



Editorial

I had planned to dedicate the first Newsletter of 1990 to the AGM on the 1st March. However, it is being dedicated instead to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in order to enlist your support for the Ove Arup route from the Channel Tunnel to London.

Peter Pain (Editor)

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

You will remember from earlier Newsletters, that after much pressure from the people affected by British Rail's 4 possible routes, they finally opted for the most environmentally friendly one and committed to tunnelling from Swanley to the London terminus. After a serious look at the costs of that option BR decided not to go ahead with it. That meant that their preferred route for most of the Channel Tunnel traffic - passenger and freight - is along the Bickley/Bromley South/Shortlands section of track.

The consequences of BR's change of mind for the Ravensbourne Valley are twofold:

- 1) Additional traffic on the existing lines. By BR's estimate there would be some 150 additional train movements a day, including 24 hour freight movement.
- 2) There would also be a viaduct rising from the Bromley side of Shortlands Station to cross the Catford Loop line near Downs Hill. BR's last stated intention was to take the viaduct up to the height of the roof line of the sub-station near Shortlands Junction (the sub-station being demolished). It is estimated that trains on this viaduct would be some 50 to 60 feet above Ravensbourne Avenue. It would also be in line of sight from practically everywhere in our area. More importantly the noise from trains would be substantially increased and many more people would be adversely affected.

Earlier this month Mark Towse and George Hodson, our representatives on this issue, attended a presentation by the Ove Arup Partnership. Ove Arup are proposing a dedicated line for both passenger and freight traffic. The line would be built with much wider spacing between tracks (not the rails) so that continental rolling stock, which is wider and higher than ours, could run on track in this country. The proposed route follows BR's to Maidstone but then turns northwards to cross the Thames near Gravesend, thence West to link Dagenham/Stratford/Kings Cross. Later, links would be built to other parts of the country. Bromley Council have already publicly supported the scheme, but time is limited if we are to influence Ministerial thinking. So between them Mark and George have prepared a draft letter with options which should allow most people to tailor it to their circumstances.

If you care about the area in which you live, please write to your MP or direct to the Minister of Transport by the 4th February.

/draft letter overleaf

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Draft Letter

* indicates options

Senders Address

Dear * MP

* Mr. Parkinson

* I live *near/*within ? yards of the main railway line from Victoria to the Channel Ports

* I commute by rail to London where I work at.....

* I do not use the railway myself, but as a regular driver in South East London I am very conscious of the heavy traffic on the roads and the bottlenecks created especially by heavy lorries. As a result, I believe that any measures which will lead to the transfer of freight traffic from roads to rail must be encouraged.

Like everyone who lives in this area, I have been very concerned about the impact of British Rail's proposals for a rail link between the Channel Tunnel and London. Whilst I was not happy about the proposed tunnel between Kings Cross and Swanley for passenger traffic only, I was prepared to accept it despite the fact that it would still have left 50% of the freight traffic to the Channel Tunnel going through Bromley.

Now that British Rail are not going ahead with the South London Tunnel on the grounds of cost, I would strongly urge you to

* use your influence (to MP)

* require British Rail (Mr. Parkinson)

to consider ALL the alternative routes that have been proposed and in particular that put forward by the Ove Arup Partnership.

It has always seemed to me, that one of the central weaknesses in the British Rail case was it's belief that there would be a massive increase in long distance passenger traffic by rail from this country to Europe. I find it difficult to believe that holiday makers will abandon their cars or that those who need to travel long distances quickly will go by rail rather than by air.

By contrast, British Rail have made little provision for freight. It will all be marshalled in London. Thereafter it will go to the Tunnel by two routes, both of which are already heavily used by commuter and long distance traffic. However well this may be scheduled, experience has shown that there is an enormous potential for jams and delays under these circumstances.

There is the further point that our existing rail network cannot take rolling stock from Europe, as they are both wider and higher than British rolling stock.

Ove Arup argue convincingly that from the start there should be a new dedicated line taking both passenger and freight trains of the continental height and width. They argue further that the line from the Channel Tunnel to London should be the first part of a national network that would eventually allow goods traffic of continental height and width to reach all parts of the country.

I believe that it is both wrong and not in the best interests of the country as a whole, that British Rail should be in a position to disregard such practical proposals.

This is our one chance to ensure that there is an adequate connection between the Channel Tunnel and the rest of the country. Please do not let the opportunity be wasted.

Yours sincerely,

* MPs - Sir John Hunt, MP / Sir Philip Goodhart, MP /
Mr. Colin B. Moynihan, MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

* The Rt.Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

* Mr. Peter Price, MEP
7 Juniper Close
Biggin Hill
Westerham
Kent TN16 3LZ

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BR Link/Bromley meetings reps: Mark Towse, 18 Ravensbourne Ave
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