

# The Rages Rag



Newsletter of Rail Action Group, East of Scotland



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

Issue No. 55 - October 2012

[www.facebook.com/RailActionGroup](http://www.facebook.com/RailActionGroup)

## Further Saturday Services between Dunbar and Edinburgh

It has been announced that enhanced rail services will begin from Sunday, December 9 to allow thousands of passengers to enjoy better connectivity and new journey opportunities. Operated by ScotRail, the new winter timetable will see four new Saturday services introduced between Dunbar and Edinburgh to match the weekday service.

Starting on Saturday 15 December 2012, these will be departing from Edinburgh Waverley at 10:08, 12:08, 14:08 and 16:08 with returns from Dunbar at 11:04, 13:04, 15:04, 17:07. All trains will stop at Musselburgh.

At the time of announcement, the Transport Minister Keith Brown said in respect of all the enhanced services in Scotland: "Rail travel in Scotland is on the rise as more people come to realise the benefits of letting the train take the strain.

"The Scottish Government has an absolute commitment to rail services and to doing all we can to encourage more people on to the trains with all the benefits that entails – less congestion on the roads, a reduction in carbon emissions and

increased job and investment opportunities.

"These service enhancements will encourage new passengers to travel by rail for commuting educational and leisure, opportunities and help current passengers to get out earlier, stay out later and get around more frequently."

Steve Montgomery, ScotRail's managing director, also said: "The new timetable provides real benefits by improving frequency, journey times and connections on routes across the country.

"It underpins our focus on delivering more services and encourages more people than ever to switch to rail."

The full press release showing enhancements across the country can be seen at:

<http://transportscotland.gov.uk/news/New-services-for-winter-timetable>

Tom Thorburn, RAGES Chairman, said: "... this is terrific news from First ScotRail that Dunbar will be getting these new Saturday Services."

## MVA Consultancy Invited to Community Council Meetings

MVA Consultancy, who are instructed to do the Stag 2 Study for East Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils to bring a local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed with the re-opening of East Linton and Reston Stations, were invited to attend the September meetings of both Duppender and Reston and Auchencrow Community Councils.

### Duppender

A representative from MVA Consultancy attended Duppender Community Council on 6th September. He explained that the reason for the second STAG was to explore alternatives to rail services as this had not been fully covered in the earlier STAG. Allison Cosgrove, Transport Spokesperson, outlined the economic, environmental and social benefits to East Linton that re-opening the station would bring, stressing the amount of traffic that would be taken off the A199/A1, with particular reference to the Sheriffhall roundabout and Oldcraighall junction which were already at capacity during peak hours. Available parking at East Linton station would also assist with parking at Drem, the nearest station, where car parking has now overflowed into the village causing congestion.

Bus services to and from East Linton were also discussed. There are three current providers, two on the Dunbar to Edinburgh route and one on the Dunbar-North Berwick route. Some services were better than others, but none had the

frequency that other towns and villages in East Lothian enjoyed.

It was disappointing to note that Network Rail were not progressing the development of Foggo's Yard in Dunbar to allow more car parking, but station parking at East Linton could alleviate pressure in Dunbar from Stenton rail users.

The potential of including rail information in promoting East Linton as a tourism destination was also mentioned. With the development of the John Muir Way, many walkers come to the village and this could be a useful addition to the tourist experience.

Go to page 3

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

#### Inside Issue 55:

- Our 13th AGM - Page 2
- EC Managers at Berwick - Page 2
- News Snippets - Page 3
- New Web Site - Page 4

The editor invites contributions which should be sent to him at the "Published by" address at the foot of page 4.

# RAGES 13th Annual General Meeting

This year's annual general meeting was held on 12 September in the West Barns Bowling Club when twelve members attended.

Chairman, Tom Thorburn, welcomed all present and read out a list of apologies.

The minutes of the 12th annual general meeting were accepted.

Tom Thorburn then spoke on the year's activities.

Within a month of last year's AGM, the long awaited MVA Consultancy Edinburgh and Newcastle Rail Service Consultation was published. Sadly, this study did not cover all the requirements that would have shown a greater patronage from the existing and new stations covered by the study, i.e. Visit Scotland and Community Councils were not contacted to gauge their passenger number and comments. Due to this, the subsidy required to provide the Edinburgh to Berwick local service with East Linton and Reston re-opened would be in the order of £2 to £2.5m. RAGES committee members met with the Transport Minister, Keith Brown MSP, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November to discuss the MVA Consultation and were somewhat shocked to find out that as the study was not to STAG 2 level and that a further study would be required to bring it up to the required status. However, the Minister was positive to our plight and visited East Linton, Reston and Eyemouth to see for himself the benefits that the local rail service will bring. A Parliamentary debate was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March which the committee and members attended. This, very pleasingly, had total cross party support for our local service.

Persistence pays dividends so they say and everyone was delighted when First ScotRail agreed to run a late night Saturday service to Dunbar from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2011 which also calls at Musselburgh. This service is bedding-in well and has been extremely busy during the Edinburgh Festival. The group continues to press for this service to be extended to Berwick.

After some nine months of requesting a meeting with East Coast to discuss: the shortcomings of services which were brought about by Eureka; the requirement for a mid morning service to Kings Cross; ticketing; trains by-passing Dunbar; car parking/charges etc., we finally met with Karen Boswell, East Coast Managing Director, on 19<sup>th</sup> March in Dunbar. Sadly very little positive actions came out of this meeting other than being told we should request these during the new franchise consultation.

Following on with the MVA additional study, the East Lothian Council hosted meetings thrashed out agreement where the two Councils, East Lothian and Scottish Borders, would jointly pay for this study to bring it up to STAG 2 status.

The committee continues: to meet our MSPs to argue the case for further investment in Rail; to also press our aims with Railfuture; to attend relevant rail conferences. The quarterly meetings continue with SEStran, with these have been hosted by Councillors McLennan and Veitch at East Lothian Council.

At the end of his report, Tom thanked the Committee for their work during the year.

A vote of thanks was also proposed to Tom for continuing to carry out his excellent work as Chair.

## Other Reports

Allison Cosgrove, secretary, reported on submissions for the East Coast Main Line franchise. She also noted that the

Minister for Transport had been interviewed on Reporting Scotland that morning.

The Treasurer presented the audited accounts which were accepted.

In his membership report, Russell Darling reported that the membership currently stood at 152, which was 10 less than this time last year. Only 85% of last year's members had renewed their subscriptions, disappointingly less than this time last year. This percentage represents a loss of 26 members compared with last year's 3, but since the last AGM we had recruited eight new members. However, at our last committee meeting, it was decided that he should write to this year's lapsed members urging them to re-join and had been done.

Reston members again outnumber all other station areas, but along with Dunbar the two together still represent well over half of our membership at 60%.

RAGES now has eight community councils as members: Haddington and District; Cockenzie and Port Seton; North Berwick; West Barns and District; Dunpender; Reston and Auchencrow; Coldingham; and, recently, Eyemouth Town Community Council. East Lothian Conservatives; the Queen Margaret University; and Sustaining Dunbar are also corporate members. Russell noted that he had had an enquiry from Dunbar Community Council.

The use of banker's orders as a method of subscription payment went well again this year.

The e-membership card was continued as a form of acknowledgement of receipt of a member's subscription. Of the 144 members, 114 had their acknowledgement in this manner - a saving of stationery and stamps.

As usual four Rages Rags were published during the last year and the editor was grateful to the committee who take it in turns to distribute them.

Electronic Newsletters continue to be sent on an ad-hoc basis to all members for whom there is an e-mail address.

## Web Site Report

The web site was updated regularly and occasionally a new member is gained via the web site membership form.

However, after 12 years of free web site hosting by British Telecomms, our ISP, they are starting to charge for the service. It has been decided to move the hosting to a local company and Russell is in the process of setting that up. He is also taking the opportunity to re-design the web site. Once complete, an announcement about its re-launch would be made via an e-rag.

## Election of Office Bearers

Having being advised by the Chair that all committee members were willing to stand again, the meeting proposed that the Committee be re-elected *en bloc*.

However, the Treasurer indicated that he would undertake his role until 31 March 2013 and would then wish to stand down.

## General Discussion

During the discussion, Russell Darling noted that the profile of re-opening Haddington station had been raised again with the Haddington ward councillors. It was considered that a public meeting might be helpful to gauge interest.

It was confirmed that RAGES was now on Facebook. [Ed - the Facebook symbol now features in our masthead along with a QR code (for smartphones) pointing to our web site]

# Community Council Meetings

From page 1

## Reston and Auchencrow

The September meeting of Reston and Auchencrow Community Council was also attended by MVA Consultancy.

Councillors from Scottish Borders Council who had arranged for MVA to attend the meeting were present along with local Community Councillors from Eyemouth, Coldingham, St Abbs and a member from SEStran. Berwickshire MSPs, John Lamont and Paul Wheelhouse, who support the opening of the stations and a local rail service, were also present.

MVA said that one of the alternatives they had to look at was bus travel which was instantly turned down by the communities who made it very clear that they wanted a rail

service.

Community Council Chairperson's from Coldingham, St. Abbs, Eyemouth and members of the public all spoke of the need of Reston station and the benefits it would bring to East Berwickshire including commuting to work, college, university and what Berwickshire has to offer for the visitors to this area.

As Vice Chairman of Reston and Auchencrow Community Council and Rages, Barrie Forrest attended with RAGES Chairman, Tom Thorburn. They were both pleased to see so many people from other communities giving their support and would like to thank all present for that support, as well as Scottish Borders Council for arranging for MVA to attend and finally, Reston and Auchencrow Community Council for their support and hosting of the meeting.

## Meet the Managers at Berwick

Barrie Forrest attended a recent "Meet the Manager" event at Berwick-upon-Tweed station. These are organised by train operator East Coast and allows customers who use their service to hear what they have to say and discuss any problems and improvements.

Present at this event were Louise Rutherford, Station Manager for Newcastle and Berwick, and Tim Thompson, Duty Station Manager. When Barrie gave them an update on RAGES, they did not know much about us! However, the reason became clear when it was explained that Berwick station was previously managed from personnel in Edinburgh, but recently has come under management from Newcastle.

After talking about RAGES which included the visit of Karen Boswell, Managing Director of East Coast, to Dunbar,

Barrie expressed his concerns about the new franchise. He hoped that the present East Coast services at Berwick would be maintained with no more reductions. Although Dunbar is not part of their area, he explained the need for a mid-morning East Coast London train to stop at Dunbar.

The team announced that there are future plans to make Berwick station more attractive with flowers and a re-painting.

Barrie would like to thank the managers for their hospitality, as well as the staff at Berwick station whom he always finds friendly and ready to help at all times.

## News Snippets

Our chairman has responded on behalf of RAGES to the Inter City East Coast replacement franchise consultation.

Tom also thanked Michael Moore MP for his recent support for Reston station in The Berwickshire News and asked if he could discuss with the Department of Transport and Network Rail the re-instatement of the northbound platform at Dunbar Station.

In a press request about the recent fare increases, our Chairman responded: "Rail Action Group, East of Scotland is disappointed to say the least with this latest hike in Train Fares. The purse strings of individuals budgets are 'stretched' enough without this additional financial burden being thrust upon them in these economic depressed times. Prior to this hike, we at the group received many challenges from members and public alike as to when we (the British passenger) were going to see a reduction in fares to that enjoyed by our Continental partners. This inflation bursting hike, albeit less in Scotland, is going to add much fuel to the argument of 'fairer fares' for British Railway Passengers. If Britain is to make any realistic attempt in its quest to reduce our Carbon Footprint, then the Government is going to have to invest in our Railways and not load all the cost of this investment via higher fares onto the passenger who wishes to use this greener form of travel."

ScotRail has unveiled a new poster at North Berwick station recalling the ups and downs of the area's railway history. The poster describes how the North Berwick Line has evolved from a Victorian steam railway to a modern commuter and leisure route. It has been designed by North Berwick in Bloom, which cares for the station's award-winning garden as part of ScotRail's Adopt a Station project.

Barrie Forrest, our vice-chairman and Reston representative, was interviewed for an article in the *East Lothian Life* magazine. The two page profile with photographs appears in the Autumn 2012 issue recently published, where it is headed "Heather Argent meets with Reston resident Barry [sic] Forrest and learns of his passion for R.A.G.E.S."

# New Web Site for RAGES

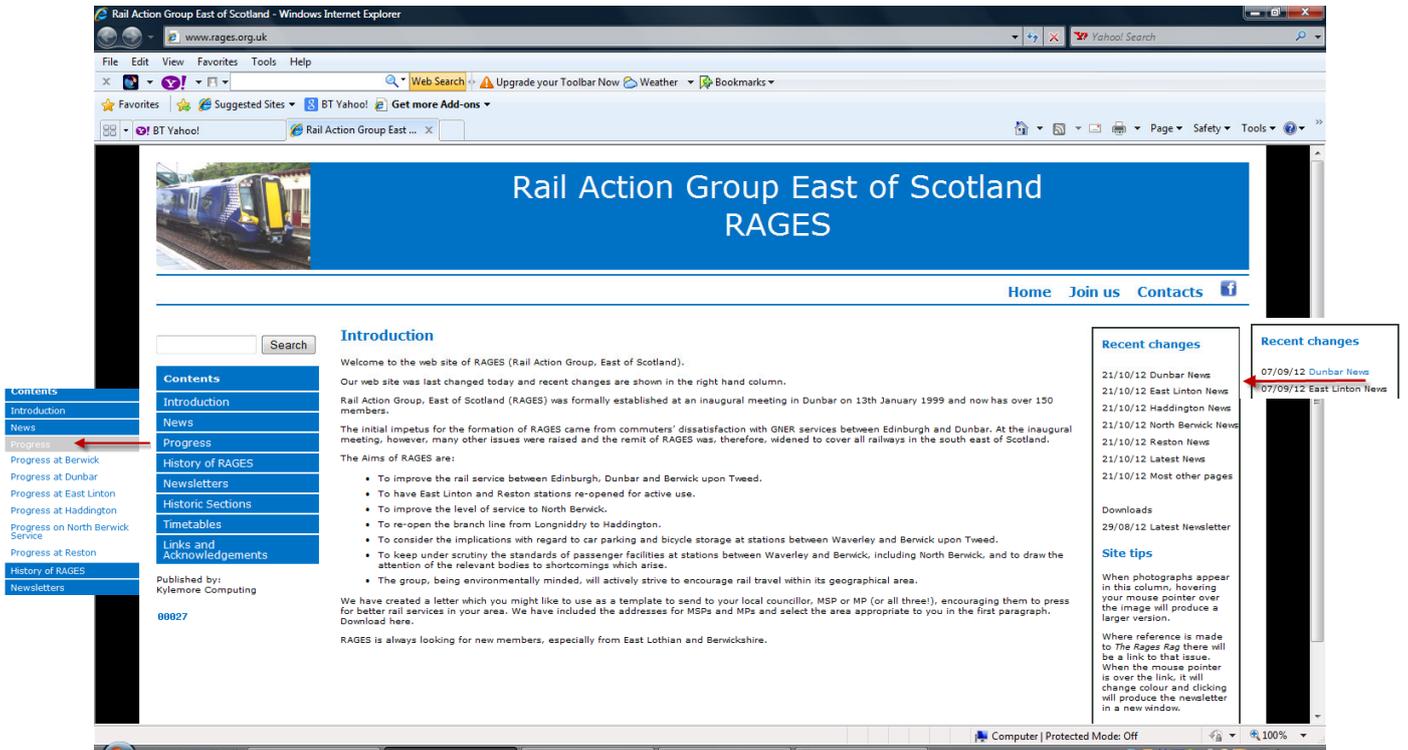
As announced at our last annual general meeting, BT's free web site hosting used by RAGES for over ten years is now being discontinued. As a result RAGES has decided to move the web site to a Haddington company called Cook Computing.

At the same time, the web site is being given a makeover as shown below.

Three columns are now used with the left-hand one being the menu to other pages; the right-hand column on the home page showing recent changes with links to the changed pages; and the centre column containing the main content.

Some of the left hand menus have concealed or drop-down menus and by hovering the mouse over one of these, the menu will drop down to reveal other links as seen in the inset screenshot (below bottom left). When the mouse is hovered over a menu item, its background changes to a shade of grey.

Where the mouse is hovered over words in the text which have links to other pages, the words will change to blue indicating



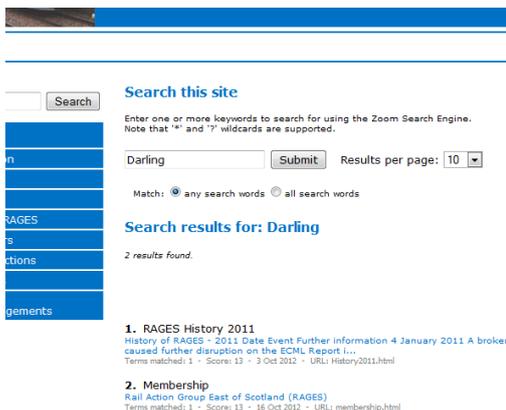
that a mouse-click will take you to a page with more detail on that subject. Where this is used for references to *The Rages Rag*, the relevant issue will open in a new window, thus preserving where you were before activating the link.

The blue link for a recent change to the Dunbar section is shown on the right hand inset above. [Ed: this may not be obvious on the black and white printed copy of this newsletter]

Most of the right-hand windows have photograph galleries showing images relevant to that page. When the mouse is hovered over an image, a larger version will be seen in the centre of the screen as seen on the right.

A new search mechanism has been implemented and appears at the top of the left-hand column as shown above. After pressing search, the search results will appear in a new window as seen below.

The search results page gives more options for further searches.



Clicking on a title in the search list will take you the relevant page. This may be another RAGES web page or a pdf file. These will not appear in a new window and by use of the "Back" button on your browser, you can return to the results page.

I have reset the counter which appears below the menus, but over the past twelve years of the web site, the original counter has reached almost 9700 hits.

Please look at the re-designed web site - [www.rages.org.uk](http://www.rages.org.uk) - and if there is anything which does not appear as you would expect or if there is something that could be added, then please e-mail [information@rages.org.uk](mailto:information@rages.org.uk)