

# The Rages Rag



Newsletter of Rail Action Group, East of Scotland



[www.rages.org.uk](http://www.rages.org.uk)

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## Local Rail Meeting

On 30 October 2012, the regular local rail meeting was again hosted by East Lothian Council. Cllr Michael Veitch, deputy leader and transport portfolio holder, was in the chair. Present were MSPs, Iain Gray and Jim Hume, councillors and council staff from East Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils, SEStran, a member of Haddington and District Community Council and committee members of RAGES.

### Rail study

Scott Leitham of MVA Consultancy had been invited to update the meeting on their progress on the second part of the Edinburgh to Berwick Local Rail Study.

As reported in the last *Rages Rag*, Scott had been invited to and had attended consultations organised in East Linton and Reston which he had found most useful.

He indicated that they were finalising the first task of the study which is the consideration of non-rail options. This task was a requirement of the STAG process.

Among the problems facing the traveller in East Lothian are:

- limited bus services
- access to the rail network
- train and car park capacities
- train patterns at Dunbar

Similarly in Berwickshire:

- limited bus services
- access to the rail network
- the perceived border (barrier?) effect
- late night travel from Edinburgh
- access to higher and further education
- its demographics

Shared problems are:

- rail fares which can be excessive if turning up on the day
- the road network into Edinburgh
- opportunities for people entering the counties e.g. visitors

The objectives of this task are:

- improve the generalised cost of travelling by public transport or park and ride by a meaningful amount
- improve accessibility and connectivity between Berwickshire and Edinburgh
- address known or foreseen public transport capacity issue in the corridor
- improve the reliability of public transport journey times from Berwickshire to Edinburgh

MVA Consultancy are developing two options:

- an express bus service from Reston to Edinburgh - with or without intermediate stops
- a feeder bus service to Dunbar

At the time of the meeting, the results of these options was almost finalised. The full report had been hoped to be available in draft before Christmas 2012. However, the expected date is now early February 2013.

The original idea of a wrap-round document to be produced by the two councils has been dropped in favour of including the same information (socio-economic) within MVA Consultancy's paper. However, a covering letter from the two councils will highlight the main points in the study's findings.

After a meeting of the MSPs with the Minister for Transport, we are now clearer on how to make use of the Government's Station Investment Fund. It was seen as an anomaly as to whether

## The Aims of RAGES

To improve the rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed.

To have East Linton and Reston stations re-opened for active use.

To improve the level of service to North Berwick.

To consider the implications with regard to car parking and bicycle storage at stations between Waverley and Berwick upon Tweed.

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.

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

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# Local Rail Meeting

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we could apply for funding if it was unknown that a service would be provided. However, the timing of the study publication and the assessment of the funding application is such that it is recommended that an application should be drafted now. It was noted, however, that the Government hopes to get many projects for its £30m fund and therefore significant alternative funding should be included in our application.

The Minister had again re-iterated that a positive decision on our local study after the ScotRail franchise being re-let would not hinder its implementation during this new franchise period.

## Consultations

It was noted that East Lothian Council, SEStran and RAGES had all submitted responses to the recent ECML franchise consultation document.

York City Council had convened a meeting for all authorities on the ECML route to discuss and produce a unified view for a lobbying document to be sent to the Department for Transport. The East Lothian Council representative was the

only Scottish authority present.

It is unknown at present whether the debacle of the WCML franchise will have any effect on the ECML one or indeed the ScotRail franchise as both are due for re-letting in 2014.

## Haddington

The RAGES aim of re-opening the Haddington rail branch was discussed. RAGES is pressing for a technical feasibility study to be undertaken by East Lothian Council as had been suggested last year in this forum. The Council is keen to gauge local opinion on the Haddington branch and also believes it is important to ascertain the view of the Scottish Government. To this end it has been suggested that the Haddington and District Community Council and RAGES combine their efforts to poll the Haddington population. This will be discussed at the next Community Council meeting. The local rail meeting was also of the opinion that it was not politic to dilute its current aim of the Edinburgh to Berwick local rail service with the Haddington aim.

# Safe Travel on the East Coast Line

In October secure station status was renewed at all 12 of East Coast's 12 managed stations – every one was re-accredited with Secure Stations status for a further two years.

The Secure Stations scheme, which is run jointly by the Department for Transport and the British Transport Police (BTP), encourages rail firms to improve security at their managed stations and demonstrate measures to reduce crime.

The national scheme covers all rail and underground networks which are patrolled by the British Transport Police.

To achieve Secure Stations status, the operator must demonstrate robust controls that provide enhanced training, recruitment and risk assessment. There must be evidence of working closely with the BTP to combat crime as well as engaging with stakeholders to improve the station environment for all who use it.

The stations which have renewed Secure Stations status until September 2014 are: Dunbar, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Newcastle, Durham, Darlington, York, Wakefield Westgate, Doncaster, Retford, Newark North Gate, Grantham and Peterborough.

East Coast Stations and Property Director Tim Hedley-Jones said: "We're delighted that all 12 East Coast managed stations have been re-accredited with Secure Stations status.

"Train travel is already one of the safest ways to get around. Continued Secure Stations status means extra peace of mind for our passengers and staff.

"The renewal of secure status at all our managed stations underlines our commitment to maintain a safe and secure environment for passengers as they travel."

British Transport Police Assistant Chief Constable Alan Pacey said: "I would like to congratulate East Coast on re-accreditation of all their stations under the Secure Stations scheme.

"We all want people to use the rail network: it's a fast, efficient and green way to travel. We know from surveys that personal security is a key issue for passengers, and this award is a tangible sign to them that East Coast and everyone involved with their stations is committed to their safety and security."

# Meet the Managers at Dunbar

The November "Meet the Manager" event at Dunbar station was attended by Barrie Forrest and Allison Cosgrove from RAGES and by Morag Haddow from Sustaining Dunbar. We asked about Dunbar services and East Coast's commitment to retaining these, highlighted by the decrease in East Coast stops at Dunbar over recent years. Although Dunbar is an East Coast station, it is now a minority operator. Managers stated their commitment to Dunbar Station.

Morag Haddow kindly showed the visitors around the garden area and the notice boards put in place by Sustaining Dunbar. She advised of the large number of cyclists in the area and that Dunbar Primary had the largest proportion of children cycling to school in Scotland; however there was difficulty in accessing Dunbar Station because of the lack of a suitable pathway.

The visit coincided with train stops, and several passengers had queries: from lack of East Coast trains to provision of a screen in the waiting room.

## Membership

We now have around 160 members from around the counties.

Please encourage your neighbours or fellow passengers to join RAGES.

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

# Dunbar Service Scenarios in Severe Weather

When in December 2010, Dunbar was by-passed due to heavy snow falls, RAGES and our local MP and MSP raised the situation with Network Rail. In November 2011, Network Rail intimated a new approach to the Key Route Strategy (KRS) implementation in such conditions.

At the recent East Coast “Meet the Managers” event at Dunbar, Barrie inquired of the managers present what the current situation was.

East Coast replied with three scenarios for extreme weather plan:

In the first scenario, the weather is so extreme that no access is available to Dunbar station from the mainline. This is likely to mean that roads in the surrounding area are blocked which means that Network Rail resources cannot get to the station and thus the points will be maintained on the mainline so as not to allow trains to access the station.

In the second scenario, there may have been falls of snow but they are not severe and allow the full service serving Dunbar to be provided. In this scenario, Network Rail is able to allocate adequate resource to keep the points operating.

In the third scenario, the weather is more extreme than in the second but not as extreme as in the first, which means that access to the station is possible by Network Rail resources. However, that resource may be needed elsewhere on the rail network in Scotland. In this scenario there would be manning of the points at the start and the end of the day to allow East Coast's extreme weather contingency timetable to work and to offer the following service:

(I) Morning - East Coast 1F01 09:18 DOWN depart, CrossCountry 1V56 09:28 UP depart, East Coast 1F02 10:23 DOWN depart; and

(II) Evening - CrossCountry 1S45 17:42 DOWN depart, East Coast 1G23/1G44 17:57 UP depart, CrossCountry 1M00 18:25 UP depart, East Coast 1G24/48 18:57 UP depart.

[Ed: Note that Down means northbound into Edinburgh and Up means southbound]

While clearly the exact circumstances of the weather will depend on how Network Rail and East Coast/CrossCountry are able to react to extreme weather, it is hoped the above scenarios demonstrate that they have the potential to put in place a more robust service for Dunbar during extreme weather in the future.

## School Interest in Railways

### Safety Poster

First ScotRail recently announced that an East Lothian schoolgirl's colourful safety poster will be displayed at 300 stations across Scotland, after she clinched victory in a nationwide competition.

Longniddry Primary School pupil Anna Monaghan's eye-catching design came top in a contest as part of ScotRail's high-profile SafeStations campaign – which aims to reduce the number of trips, slips and falls at stations.

Her artwork features ScotRail's cartoon characters 'Scratch and the Train Gang', and Anna's slogan: 'Don't be silly, please watch out, keep really safe, and travel about!'

ScotRail staff visited the school to present the primary five pupil with a copy of her poster and £50 in vouchers in front of teachers, fellow pupils and her mother Ailsa.

Anna, aged nine and from Longniddry, said: "It's a brilliant surprise to have won, and it's really exciting that my poster will be displayed at so many stations."

Headteacher Miss Sheona Skinner, said: "We are delighted for Anna, and very proud of her achievement.

"We hope her poster encourages children across Scotland to take extra care when travelling by train."

ScotRail's SafeStations campaign follows more than 650 injuries caused by trips, slips and falls at ScotRail stations since April 2009.

Although the numbers are steady year-on-year, and the vast majority were minor incidents, ScotRail is determined to urge customers – and especially children – to take extra care.

Linda Gallacher, ScotRail's head of customer service delivery and standards, said: "We love Anna's design and hope customers will too. It perfectly captures the aims of the campaign, by highlighting safety issues in a fun and engaging way."

The poster is being rolled out at stations this month.

As well as the poster competition, the SafeStations campaign includes: videos on the train operator's YouTube channel; ScotRail and British Transport Police safety talks at schools; downloadable safety education packs, including sheet music, for teachers, and; stickers and colouring-in books for children.

### School Project

A sixth year student studying Advanced Higher Geography at the Berwickshire High School e-mailed RAGES asking for information.

"I am doing an investigation on The Growth and Changes of Reston and Ayton villages. I was interested to know about the proposed re-opening of Reston station in the future. I was wondering what stage the plans were at and what your arguments are for re-opening it. I imagine if the plans do go ahead then it could have an effect on the future growth of Reston."

Our Reston representative, Barrie Forerst, replied to her.

# Obituaries

It is with deep sadness that RAGES announces the deaths of two of our Reston members.

## Ray Stringer

Ray was a former Chairman of Reston and Auchencrow Community Council. He was chairman at the Reston Open Meeting held in September 1999 which was attended by members of Scottish Borders Council, RAGES committee members and the people of the Reston area who were supporting the re-opening of Reston station. Over one hundred members of the public attended.

## Albert Edward Clemit

Ted was also a former Chairman of Reston and Auchencrow Community Council. He was a former railwayman having started as a porter then signaller in Yorkshire. Latterly he was Station Master at Chathill. Ted later took up teaching and was also a former Mayor of Berwick.

Our thoughts are with both families at this sad time.

# ScotRail's Club 55's Conditions Changed

ScotRail has advised RAGES that its new Club 55 offer, which means people aged 55 and over can have return journeys on ScotRail services in Scotland for just £19, will run from 14 January to 28 March 2013.

Travel to and from Carlisle is also available.

However, it also noted that:

“Club 55 has previously included travel on selected East Coast services, with restrictions on Sundays.

“Regrettably, East Coast has on this occasion required additional restrictions over and above their existing Sunday restrictions.

“These additional restrictions included a 10-day exception on East Coast services during the half-term holidays - a popular period for rail travel.

“The number and complexity of restrictions requested by East Coast would have made the deal unworkable - and particularly confusing for customers.

“This means that ScotRail is no longer able to offer travel to and from Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

“However, people can use Club 55 tickets on ScotRail services between Edinburgh-North Berwick and Edinburgh-Dunbar.”

One of Club 55's key attractions - in addition to being excellent value - is its simplicity, providing a flat fare for return journeys across Scotland.

ScotRail also said it hoped to work with East Coast again on future Club 55 offers.

Our chairman, Tom Thorburn, wrote to East Coast, noting that RAGES have received a number of e-mails from members registering their disappointment of not being able to use East Coast Trains from Berwick upon Tweed and asked that the constraints be withdrawn in readiness for the next round of ScotRail's Club 55 tickets.

In response, East Coast said: “We regret the decision taken by ScotRail to withdraw East Coast from the Club 55 scheme.

“East Coast requested one restriction to be added, which would have meant Club 55 would not be available on East Coast services within Scotland plus to/from Berwick, during the half-term school holidays. As a long-distance rail operator which carries many thousands of passengers on leisure journeys, we made this responsible request to prevent overcrowding, and to preserve the quality of service for all our customers. Unfortunately this request was refused by ScotRail.

“Despite this outcome, we hope to work with ScotRail on future joint promotions to benefit everyone travelling by rail, including to and from Berwick.”

Tom also wrote to First ScotRail and East Coast noting that Club 55 is allowed on CrossCountry from Dunbar but not Berwick. First ScotRail replied that “... the flows out of this location are ‘owned’ by East Coast and as such ScotRail cannot offer the fare there.”

# Subscriptions by Bankers Order

It is a few years since we promoted the paying of the RAGES subscription through the bank, so members will find included with this copy of *The Rages Rag* is a bankers order form. If you already use this method of payment, then thank you. If not please consider completing the form and presenting it to your bank prior to 1st April when your subscription is due for renewal. Full instructions are included on the reverse of the form. It would be helpful if you let the membership secretary know that you had done so by e-mailing him at [information@rages.org.uk](mailto:information@rages.org.uk)