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SCOTLAND | ALBA



Teachdail Rèile na h-Alba

RAILFUTURE SCOTLAND NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023

FURY AT CROSS COUNTRY PROPOSALS TO REDUCE SERVICES AT DUNBAR

CrossCountry Trains have vowed to press ahead with the withdrawal of 7 trains a day from Dunbar which instead will stop at Berwick upon Tweed, despite opposition from local rail users and campaigners. This includes a very popular commuter train from Edinburgh, the 17.28, used by hundreds of Dunbar residents each weekday.

At a recent meeting with Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES), chaired by Paul McLennan MSP, CrossCountry claimed that because Dunbar was also served by Trans Pennine Express there was no need for 'duplication' of passenger services there, and that the extra stops at Berwick were necessary to compensate for the withdrawal of LNER trains. However, closer investigation reveals that the LNER withdrawal amounts to just one train per day.

CrossCountry tried to justify their decision by claiming that they had held a consultation and nobody had objected to the planned cuts. However the existence of this consultation came as news to both RAGES and local politicians, who surely should have been at the top of any list of consultees, suggesting that this consultation has had such a limited participation that its legitimacy is in doubt. Community Councils in the area have confirmed that no such consultation has been received by them.

For some time CrossCountry have been the main rail provider at Dunbar and in the absence of stops at the station, Dunbar passengers have opted instead to drive to Berwick and catch the same trains further down the line. These actions appear to make little sense, because while Dunbar is expanding and demand for travel will likely increase further when East Linton opens next year, the population of Berwick is reducing, apparently with the only increase in passengers due to Dunbar residents driving to catch the trains which no longer stop in their home town. This is no way to run a railway and is bad for the environment to boot.



RAILFUTURE SCOTLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Our AGM will take place on **Saturday 13 May 2023** from 14.00 – 17.00 at Hay Suite, Dewars Centre Ice Rink, Glover Street, Perth PH2 0TH. The venue is a short walk from Perth Station.

Our speaker will be from the Campaign for North East Rail, who are working to restore the rail links from Dyce to Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

We look forward to seeing you then.

NEWS FROM FIFE

Following the Fife Rail Forum meeting held at the Scottish Parliament in October, attended by the Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP and convened by Mark Ruskell MSP for Mid Scotland & Fife, hopes were high that progress with the various projects would soon be made. The Minister, accompanied by a Transport Scotland official, listened carefully while representatives of the Newburgh Train Station, Alloa-Dunfermline, St Andrews Rail Link and Levenmouth campaigns presented their cases.

However, although half of the Levenmouth track is complete, with the first three miles of track comprising over 18,000 sleepers and one hundred 215 metre-long rail sections now in place, as well as significant earthworks and waterproofing of ground so that rail services should commence in spring 2024, the same cannot be said about the other projects. For instance, Transport Scotland took 5 months to even discuss the preliminary options appraisal with StARLink campaigners (for the restoration of the St Andrews rail link) and the consultants. Three months after the agreed revisions were submitted, there has been no reply from Transport Scotland. This means that the Detailed Options Appraisal has not yet begun.

The Newburgh campaign has completed all three parts of its STAG but again has been left in limbo for nearly a year since last June since Transport Scotland has refused to say what should be the next steps. Apparently all the projects funded by the Local Rail Development Fund are in the same position.

Good news has been received from Cross Country trains, though, as they have promised to restore the Fife stops in their cross-border services once the May timetable comes into effect. This will be most helpful for those travelling to the Midlands or West Country from Inverkeithing, Kirkcaldy, Markinch, Ladybank, Cupar and Leuchars, with passengers utilising the last including students and staff from the University of St Andrews. *(a total contrast to their treatment of Dunbar passengers reported on P1! – Ed)*

Planning permission has been granted for a museum housing the two retired steam locomotives Union of South Africa and The Great Marquess, on their owner John Cameron's farm near Kilconquhar, Fife. The Union of South Africa's illustrious career culminated when she hauled the train carrying the Queen on the occasion of the opening of the Borders line in 2015, with Mr Cameron himself, a former chairman of Sco-trail, driving for part of the journey.

Jane Ann Liston



Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth MSP, Fife Rail Forum convenor Mark Ruskell MSP, Jane Ann Liston (StARLink), Allen Armstrong, Ken Haig & Don Barclay (Levenmouth Rail Campaign), Cameron Little (Alloa-Dunfermline Rail), Nigel Mullan (Newburgh Train Station Group).

GLASGOW MODEL RAIL SHOW 2023

Railfuture Scotland held its usual stall at Glasgow Model Rail Show from 24-26 February.

It was a very busy Show and great to see people again, especially some of our members who were able to come along.

Pictured are Ron McLean and Allison Cosgrove just before the opening of the Show.



BULK BALLAST ON RAIL

The biggest bulk railfreight flow for over a decade has been established from the former Ravenstruther Coal Terminal to destinations in England. The rock from Cloburn Quarry in Lanarkshire has always been found suitable for railway ballast.

Prior to 1940's the quarry had its own tramway to the West Coast Main Line, after that it was taken 10 miles by road to a loading bank at Carstairs Junction but then it was found cheaper to take it long distances by road, even as far as Aberdeen for the recent track redoubling. After agreement between the railhead owner, Hargreaves, and Cloburn Quarry it now travels 4 miles by road to be loaded onto trains. Trains take some 1000 tonnes in 10 to 18 box wagons (Gondolas?).

The trackwork is not perfect as it was designed for coal to go north but to go south trains have to reverse out onto the main line and then run "wrong line" 2 miles to Carstairs Junction before achieving right line. Network Rail had planned to put in double crossovers but these were cancelled to save money. Between 5 and 15 trains are dispatched per week, mainly operated by Colas.

The quarry is applying for a further 50 years reserves and some objectors suggest a conveyor direct to a new loading point although this would be difficult. These trains run long distances but in a strange twist many trains are now running just 2 miles with auto-ballasters to serve the massive track renewal project at Carstairs Junction.

Ralph Barker

CARSTAIRS REMODELLING

Network Rail are undertaking a £164 million remodelling at Carstairs Junction. The trackwork was worn out and had to be renewed so the opportunity is taken to improve the layout for modern operations and higher speeds.

This involved 2 months preparation work, 2 weeks complete closure of all lines and a further 2 months of partial closures. The result will be increase in speed to 100/110mph on the main line and to 40mph, up from 15mph, on both branches to Edinburgh. British Rail planned to close Carstairs Station over 20 years ago but a community campaign, Railway Development Society and one or two professional railway insiders prevented this and local trains to Edinburgh and Glasgow were reinstated. A station car park was built because it never had one in the past!

When the remodelling was being planned there were suggestions again that the station would be closed, moved away or cut down to one short platform face. Very sadly, some organisations which purported to be pro-rail and pro-public transport actually encouraged closure of the station to allow even higher speeds for inter-city trains. Network Rail worked hard to provide both a station and the higher speeds. Carstairs Station never had true disabled access and this was not included in the remodelling despite passenger demands. The local MP and MSP came together and won the commitment to make the station fully accessible.

Ralph Barker



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TOP 50 STATIONS BY PASSENGER USAGE, APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022

More information at dataportal.orr.gov.uk
Table 1565

		Apr 2021 to Mar 2022 Entries and exits: Total	Apr 2021 to Mar 2022 Entries and exits: Rank	Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 Entries and exits: Total	Change between Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 and Apr 2021 to Mar 2022 (percentage)	Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 Entries and exits: Total
1	Glasgow Central	15,322,350	16	5,325,090	188	32,465,202
2	Edinburgh	13,617,536	19	2,957,732	360	23,087,646
3	Glasgow Queen Street	8,467,718	28	2,299,020	268	16,685,760
4	Paisley Gilmour Street	2,124,248	165	982,530	116	3,903,776
5	Partick	1,664,560	229	634,162	162	2,935,104
6	Aberdeen	1,536,720	251	393,982	290	2,497,108
7	Haymarket	1,500,672	256	448,460	235	2,980,386
8	Stirling	1,435,624	268	432,464	232	2,485,394
9	Dundee	1,167,730	325	317,582	268	1,945,950
10	Charing Cross (Glasgow)	917,702	410	362,892	153	2,149,716
11	Hyndland	829,640	447	295,110	181	1,631,376
12	Exhibition Centre (Glasgow)	809,248	457	300,276	170	1,959,630
13	Argyle Street	773,154	483	382,016	102	1,311,820
14	Inverness	753,228	492	231,894	225	1,214,648
15	Ayr	725,962	506	238,652	204	1,395,968
16	Croy	719,004	510	193,744	271	1,372,748
17	Inverkeithing	645,026	560	155,816	314	1,137,604
18	Johnstone (Renfrewshire)	636,844	562	247,134	158	1,275,028
19	Mount Florida	622,242	575	196,162	217	1,302,818
20	Perth	614,804	579	181,454	239	1,059,278
21	Livingston North	610,928	582	184,666	231	1,179,130
22	Bathgate	600,474	589	210,824	185	1,209,782
23	Kirkcaldy	578,852	603	139,356	315	1,008,276
24	Annesland	564,808	613	173,104	226	1,144,568
25	Motherwell	545,802	623	174,096	214	1,343,424
26	Linlithgow	518,806	643	119,566	334	1,131,374
27	Rutherglen	489,766	671	213,110	130	1,015,208
28	Airdrie	476,662	688	121,496	292	1,009,104
29	Bridgeton	476,300	689	272,742	75	814,234
30	Crossmyloof	473,588	693	213,784	122	732,808
31	Kilwinning	456,434	711	111,346	310	938,072
32	East Kilbride	445,832	719	134,146	232	991,900
33	Cambuslang	443,054	725	165,944	167	769,008
34	Irvine	442,436	728	114,254	287	889,394
35	Dalmuir	440,666	731	128,016	244	915,936
36	Falkirk High	431,898	734	116,720	270	895,962
37	Larbert	424,396	740	113,242	275	889,872
38	Lenzie	422,064	745	135,704	211	916,816
39	Bellgrove	421,792	746	147,848	185	726,496
40	Bishopbriggs	421,484	748	163,940	157	772,086
41	Uddingston	408,504	759	138,094	196	863,522
42	Queens Park (Glasgow)	408,106	760	168,116	143	782,170
43	Bishopton (Renfrewshire)	403,328	767	123,580	226	782,688
44	Milngavie	394,948	779	97,076	307	912,674
45	Westerton	382,188	800	102,858	272	774,774
46	Bellshill	380,576	801	147,280	158	783,902
47	Hamilton Central	378,966	803	103,426	266	757,450
48	Helensburgh Central	370,770	811	81,510	355	716,864
49	Leuchars (For St. Andrews)	369,542	812	74,406	397	594,982
50	High Street (Glasgow)	368,764	814	108,564	240	814,934