

# The RAGES Rag

APRIL 2015, Issue 64



The newsletter of the Rail Action Group, East of Scotland, bringing members up-to-date with progress on improvements to local rail services.

*(left: East Coast Virgin Class 225 train passing Burnmouth, showing new livery. Photograph: B. Forrest)*

Follow us on  Twitter @RailActionGrpES  [www.facebook.com/RailActionGroup](http://www.facebook.com/RailActionGroup)

## RAGES Meeting with Abellio

### MEETING WITH ABELLIO

**RAGES** invited **Abellio** to discuss the new franchise with regard to our area which is due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Mike Kean, UK Rail Business Development Director (Bid Director for ScotRail) and John Shannon (Lead Timetabler) attended a meeting of the committee recently.

### GENERAL

The new name for the **Abellio** ScotRail franchise will be ScotRail, i.e. without **Abellio** in front as was the case with First. Instead there would be signs at stations and on train doors showing "Operated by **Abellio**".

As agreed in the ScotRail and East Coast franchises, **Abellio** will take over the running of Dunbar Station from late June 2015. This was a priced option during the franchise bid which **Abellio** priced and Transport Scotland has accepted. We are assured that the

*(continued on p2)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. RAGES Meeting with Abellio
2. 'All Change' - Franchise Change Details
3. East Linton Station Site Map Correction
4. 'Meeting the Manager' - Jonny Holdcroft, Stakeholder Communications Manager, East Coast Trains
5. Edinburgh-Newcraighall Service Improvements
6. Dunbar Station Audit by The ELCRP
7. Letter from Claire Perry (Under Secretary of State, Department for Transport)
8. Clifford Campbell Retirement
9. Meeting with Transport Scotland

(continued from p1)

only difference will be the change of uniform.

The current **CrossCountry** service from Dunbar to Edinburgh leaving at 07:00 will be carried out by **ScotRail** with a timing such that the passengers can connect with the **CrossCountry** service to Glasgow which will now start at Edinburgh.

#### **PRICED OPTION**

The local service to Berwick was also priced by **Abellio** and accepted by Transport Scotland. Extension of this service to Newcastle was not accepted.

There was some disappointment round the table when Mike announced that the local service could not start until the December 2018 timetable, due to lack of stock. This prompted the production of the letter from Keith Brown MSP, the previous incumbent of Minister for Transport, to the **RAGES** Chairman, where he said "*... I look forward to being able to confirm funding for the stations, and to their construction, with services operating from December 2016, that being the earliest realistic date.*"

**Abellio** confirmed that the service could include stops at all stations on the line between Edinburgh and Berwick including East Linton and Reston when built. We had our first look at the proposed timetable which does match the Transport Minister's promise of a two hourly service.

On weekdays, trains will leave Edinburgh at 06:31, 08:36, 10:33, 12:33, 14:35, 16:34, 18:34, 20:22

and 22:33 arriving at Berwick around 57 minutes later. Departures from Berwick will be at 07:41, 09:47, 11:50, 13:47, 15:47, 17:48, 19:47, 21:47, 23:44 arriving at Edinburgh some 58 minutes later. Note that there will be the Dunbar to Waverley service around 07:00.

On Sundays, there will be a three-hourly service from Edinburgh at 08:36, 11:36, 14:36, 17:36 and 20:36 with return services at 09:47, 12:47, 15:47, 18:47 and 21:51.

Timings between Edinburgh and Dunbar will be around 35 minutes with stops at all stations.

Achievement of these relatively fast timings is due the intention of using the new Hitachi class trains (currently known as 3nn until a number has been chosen) which will serve the main Glasgow-Edinburgh line (known as **EGIP**). As expected the announcement of the "delay" in the local service until December 2018 generated much discussion.

According to the **ScotRail** Franchise - Franchise Agreement between the Scottish Ministers and **Abellio ScotRail** Ltd, the service would require one additional EMU diagram to accomplish the two-hourly service and that the last date for exercising the priced option on order to maintain the price detailed in that document is 1st December 2018.

Mike confirmed that if Transport Scotland is so minded to finance this priced option earlier plus the funding of extra stock, **Abellio** would respond favourably.

#### **FARES**

These are yet to be decided, but it was pointed out that there were no off-peak fares on the Dunbar route. The current Club 55 tickets would be re-named and to start for passengers of 50 years and above.

#### **CAR PARK AND CYCLES**

**Abellio** were committed to providing 1000 extra car park spaces in Scotland, although none of these is in our area. The meeting noted that several stations in our area were full early in the day and passengers were parking on the roads outside of the stations.

**Abellio**'s cycle on-train strategy is still to be two reserved spaces per train. However, their approach is to provide more cycle spaces at stations where passengers arrive for a train and cycle hire at the end of their journey. To that end, **Abellio** has to supply 3500 extra cycle spaces at stations: Drem increased from 10 to 22; Dunbar from 12 to 62; and North Berwick from 18 to 30. Bike & Go facilities are to be introduced at 10 of 25 identified stations including Waverley, Haymarket, Edinburgh Park and Dunbar.

The difficulty at Dunbar for passengers wishing to transport surf boards on trains was highlighted.

#### **TRAIN OVERCROWDING**

The current 17:14 hrs train from Edinburgh to North Berwick is usually overcrowded and sometimes leaves passengers behind. It was noted that this is a 3-car 380. Given that **RAGES**

(continued on p3)

(Meeting with Abellio - concluded from p2)

has only recently been notified of this by members, Mike and John thought it was due to re-diagramming of 380s in December when they were introduced to additional Glasgow services.

### **HADDINGTON**

It was brought to **Abellio**'s attention that one of **RAGES** aims which is being pursued is to have the branch to Haddington re-opened. It was pointed out the lack of success with the X7 some years ago to Newcraighall and last year's disappointing failure of the rail link to Wallyford. Mike noted that with another of their franchises, they operate buses from areas where there used to be stations to link with current stations.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**RAGES** are indebted to Mike and John for agreeing to come to meet **RAGES** when within three weeks their franchise would be starting.

### **RAGES RESPONSE AFTER THE MEETING**

Our chairman has written to the Minister for Transport, copied to "our" four MSPs, outlining "... our grievance that Abellio informed us they will NOT start the service until Dec 2018 as this is when the new electric units supplied by Hitachi will be delivered" and asking for a meeting with him to discuss this situation.

## 'All Change' – Franchise Change Details



**Left:** Driver David & Guard Ruth alongside Scotrail train at Dunbar, showing new livery (Photograph: B. Forrest)



**Right:** Crosscountry train at Berwick-upon-Tweed, showing new station sign (Photograph: B. Forrest)

### **ALL CHANGE**

This year has seen several changes to the rail franchises in Scotland.

On 1st March, **Virgin Trains East Coast** took over the east coast main line franchise, whilst the **ScotRail** one was split into two on 1st April: the Sleeper service to **Serco**; and the rest to **Abellio**.

### **EAST COAST SERVICE**

As reported in the last issue of our newsletter, **Inter City Railways**, a consortium of **Stagecoach** and **Virgin** was awarded the franchise

for the East Coast Main Line. Transfer took place apparently seamlessly on 1st March. They operate under the name **Virgin Trains East Coast** and gradually their trains will be repainted as shown in this excellent shot of a southbound train to Kings Cross passing Burnmouth taken by our Reston representative, Barrie Forrest.

In one of their press releases, the management said:

*"Our passengers are already set to benefit from hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of infrastructure investment and service improvements over the next decade. We now have a first rate team in place and are ready to listen to our*

*(continued on p4)*

## **'All Change' - Franchise Change** Details continued from p3)

customers as we deliver thousands of extra seats, faster journeys, new trains, better value fares and investment in our people.

"Over £140 million will be invested in the new franchise delivering major improvements for customers. Stagecoach and Virgin have exciting plans to transform the on-train experience and deliver a more personalised service, with at-seat food ordering from the buffet car and hot food available to passengers in Standard Class. Passengers will also benefit from new trains, an improved timetable with faster journeys and better connections, more services to new destinations, better value fares, new technology and a range of station and accessibility enhancements."

### **SCOTRAIL**

Also reported in our last newsletter was the announcement that **Abellio** had been awarded the **ScotRail** franchise minus the Sleeper Service which had been separate for bidding purposes.

As seen elsewhere in this issue of The **RAGES** Rag, **RAGES** met representatives of **Abellio** to discuss the future of the service as it affects our area.

Our photograph, at Dunbar, shows the new door signs announcing **Abellio** as operators. The livery shown is gradually being adopted over the entire fleet with, apart from these door signs, it being devoid of who the franchisee is.

### **CALEDONIAN SLEEPER**

**Serco** took this service over on the night of 31st March. Their web site gives an insight into their vision:

*"An exciting new Caledonian Sleeper service now operates between London and Scotland. The new Sleeper service sees guests arrive at the heart of their destination refreshed and ready to go. Serco has been chosen by the Scottish Government as the new operator, with a vision for the Sleeper to be a modern, revitalised overnight travel and hospitality experience between world famous destinations in Scotland and London.*

*This is an iconic Scottish railway journey available for all - from backpackers to business travellers.*

*At the heart of the new service is outstanding hospitality that is emblematic of the best of Scotland, benefiting Scottish businesses from Shetland to Stranraer and from Stornoway to Stonehaven showcasing the best of Scottish produce.*

*From 2018, the Caledonian Sleeper will take a leap forward thanks to an investment of over £100million in 75 new state-of-the-art carriages.*

On board, guests will enjoy:

- . **En-suite berths for the First Class guests**
- . **Improved Standard Class berths**
- . **New pod flat-beds for affordable comfort**
- . **Cradle seats for Standard Class guests**
- . **Luxurious new Brasserie Club Car**
- . **Films and TV available via free WiFi**

Renowned Edinburgh-based designer Ian Smith is creating a contemporary environment for the carriages, bringing our guests a travel experience to rival any in the world.

And we're not just improving the train itself. We're completely overhauling all aspects - including sales, guest services and station facilities.

This includes:

- . **Installation of guest information totems at each of the 48 stops**
- . **Onward travel information**
- . **Free station WiFi access for all guests"**

## **Correction to East Linton Station Site Map**

East Lothian Council has pointed out that the **RAGES** website has a small plan showing East Linton station with vehicle access from the north. Whilst the plan helps to explain the location generally there will not be provision for the north for vehicle drop off or the likes. Full and detailed development of the station by Network Rail will only include access road access to the station from the south.

**RAGES** apologises for using an out of date map, which also featured in our last newsletter.

## ‘Meeting the Manager’: Jonny Holdcroft

On Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February, **RAGES** Tom Thorburn and Barrie Forrest had separate meetings with Jonny Holdcroft, Stakeholder Communications Manager for **East Coast Trains**, at which a number of issues were raised. A subsequent e-mail was sent by Tom to Jonny summarizing these meetings, and the text of this is reproduced below:-

*“It was good for Barrie and myself to meet with you at Berwick and Dunbar respectively on Tuesday 13th Feb. I would appreciate if you can have the items below that we both discussed with you addressed.*

### **Dunbar**

*The requirement for a London bound train call around mid morning to midday to allow passengers from East Lothian with young families and/or luggage the opportunity to get to London. Presently those passengers are having to drive to Berwick to catch a train. Some twenty minutes after we*

*met, I was informed of a Dunbar resident booking London tickets from Berwick.*

*Similarly, the above passengers require a return northbound service from London around the same time of mid morning to midday.*

*The car park is in serious need of being extended as there are no spaces after 08:00 and Countess Road is overcrowded as a result, much to the annoyance of residents.*

*Since the Eureka timetable was introduced in 2010, it is impossible to travel to/from Berwick from Dunbar - it would be good if East Coast could liaise with Cross Country to achieve better connectivity between those two stations.*

*Fares - fares are too expensive from Dunbar, more so for peak services. Offers in line with those offered to the larger stations such as Edinburgh and Newcastle are required at Dunbar.*

*Positive and appreciated point was that East Coast had coaches on standby at Dunbar during the storms of Friday 10th Jan. Thankfully these were not required.*

### **Berwick**

*Car parking is a major problem at this station after 08:00. Space at the opposite side of the track could be utilised?*

*Ticket Office opening hours require to be re-instated to those previously enjoyed. Currently passengers for long periods are faced with no staff to make enquiries with, and not everyone likes or is at ease with ticket machines.*

*Berwick fares are far too expensive, a quick check of the web reveals that walk on fares from/ to this station are staggering.*

*Berwick requires a Saturday night service from Edinburgh (as does Alnmouth, Morpeth and Newcastle) as the current last service of 19:00 is quite ridiculous - there are no other major stations on the East Coast network that have last trains at this time.*

*All of the Committee are very impressed with East Coast Station Staff at both stations who are all very helpful and pleasant.*

*I look forward to hearing from you in response to our meeting.”*

## Edinburgh-Newcraighall Service Improvements

**ScotRail**'s summer 2015 timetable will see a new Sunday service between Edinburgh Waverley and Newcraighall for the first time - from Sunday 17 May. The enhanced timetable will deliver an hourly service departing

Edinburgh Waverley at 09:11, then at 11 minutes past each hour until 23:11. In the opposite direction, trains will depart Newcraighall at 30 minutes past the hour. The first service will leave at 09:30 and the

last at 23:30.

This would have happened from early September when the Borders Rail opens, but it is good to see this service earlier.

# Dunbar Station Audit by The ELCRP



The above photo shows the **East Lothian Community Rail Partnership** (ELCRP) steering group on their station audit at Dunbar Station on 19th March.

The **East Lothian Community Rail Partnership** is a coalition of **East Lothian Council**, the **Association of Community Rail Partnerships**, **ScotRail**, and **local community**

**groups** who are working to improve the environment around train stations, provide better links between stations and the population they serve, and increase passenger numbers between North Berwick/Dunbar and Edinburgh Waverley.

On Thursday 19th of March the steering group conducted an audit

of all stations along the route, looking at current station facilities and signage and identifying where these can be improved.

The group can be contacted via Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/eastlothiancrp](http://www.facebook.com/eastlothiancrp)

*(Photograph: J. Yellowlees, Scotrail External Relations Manager)*



**Left: East Coast Stagecoach/Virgin train** passing Reston, showing new livery (Photograph: B. Forrest)

## Letter from Claire Perry

**RAGES** member Alison Cosgrove, in her capacity of Chair of Railfuture Scotland, recently sent a letter to Claire Perry, Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, seeking assurance that East Coast mainline services to Dunbar would not be reduced as a result of the new franchise awarded to Stagecoach/Virgin. Claire's response is reproduced below:-  
"Thank you for your e-mail of 5 January, regarding the possibility of a reduction in East Coast Mainline services to Dunbar. I must apologise for the length of time it has taken for this

*response to be forthcoming. As I believe you were informed by Stagecoach, there were no plans for such a reduction, and as the timetable of the new Virgin Trains East Coast franchise has shown, there is no reduction in the service provision for Dunbar. I believe the new franchise is a good thing for passengers, and that those from Dunbar will not be left out in receiving the benefits that the new franchise will bring. Please accept my sincerest apologies once again for the lateness of this response.*

Claire Perry"

## Clifford Campbell Retirement

At 2pm on Thursday 2/4/2015, Clifford Campbell retired after 35 years of loyal service at Dunbar station booking office. **RAGES** member Barrie Forrest was present to present a retirement card on behalf of the **RAGES** committee. The photograph below shows Clifford on the platform of Dunbar station with a Class 380 EMU forming the 12.50 service to Edinburgh. **RAGES** wishes Clifford all the best in his retirement.

(Photograph: B. Forrest)

## Meeting with Transport Scotland

In response to complaints that the Edinburgh to Berwick local service may not start until Dec 2018, the Transport Minister's office wrote to **RAGES** informing them to arrange a meeting with the Transport Scotland Rail Policy Team at Buchanan House, Glasgow.

Recently, the **RAGES** Chairman and Vice Chairman were joined by MSPs Iain Gray and Paul Wheelhouse and Councillors Joan Campbell and Paul McLennan.

The meeting opened by informing the Rail Policy Team that there was a lot of very unhappy people in the East Lothian, East Berwickshire and Berwick areas. The reason behind this unhappiness was the news they received from **RAGES** that **Abellio** management stated that the local service could not start for some two years after the date of Dec 2016 which the Transport Minister had



given.

A lot of discussion took place around the issue of shortage of rolling stock to run the service and the progress of planning and construction of East Linton and Reston Stations to bring things back as close as possible to the original 2016 date.

On conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that **RAGES** would write to Transport Scotland, Rail Policy

Team, for defined detail of the station planning through to opening and that six-monthly meetings would take place at Buchanan House.

**RAGES** are very grateful to Iain, Joan, Paul and Paul for giving up their time to attend this meeting during the run up to the General Election as well as the written support from MSPs Jim Hume and John Lamont.

**RAGES** works to

- Improve the rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Have East Linton and Reston stations re-opened for active use.
- Improve the level of service to North Berwick.
- Consider the implications with regard to car parking and bicycle storage at stations between Waverley and Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- 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.
- 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.



**RAGES** needs your support

**RAGES** (Rail Action Group, East of Scotland) is the rail users campaign group for the area between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed, including the North Berwick service.

Our aim is to persuade the Government, both at national and local level, train operators and Network Rail to improve the level of service to stations in our area and to seriously consider re-opening key stations such as East Linton, Reston and Haddington.

***Please join us to lend your support.***

Membership will give you a say in how we influence the rail companies to improve local train services. Additionally you will get up-to-date information on significant changes in rail matters, and a regular newsletter.

The annual subscription is £4 for individual membership or £10 for corporate membership, such as community councils and organisations, and is renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year.

Please send your completed form with your remittance (made payable to Rail Action Group, East of Scotland) to:

Mr R J Darling  
 Membership Secretary (RAGES)  
 5 Somnerfield Crescent  
 Haddington  
 EH41 3RW

I enclose my first RAGES membership fee of £4 / £10\*. (\* Delete as applicable)

Title ..... Surname ..... Forename(s) .....

Company .....

Address .....

.....

Post Code .....  Telephone .....

Email .....