

# SE1

## New rail links cut a swathe through SE1

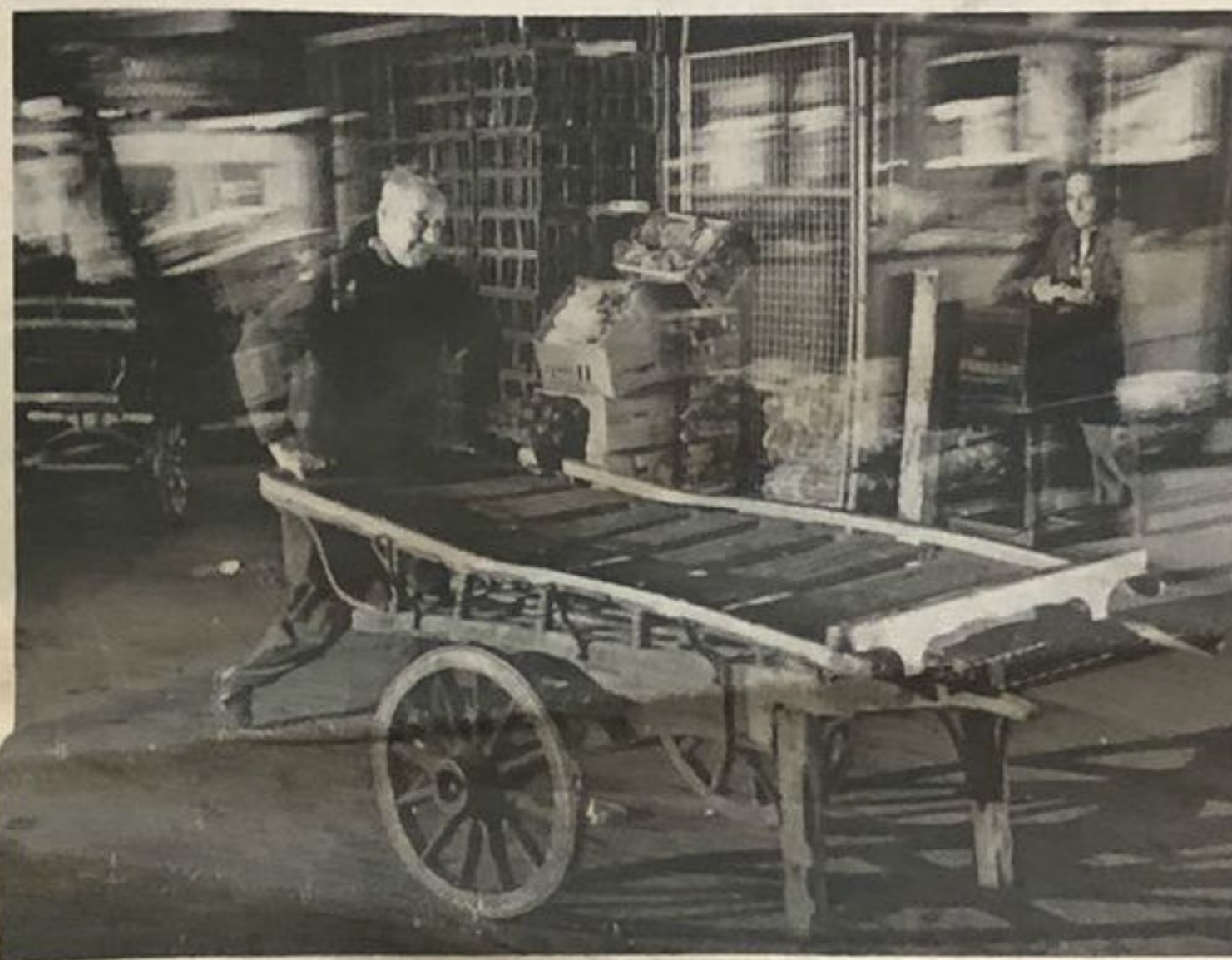
British Rail has recently informed Southwark Council of a proposal to upgrade its Thameslink service which runs through London Bridge. This would involve building an additional two tracks alongside the existing viaduct from London Bridge to the Metropolitan railway junction at Great Suffolk Street, where the new lines would link up with existing spare capacity.

In the map which accompanies the proposal, a considerable amount of property along this route would appear to be in danger of demolition, including the Globe Public House on Bedale Street. British Rail is known to have requested a meeting with the Trustees of the Borough Market whose property would also be affected. Properties in Borough High Street, Bedale Street, the back of the Hop Exchange, Flat Iron Square, would also be in the way of the new line. British Rail itself owns a number of properties along the proposed route.

There has been talk for many years about widening the railway junction which runs across the Borough Market, but these ideas have now been given impetus by the recently published 'Central London Rail Study'.

This study, carried out by the Department of Transport, British Rail and London Regional Transport, reported on possible rail solutions to the severe overcrowding on London Underground and British Rail services into and out of central London during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

This is viewed in official circles as the key public transport problem facing the capital and is of great concern to major financial and commercial businesses who have been pressing the government to tackle the problem. These business interests have their own transport lobby, known as the 'City Commuter Services



Borough Market...making way for British Rail?

North Southwark is on the eve of a new era of railway construction unseen since the last century. Within the past several weeks, British Rail has made known proposals to build two extra railway tracks alongside the existing viaduct from London Bridge across the Borough Market and on to Great Suffolk Street. This would mean the demolition of many buildings along the route. Shortly after, in a meeting with representatives of pressure group 'Peckham Against the Rail Link', BR disclosed that it intends to compulsorily purchase the Bankside Power Station for use as the major boring site for the underground channel tunnel high speed rail link between Peckham and Kings Cross. In a further development, public confirmation is expected soon that London Underground will build an eastern extension of the Jubilee Line to Docklands along the SE1 riverfront to Stratford. A further major project in SE1 is British Rail's redevelopment of Waterloo Station to serve the channel tunnel trains due in 1993. Plans are well advanced even though a host of problems remain unresolved and in the face of still great opposition from residents. In this issue of SE1, in articles on this page and on pages 2 and 3, we detail the new age of the railway in SE1 and its implications for the local community.

Group', which is chaired by the Vice Chairman of Barclays Bank.

With 150,000 new jobs expected to be created in central London over the next 20 years and demand for rail services expected to grow by 20% in the same period, urgent solutions to London's

growing transport chaos are being sought by transport authorities. After starving British Rail and London Underground of funds in the past 10 years, the Government has come to the belated conclusion, under public pressure, that public rail transport is crucial to the economic future of London.

As a result of the Central London Rail Study, transport specialists are investigating the possibility of building two new rail lines, a new London Underground link from Chelsea to Hackney and a British Rail East-West underground Crossrail. At the same time, a major upgrading programme has been recommended by the study. This would be designed to increase the effectiveness and capacity of the existing rail network aimed also at relieving congestion in central London, especially at key junctions.

One of the key junctions on the British Rail network is London Bridge. It is the fifth busiest mainline terminal in London used by 125,000 passengers a day. In the morning peak hours, 250 trains either terminate at or pass through London Bridge. The majority of these trains, originating mainly in Kent but also in Sussex, pass through London Bridge to Charing Cross and Canon Street.

Both of these lines out of London Bridge are overcrowded in the morning peak hours, and British Rail has set itself the task of eliminating this overcrowding by the year 2001. At the same time, the 'Central London Rail Study' recommended upgrading the Thameslink service to a Thameslink 'Express Metro'.

British Rail's Thameslink service was begun in May 1988 in response to rail passengers' demands for a cross London through link. Thameslink runs from Bedford and Luton in the north to Gatwick Airport and Brighton on one branch and Orpington and Sevenoaks on another branch, in the south. Since the introduction of the service, there has been a massive increase in passengers carried.

From Farringdon to Blackfriars, trains run underground through the Snow

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# Thameslink to cut swathe through the Borough

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Hill tunnel, a previously abandoned Victorian railway tunnel, and then over Blackfriars railway bridge. Presently, four trains an hour run to their southern destinations through Elephant & Castle and two trains an hour through London Bridge during the peak periods. British Rail's long term aim is to upgrade Thameslink to the frequency of London Underground services, with up to 20 trains an hour in both directions. The service would become a Cross London 'Express Metro', similar to the suburban train services which serve central Paris and which are many years in advance of British Rail.

In upgrading the service, British Rail proposes to extend Blackfriars Station and provide pedestrian access from the south bank as an alternative to a new station in Union Street.

To run more Thameslink trains south from Blackfriars, British Rail considered two alternatives, either via London Bridge or via Elephant & Castle, the two existing branches of Thameslink. British Rail claims that capacity restrictions, technical difficulties and environmental restraints rule out the Elephant & Castle option. They favour London Bridge because "widening the viaduct through the Borough Market is thought feasible with only modest environmental impact."

In view of the fact that upgrading Thameslink to an 'Express Metro' service is seen as providing major benefits for relatively little cost, building two new tracks through the market is highly likely. In fact, proposed new low level stations at Kings Cross and Holborn Viaduct leave London Bridge as the missing piece in the Thameslink jigsaw.

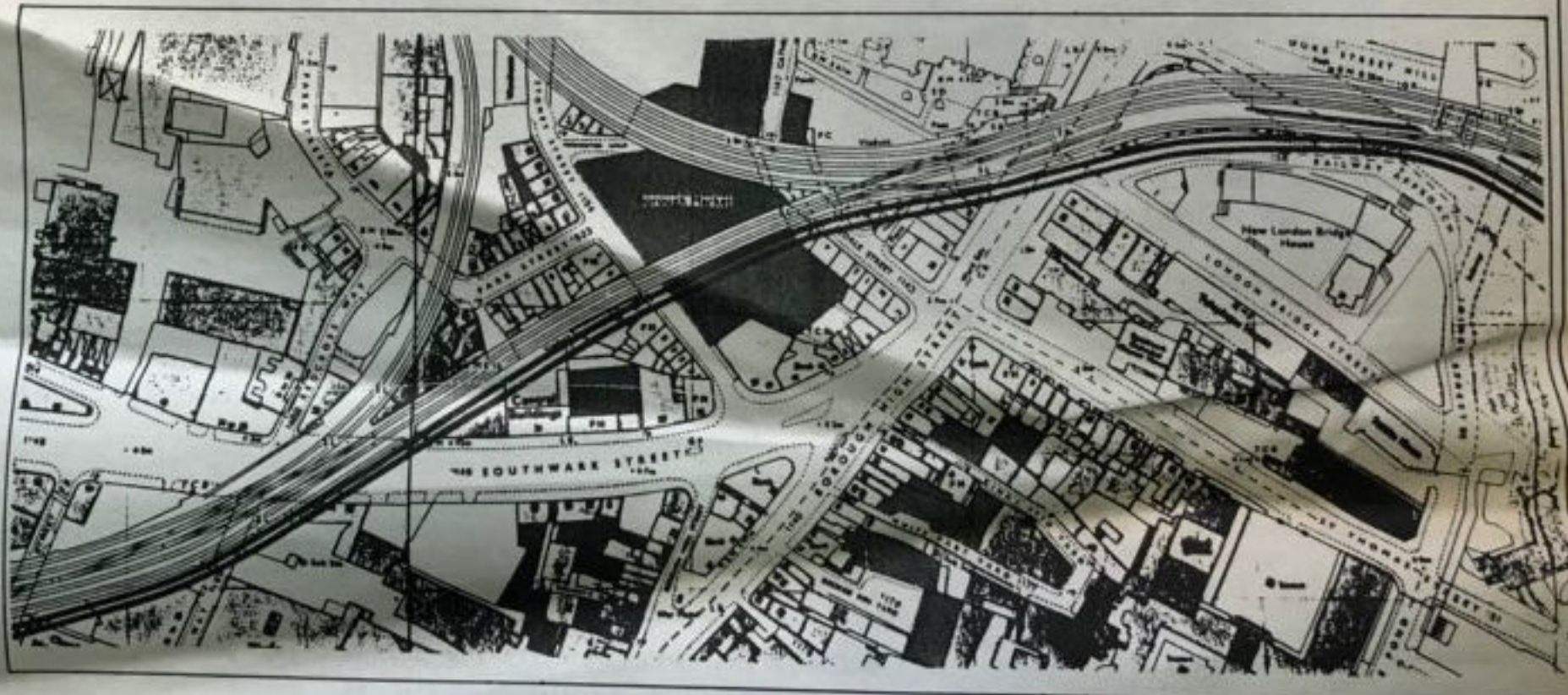
The London Bridge option, however, has been criticised by North Southwark Community Development Group as reinforcing a two-class public transport system in London. By running more services through London

Bridge, British rail will be able to more quickly serve such profitable destinations as Gatwick Airport and Brighton. Avoiding the Elephant and Castle will mean that inner and outer south London destinations like Herne Hill, Nunhead, Peckham Rye, West Norwood, Catford, will not benefit from this investment. Services to these destinations would continue to run at their present levels.

High-paying long distance commuters will be the ones to benefit while off-peak travellers and non-commuters in the inner city areas who depend on

have to put up with inadequate services. It is obvious also that track widening at London Bridge would not only allow more Thameslink trains during the peak period, but would also contribute to relieving the congestion at this junction during the morning peak, bringing commuters to London from long distance points of departure.

Widening the Borough Market junction would require parliamentary powers and British Rail has indicated it wants to present a Bill to Parliament in November.



Proposed route of Thameslink widening