

# HISTORY LAB

*Have we learnt from Beeching?*



Wimborne Station, 16th Oct. 1977  
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# *Have we learnt from Beeching?*

Objective:

- To decide whether today's framing of rail infrastructure policy is likely to prove more robust in the long-term than network planning 50 years ago.

# *Have we learnt from Beeching?:*

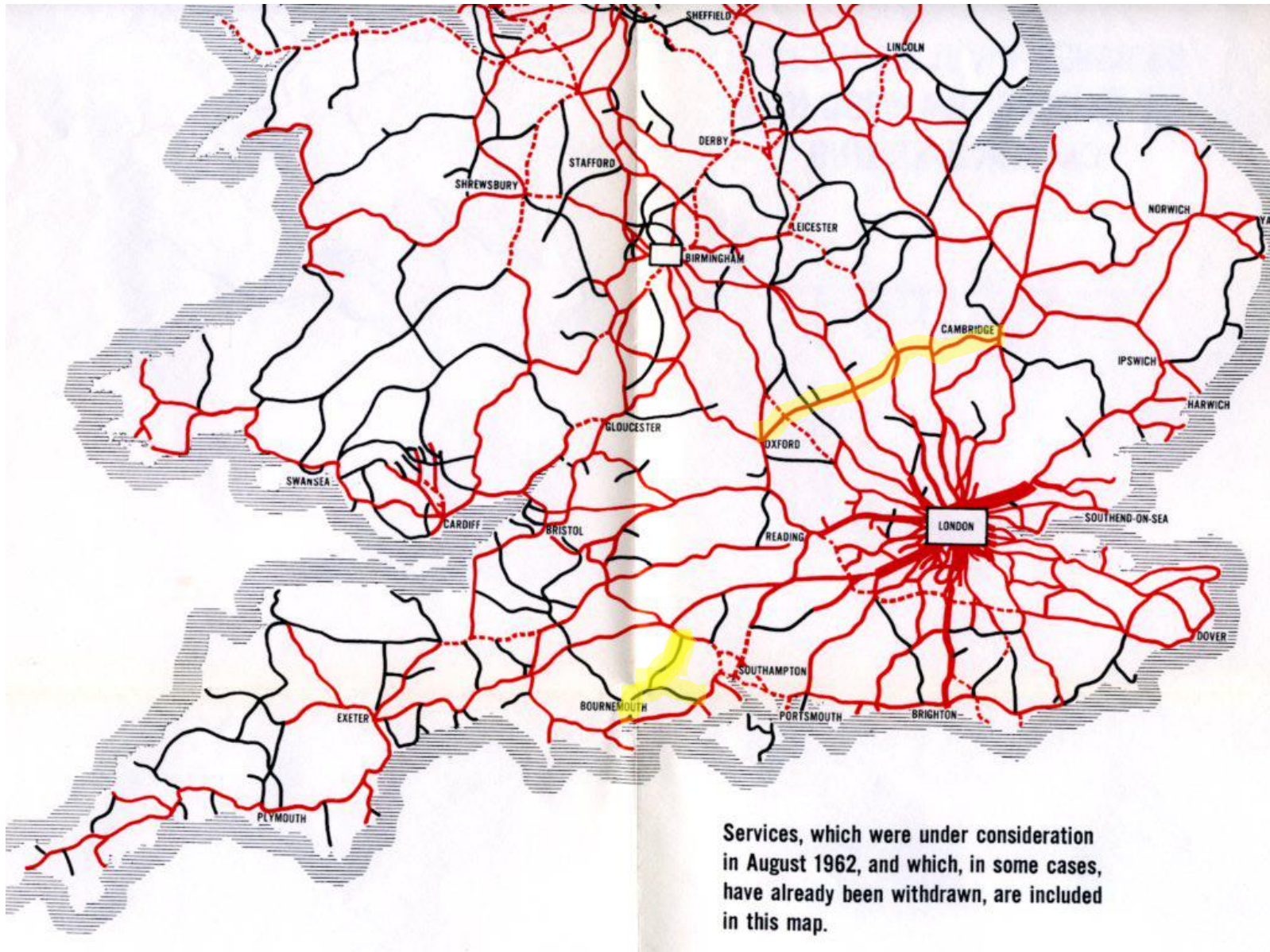
## Case studies:

### ➤ Regional links to Bournemouth

- Bournemouth/Poole to Salisbury/Bristol and to Brockenhurst/Southampton (closed 1964)

### ➤ The Varsity route

- Cambridge to Oxford via Bletchley (partly closed 1967)



**BR Proposed withdrawal of passenger services (1963)**

# *Have we learnt from Beeching?*

Task 1: BRB, *The Reshaping of British Railways*  
(1963)

Review the initial policy process and decisions:

- What were the main factors for and against closure?
- Were all the issues given due weight?
- Was the evidence base adequate and time horizons for planning realistic?
- Did ministries work well together?
- How open was the process to outside agencies?



**BRB Network for development, 1967**

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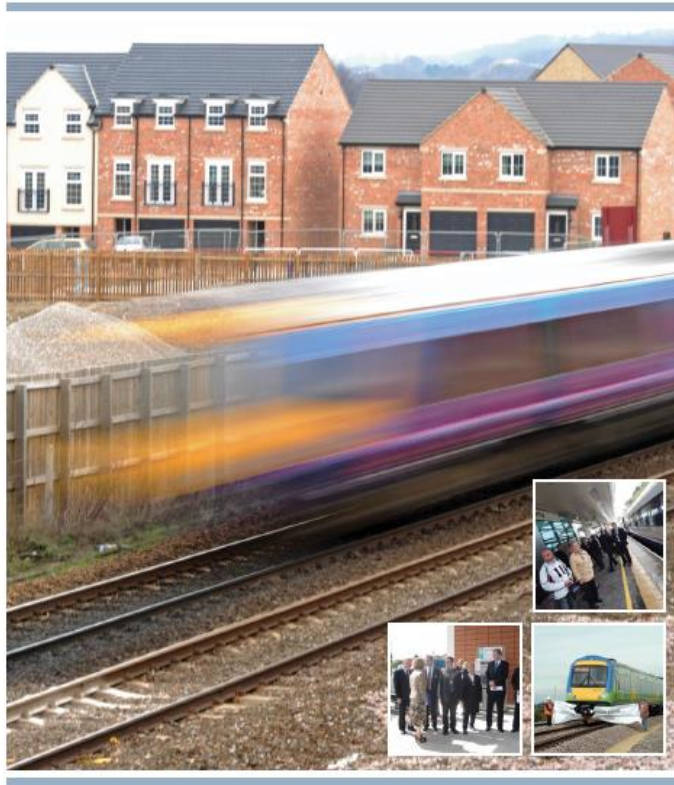
Task 2: BRB/MoT 'Network for Development'  
(1967)

Think about alternative futures:

- Were there new factors to consider?
  - Or that with hindsight should have been considered?
- Would you have recommended keeping the route(s) open or re-opening them?
  - If not, what would you have suggested doing with the redundant infrastructure?

# Connecting Communities

Expanding Access to the Rail Network



June 2009

## Ringwood:

- Station: Ringwood.
- Population: 25,000 (Ferndown, including Ringwood).
- Location: 12 miles north east of Bournemouth.
- Catchment area: a station at Ringwood would serve the northern part of the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation spread along the A 31, including Ferndown, West Moors and Wimborne, as well as the rural area to the north, including Verwood and Fordingbridge.
- Current rail access: via Bournemouth or Christchurch, although traffic congestion is a real constraint, particularly in the peak. Alternative access to Southampton Airport Parkway via the A31/M27/M3.
- Proposed link: single track electrified line, using the formation of the former Brockenhurst – Wimborne - Poole line. 10 miles long from Lymington Junction (Brockenhurst). Four level crossings required.
- Formation: intact, but blocked at Ringwood by the A31.
- Indicative capital cost: £70m.
- Train service: hourly assumed for evaluation, provided by a diverted service from Waterloo. Alternatively the Victoria – Southampton service could be extended, with the option to change to fast Waterloo services at Southampton.
- Note: the reinstated line would run through the New Forest National Park.





# *Have we learnt from Beeching?*

Task 3 ATOC, *Connecting Communities* (2009)/East West Rail/HS2, HS3...

Reflect on the 'lessons' for today's policy processes:

- How far into the future can/should we plan? Do we consider a wide enough range of scenarios?
- What is the appropriate geographical scale for infrastructure policy?
- What should be done with redundant infrastructure ?
- What might historians in 2064 make of today's framing of policy and decision-making? (Be honest!)