

The Rages Rag

Newsletter of Rail Action Group, East of Scotland
Issue No. 3 - October 1999

Refurbished Dunbar Station MSP Performs Official Opening

On 19 July, the refurbished station at Dunbar was officially opened by the recently elected MSP for East Lothian, John Home Robertson.

RAGES attended the ceremony and our photograph, kindly supplied by GNER, shows from left to right:- John Home Robertson MP and MSP; Ralph Jordinson RAGES secretary; Tom Thorburn RAGES chairman and Christopher Garnett GNER Chief Executive. Also present from GNER was Bob Bone, Andy Naylor and Sean English.

Sean confirmed that the platform shelter was due for erection in August along with the promised cycle racks. The capacity of the racks would be for 8 cycles and more would be provided if capacity was outstripped.

Bob Bone informed us that the 07.20 service to London was being reinstated in the winter timetable, starting on 27th September.

Andy Naylor introduced Christopher Garnett to us and we had an excellent exchange of words. Christopher re-confirmed the 07.20 service coming back and that another afternoon southbound service was being investigated (possibly 16.00) in order to relieve some of the pressure

from the 17.00 ex Edinburgh service. He has had discussions with Alastair McPherson of ScotRail about their coming to Dunbar off-peak. Tom pointed out that RAGES did not want to lose the existing GNER services. Christopher also remarked that we were a sensible balanced group.

The ceremony concluded with coffee and delicious cakes.



Station update

There are still some outstanding matters to be addressed:

- A large hole, surrounded by barriers, has been present for a number of months on the only footway to the station.
- No work has been done on the construction of the shelter at the far end of the platform.
- On occasions, the street lighting on Station Road has not been switched on.

With the onset of darkness and colder weather, we consider that these should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

We have also been told that customers have been unable to purchase tickets even though stopping trains are still due. A notice should be displayed giving the opening and closing times of the ticket office.

The Aims of RAGES

- To improve the rail service between Edinburgh and Dunbar with extension to Berwick upon Tweed at a later stage.
- To have East Linton Station reopened for active use and to press for the re-opening of Reston Station.
- To consider the implications with regard to car parking and bicycle storage at Stations between Waverley and Berwick upon Tweed.
- To improve the level of service to North Berwick.
- To keep under scrutiny the standards of passenger facilities at stations between Waverley and Berwick upon Tweed, including North Berwick, and to draw the attention of the relevant bodies to shortcomings which arise.
- To re-open the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington.
- The group, being environmentally minded, will actively strive to encourage rail travel within its geographical area.

Train re-instated

Although it is not in the new winter timetable, the 07:00 hrs from Edinburgh with a 07:20 departure from Dunbar to London has been re-instated from 27 September 1999.

We are indebted to John Home Robertson for all his effort in the return of this service.

Welcome to this issue of The Rages Rag, which we intend to publish quarterly. It is the main means of communication to our members.

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The good and the not so good

One of our number having travelled from North Berwick to Glasgow on the train discovered his car and house keys were missing. Phone calls to previous offices visited were fruitless.

In the meantime, the guard on the train to Edinburgh had found a set of keys on the train and, on his return to North Berwick, along with the station newsagent, searched for a BMW in the car park. The key ring gave the clue to the car model! There wouldn't be many of them to look for there.

A BMW was soon found that fitted the key and its distinctive number plates identified the owner.

When our member phoned the newsagent to inquire if he had dropped his keys at the station, he was somewhat surprised to be greeted with the good news as to how they were found.

Well done to ScotRail and the station newsagent.

One Sunday morning another of our members phoned the GNER travel line for the cost from Dunbar to Aberdeen.

This request was responded to by being told it was ScotRail who went to Aberdeen.

Our member replied that she was aware of that, but knew GNER also had a train which went from Dunbar, so could she please have the cost.

After he had given her the details, she asked why he had not given her the information when first asked. His reply was that he was doing her a favour, i.e. far more trains are run by ScotRail. He actually did not mention that these were from Edinburgh!

Is this GNER trying to run down the use of Dunbar? - of course not, but we would appreciate a little help in promoting one of the group's stations.

Data Protection Act 1984

As detailed in the above act, RAGES is exempt from registering as it maintains a computerised database of information solely for its own use as a mailing list or summarised for committee purposes. The data held is that supplied on the Application Form and will not be passed to any third party.

Your entry can be obtained by request to the Membership Secretary, enclosing a S.A.E.

Seen in Switzerland

On a two hour visit to a railway town:

- Several goods trains with cars, timber and closed wagons
- Two trains of lorries

Seen in East Lothian

- No cars on trains
- SIX car transporters in a convoy on the A1

OPRAF Performance League for 1998-99

		Punctuality	Reliability
ScotRail	Category B - 6 companies	95.7% - top	99.4% - 3rd
GNER	Category C - 12 companies	88.8% - 9th	99.2% - 5th

Source: Railnews, June 1999



For those who wondered where this was seen, it can be found in Belhaven Road, Dunbar - the now closed Inverleith GaRAGES LTD.

Membership

We now have 111 members from around the counties.

Please encourage your neighbours or fellow passengers to join RAGES, as our combined voice can make a difference.

Membership forms can be obtained from committee members, whose names can be found on your membership card.

Reston Public Meeting

Standing room only

At the public meeting held on 24 September 1999 in a packed Reston Community Centre, there were approximately 115 people present.

Tom Thorburn, the RAGES Chairman, welcomed everyone in the audience and introduced the top table.

- Euan Robson, MSP, Roxburgh and Berwickshire
- John Ross Scott, Chairman, South East of Scotland Transport Partnership
- Peter Fuller, Transport Manager, Scottish Borders Council
- Chris Budzynski, Berwick Borough Surveyor
- Alan Macmillan, Railtrack Account Surveyor Scottish Stations
- Ray Stringer, Chairman, Reston and Auchencrow Community Council

The chairman gave apologies from the local MP, Archy Kirkwood, who had indicated his support in a letter to RAGES.

Also present in the audience were Willie Scott from the Railway Development Society, Drew Tulley the Convenor of Scottish Borders Council and councillors John Elliot and David Jones.

In his introduction, Euan Robson said that he was supportive of the initiative and the Scottish Parliament are aware of the situation. He felt that it would be of commercial benefit for the area and improve commuter services. He stated that the RAGES survey will give a measure of possible local usage, but that there are many questions to be answered and that a feasibility study should be undertaken. In summary he felt that a train station in Reston would be excellent for the Borders and surrounding area.

Peter Fuller said that with a change of Government and Government policy the emphasis is more on passenger/freight from road to rail. Capital is available for rail projects from the government and new money is available from the Strategic Rail Authority. Road user charges will provide money in the future and new trains will be required.

John Ross Scott indicated that the emphasis should be on the central line rather than Reston at the moment. He is also concerned that Berwick Station would lose customers or status and he supports the dualling of the A1. An integrated transport system should be developed for all Lothian Regions. All transport systems require support and investment from the government.

Chris Budzynski informed the meeting that two trains serve Chathill then wait in Belford for twenty minutes for a slot to return; they are therefore actively seeking to re-open Belford station. They are looking for grant aid from the Rural Transport Development Fund and the emphasis should be on public transport and away from cars. He does not foresee any A1 dualling in the immediate future.

Alan Macmillan, from Railtrack, said that they will support any initiative to improve the rail network/stations. Capital costs are high and revenue income cannot be the

principal source of finance. He agreed that a detailed feasibility study is required by all the main players.

Public Question Time

The main points raised during the public question time were:-

Question. Members from the top table should work more closely together with the view to re-opening Reston Station. The expected cost of £750,000 is not much to spend on a station or £1m for a train set. Time slowing down for trains can easily be made up and the A1 is regularly blocked.

John Ross Scott - Political will is not yet in place to undertake this size of project.

Peter Fuller - It would be a local train service and not an Intercity type of train.

Q. Will ScotRail go to Newcastle?

Tom Thorburn - Hopes ScotRail will run from Edinburgh to Berwick.

Q. What effect will a train station have on other public transport services i.e. buses?

Tom Thorburn - These should provide a feeder service to the station.

Q. We always see investment given for work in Central Scottish Borders e.g. Newtown St Boswells. Why not here?

Drew Tulley - The whole of the Borders requires a transport system. A study is required in this area for a sprinter service. Look beyond the Borders when the service is being provided and lobby for more investment in public transport.

Q. There needs to be more enthusiasm from the top table and public transport should provide a service for the public. A through service would be more sensible than a shuttle.

Euan Robson - the only way to proceed from here is a feasibility study and we require accurate costs from Railtrack.

Q. Are there any critical factors affecting the re-opening of Reston station?

Alan Macmillan - Network capacity and Waverley area capacity, but signalling is the biggest technical problem. Provision must be made sooner rather than later if it is to happen.

Q. Where will the car park be? Get the lorries off the road onto the railway.

Tom Thorburn - A local landowner is happy to provide land for car parking.

Euan Robson - Problems on the road are as a result of road types changing (single to dual carriageway) - but must try to get freight off road. Not no work on A1 but not major.

John Ross Scott - Park and ride would follow when the station arrives and we must get freight off the road.

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History of Reston Station by Tom Thorburn

Reston Station opened on 22nd June 1846 as part of the North British Railway Company's Edinburgh to Berwick railway. Only four days after the opening, the NBR applied for (along with 5 others) an Act of Parliament to run a branch line from Reston to Duns. The auction mart at Reston opened shortly after and flourished as the railway brought all the stock from near and far in many large cattle trains.

The Duns branch opened on 13th August 1849 as a twin line but passenger receipts were very poor. Two large Berwickshire landlords pressed the NBR to accept £5000 worth of land such that the branch could be extended west of Duns. The Berwickshire Railway as it was then known as, was opened to Earlston on 16th November 1863 and eventually across the impressive Leaderfoot Viaduct to Newstead coalyard/Ravenswood Junction on 2nd October 1865.

Reston Junction's demise was to begin in 1948 with the great flood on the 12th August. Not only was the East Coast Main Line breached several times with the Water Eye bursting its banks but the Berwickshire line was also breached west of Duns at Langton. Reston therefore

returned to being a branch junction station which must have reduced its importance and income to a great extent. Passenger services on the branch were withdrawn on 10th September 1951 and at Reston on 4th May 1964. Freight ceased on 7th November 1966 resulting in total closure.



Today all that remains of Reston station is the Station Masters house, part of the up platform and Engineers sidings for when track maintenance is being carried out locally.

RAGES and Campaign for Borders Rail wish to see this station reopened such that it would provide a rail link for the local communities of Reston, Eyemouth, Ayton, Coldingham,

St Abbs and Chirnside. This would encourage business to the Eastern Borders and also assist in easier access to the main business centres of Edinburgh and Newcastle therefore stopping the drift of talent from the Scottish Borders.

On January 26th 1999 at the Scottish Borders Council Draft Structure Plan meeting in Duns, representation was made to have Reston Station included in the Plan. This has been followed up with a letter to the Council who have subsequently confirmed that Reston will be included.

Railway Snippets

From Railnews

Cycle Mark Award for ScotRail

ScotRail has been named the most improved rail operator for cyclists. It has dropped charges and increased capacity on some services. 22 stations are now equipped with bicycle lockers.

Bike cull

Nearly 170 abandoned bikes have been cleared from Cambridge Station. Three men using bolt cutters and angle grinders worked for 2 nights to remove them. Only 50 bikes were re-claimed! This will not happen at Dunbar?

GNER's burger no more

In its place comes a new buffet menu of tastier sandwiches with fuller fillers. Also available are hot and cold baguettes, soups, pizzas and pastries and hot vegetarian pasta dishes.

Quote from Tom Winsor, Rail Regulator

"Passengers have been waiting too long for better performance from the railways.

"They have heard numerous statements of good intentions and promises of jam tomorrow.

"The time has come to take action to make the privatised railways treat the travelling public with the same respect as they treat their shareholders"

GNER investment

Christopher Garnett, GNER's Chief Executive, has said that investment of more than £40m in its business is more than double the amount it agreed to spend during the seven year franchise from 1996 to 2003.

Passenger numbers are up by 21% so far - against 18.5% forecast for the whole franchise term.

Railtrack NMS Consultative Meeting

By Tom Thorburn

I had the privilege of attending the Railtrack Network Management Statement Consultation 1999 meeting on behalf of RAGES, on 8th July 1999 in the George Hotel Edinburgh. The above meeting was attended by representatives from:

- Local Authorities
- RUCC for Scotland
- Enterprise and freight supporting groups.

Chaired by Nigel Wunsch, Railtrack Scotland Business Development Manager, he welcomed us and then told us about the partnership between themselves, ScotRail and First Engineering (as it should be in my opinion). This partnership was further emphasised in the 'ScotRail 2000' video.

After a short question and answer session, where I remained silent - for a change, (Ed: hard to believe), the group split into their respective syndicates namely: Passenger; Freight and Vision.

As some of RAGES main aims are the reopening of stations, Vision was clearly the most suitable group to attend. Robin Harper, the Green MSP, was in this group and Gordon Brown, Railtrack Scotland Commercial Manager chaired it. Minutes of this meeting were taken on a 'NOBO' flip chart such that points raised were/could not be misinterpreted. I raised a number of points:

- In 2001 the station regeneration programme is due to end which has had a massive investment - can we see this being replaced by a station re-opening programme starting with East Linton, Reston and Haddington?
- Have Scottish Borders Council included Reston in their update of the NMS Council Aspirations (East Linton and Haddington are already there)?
- When are Railtrack going to address the pinch points of the Calton Tunnels east of Waverley and the re-instatement of

passing loops to ease the flow of all types of train?

- Wearing my Campaign for Borders Rail cap, Railtrack have this very large ball-park figure for re-instatement of closed lines which is not relevant to the Waverley route as it passes through mainly rural habitat - such that the Borders can get their Railway back thus relieving the plight of Central Borderers and in turn save some 175 timber trucks (each way) thundering through Newcastleton, please review this figure and reduce it accordingly.

In case you are now wondering, did anyone else attending this meeting get a chance to express their views? - yes, but if the pause was too long yours truly was back in. Seriously though, one of the main points to come out of this meeting was that the attendees wanted greater accessibility to the network via new stations and more frequent services. Reduction in journey time, i.e. Edinburgh to London, took a definite second place, which somewhat surprised Railtrack.

When the three groups reconvened, the minutes of their respective meetings were presented by the group chairmen and a question and answer session ensued. Sorry to say I remained quiet here, but the most relevant question raised was - 'why are Railtrack selling off the car park at Waverley Station when St Andrews Square bus station is being closed - surely would it not be better to see it re-sited at Waverley to give an integrated transport system?' The meeting concluded with an excellent buffet lunch.

As I had just missed the 14.00 service back to Dunbar, I took the train out to Bathgate and back. Bathgate is often quoted in railway circles as the swansong of a reopened passenger line, hence my justification for this journey. Taking the 14.06 service from Waverley, the train ran 30 to 40% capacity loading, which in my view is excellent for an off-peak service. Now when I quote the above swansong, I can be

Concessionary Fares for Senior Citizens

by Ralph Jordinson

Introduction

The following tables summarise the arrangements for concessionary fares in 6 council areas in or adjacent to the East of Scotland.

With regard to concessionary travel it should be understood that concessions apply on the day of travel. It is recommended that rail travellers obtain return tickets on their outward journey, if intending to return on the same day, particularly if the destination is outside the local council area. Bus travellers can usually obtain single tickets only, although tickets for return journeys are available at appropriate bus stations. The maximum concessionary fare on buses is usually 40p but this is often reduced to 30p by "commercial enhancement", (referred to as standard in the tables).

Permits

<u>Council</u>	<u>Initial Cost of Permit</u>	<u>Period of Validity</u>
City of Edinburgh	Free	5 years
East Lothian	£3.00	3 years
Midlothian	Free	4 years
West Lothian	Free	Up to 2006
Falkirk	Free	Up to 2002
Fife	Free	5 years

Travel within Council Area

<u>Council</u>	<u>Bus</u>		<u>Train</u>	
	<u>Fare (Max/Std)</u>	<u>Available Times</u>	<u>Fare (Single/Return)</u>	<u>Available Times</u>
City of Edinburgh	40p/30p	04:15 to 23:59	Flat - 50p/£1	04:15 to 23:59
East Lothian	40p/30p	04:15 to 23:59	1/2 relevant fare (ie peak, off-peak etc)	04:15 to 23:59
Midlothian	40p/30p	04:15 to 23:59	Not available	-
West Lothian	40p/30p	All times	Flat - 60p/£1.20	All times
Falkirk	1/4 fare	All times	1/2 fare	All times
Fife	Free	Mon to Fri - 09:00 to 15:30 and after 18:00	Flat - 40p/80p	09:15 to 16:45 and after 18:20
	1/2 single fare	Mon to Fri - before 09:00 and 15:30 to 18:00		

Travel outwith Council Area (details only to councils in first table)

<u>Council</u>	<u>Bus</u>		<u>Train</u>	
	<u>Max/Std</u>	<u>Permitted Areas of Travel</u>	<u>Single/Return</u>	<u>Permitted Areas of Travel</u>
City of Edinburgh	40p/30p	East Lothian, Midlothian. Also direct journeys to Linlithgow, Broxburn, Uphall and St John's Hospital	-	Not available outside Edinburgh area
East Lothian	40p	Edinburgh, Midlothian and above areas in West Lothian	1/2 relevant fare	Edinburgh and West Lothian
Midlothian	40p/30p	East Lothian, Edinburgh and above areas in West Lothian	-	Not available
West Lothian	40p/30p or 1/2 fare on some routes	Edinburgh and Falkirk	60p/£1.20	Edinburgh, Falkirk and East Lothian
Falkirk	1/2 fare	Edinburgh, Dunfermline and Bathgate	1/2 fare	Edinburgh
Fife	Free in off peak and 1/2 single otherwise	Edinburgh and Falkirk	40p/80p in off peak and full fare otherwise	Edinburgh