

The Rages Rag

Newsletter of Rail Action Group, East of Scotland
Issue No. 1 - May 1999

Dunbar Open Meeting Success

At the Dunbar Open Meeting held on 19 March 1999, there were approximately 70 people present.

Our chairman, Tom Thorburn, welcomed the members and introduced the guests:

- Bob Bone, GNER, Customer Operations Manager North
- Anne Edgar, GNER, Train Services Delivery Manager for Scotland
- David Hansen, Secretary, Railway Development Society
- John Home Robertson, MP for East Lothian

In his introduction, John Home Robertson said that he was a regular user of GNER and recognised the need for better services. The rail industry is now more complicated than before with the large number of rail operators. He confirmed that the Government wishes the population to use public transport more and supports the move from road to rail. He reminded the audience that the East Lothian Council was doing a rail study. He finally commended RAGES for setting up the meeting and was happy to work with them to achieve their aims.

David Hansen reminded us that newly introduced services have been successful and highlighted the Bathgate service. He said that since the Beeching cuts, 300 new stations have been opened. The Railway Development Society welcomed the formation of local groups and strongly supported RAGES.

Our Vice Chairman, James King, then continued with the main aim of the meeting which was to discuss the various issues at stake. With the aid of overhead slides, he indicated each area of concern and GNER were asked to respond. Comments were

also raised from the floor.

Fare Evasion

Anne Edgar was extremely concerned about this matter and had thought that matters had improved recently. The floor had other views!

The following points were raised:

- As the trains are so busy, how can adequate checks be made?
- Lots of single tickets are sold. How do the passengers get back?
- No effort is made to count people and take tickets on the train.
- Numbers fall off at the end of the week.
- Unmanned stations are a curse.
- Additional ticket checks on board are not evident to passengers.
- Does GNER actually care about Dunbar revenue?

In response, Anne Edgar said they would take on board these criticisms.

Times of Services

Overhead slides were displayed showing service times and comments invited. The audience pointed to gaps in the service to Edinburgh, eg 09:45 and 13:06 and from then until 16:55. An evening out using rail transport to and from Edinburgh is impossible. In particular Saturdays and the Edinburgh

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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 reopening 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 reopen the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington.
- The group, being environmentally minded, will actively strive to encourage rail travel within its geographical area.

A members' meeting is being arranged for September 1999. Details will be in the next issue of the Rag.

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

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

Dunbar Open Meeting

Festival were highlighted. Also, there is no southbound departure earlier than 12:00 on a Sunday.

Bob Bone's response was the franchise requirement of 3 trains in each direction from Monday to Saturday had been doubled by GNER. Trains were running at near capacity and it was noted that it took 10 minutes of operating time to stop at Dunbar. He said that GNER has limited stock and that the terms of the franchise limited flexibility. As it was unlikely that GNER would be able to meet the requirements of Dunbar passengers, Bob Bone suggested that Virgin and ScotRail should be consulted. He was able to confirm that two new services were to be introduced 09:10 (Ed: but see Page 4) from Dunbar to Edinburgh and an 18:30 return. However, the 07:20 southbound from Dunbar would be withdrawn.

The following points were raised:

- There were more trains using the track in the past. Why not now?
- Availability of super APEX tickets from Dunbar.
- Could GNER not hire trains from ScotRail to fill in timetable gaps?
- Why are there only 3 trains from London to Dunbar?
- Will the new trains continue into the winter timetable?
- Uncertainty of certain London trains stopping at Dunbar.

In response to some of these points, Bob Bone replied that Railtrack has a problem over available capacity on the East Coast Main Line. Train overcrowding would be relieved by having the High Speed Train sets increased by one coach (to 9). This work has not been put out to contract yet.

Booking Office and Car Parking

Bob Bone apologised for the state of Dunbar station, but promised that the work would be completed by the end of April. There will be new toilets and baby-changing facilities, new entrance hall, waiting room with vending machines, new lighting, new canopy, new waiting shelter and the platform surface will be renewed. There will be 22

additional car parking spaces.

The following comments were raised, with GNER's response in brackets:

- Will there be a cycle rack? (No problem)
- The station approach road has recently posed a health and safety hazard since no passenger walkways were provided.
- Can an interchange with local bus services be provided? (Need to consult with the relevant bus operators)
- Can access to the station be provided from other directions, particularly from the west? (RAGES will pursue this)
- PA system inadequate. (Improvements are in hand)
- Queues at the ticket office are too long. (Ticket machines are being considered)
- Can the ticket office remain open until the last train arrives from Edinburgh? (This can be arranged)
- Why does the ticket office close early on Sundays? (GNER will investigate)
- Why do on-train staff not sell tickets at reduced rates when it can be seen that the ticket office is busy? (This problem will be addressed)
- One customer felt that GNER staff did not treat her correctly. (All GNER staff are trained to be courteous)
- More fare evasion takes place from Edinburgh to Dunbar than in the opposite direction!

Security

- It was felt that the present lack of security inhibited people from leaving their cars to travel southwards from Dunbar. It was essential that CCTV should be installed in the car park. (GNER agreed to provide CCTV)

Finally

GNER promised to take all the unanswered points back for further consideration and would respond to RAGES.

At the time of issuing this newsletter, this had not happened, but members will be informed as soon as a response is received.

Seen in ScotRail's Outlook

"You could also visit the attractive market town of Haddington, buses leave from Wallyford Station (service 106), every 20 minutes."

Surely, this state of affairs cries out for the Haddington branch to be re-opened?

Membership

We now have around 70 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.

Open Meeting at East Linton - Friday 28 May 1999

Should the station re-open?

Following its campaign to have the rail service to Dunbar improved, RAGES has now turned its attention to the re-opening of East Linton station. An Exhibition and Open Meeting has been arranged for 28th May, to which all potential rail users are encouraged to attend. It will be held in association with Dunpender Community Council at East Linton Village Hall. The exhibition will start at 18:30 hrs and the Open Meeting at 19:30 hrs.

The purpose of the Open Meeting is to provide a forum for members of the public to express their views on whether the train service needs to be re-instated. As a prelude to the meeting RAGES and Dunpender Community Council have distributed a Travel Survey to nearly 1000 households in the East Linton area on behalf of East Lothian Council, which strongly supports the



Photograph: H Stevenson

campaign to have the station re-opened.

Invitations to attend and speak at the meeting have been issued to ScotRail, RailTrack, East Lothian Council, the Railway Development Society and John Home Robertson, the local MP. The Rail Users Consultative Committee has also been invited to attend.

The station at East Linton was closed on 4th May 1964, since which time road congestion has increased dramatically, as has daily commuter travel to Edinburgh from the East Linton area.

Our photograph shows a heritage diesel multiple unit at East Linton during the last weeks of its public service. The service withdrawal notices can be seen

on the end wall of the station building at the bottom left.

We look forward to seeing all potential East Linton and surrounds rail users at the Open Meeting.

Railtrack Meeting

Since enrolling the group with the Rail Regulator on 25th November 1998, we now get regular mailings from Railtrack and ScotRail. In March we received an invitation from Railtrack Scotland to attend their Network Management Statement (NMS) announcement meeting on 25th March in the Quality Hotel, Glasgow Central Station. On deciding this would be good for the group to build bridges with Railtrack, I accepted the invitation.

I first met Fiona Callison, Head of Corporate Affairs, who spent some 30 minutes with me discussing the aims of the group. She agreed that Dunbar was very busy and, in fact, was amazed at the number of passengers on the 17:00 and 17:30 services. On the aspect of East Linton and Reston station re-openings, this she felt would be better discussed with Nigel Wunsch, Business Development Manager, but that we should take strength from the fact of the reopening of Beaulieu in the Highlands.

The meeting itself took the usual format of discussion on the main points of the Ten Year NMS, followed by a questions and answers session. One of the most important points borne out by the meeting was that Railtrack in line with the Rail Regulator's recommendations will take on more risk investments rather than just care and maintenance of the infrastructure. I see that as good news on our part in the quest to have East Linton and Reston reopened. This Ten Year plan, for all the stick that

Railtrack receive in the national press/media, is the only such document available to the public of a 100 index listed company.

The good news contained within it shows the 'Aspirations of local authorities in Scotland' with East Lothian's commitment to: East Linton Station; Dunbar local service; Reopening of Haddington branch; East Lothian Rail Study; Half hourly service to North Berwick; Improved station accessibility and Musselburgh Parkway station. Sadly Scottish Borders did not commit anything on the East Coast Main Line - this will be looked into.

At the end of the meeting, I was fortunate to discuss our aims with Janette Anderson, Director of Railtrack Scotland. Nigel Wunsch also showed interest in our plans for better services and station reopening. A lot of time was spent discussing if there were going to be enough paths available, given that there is now only twin track into Waverley from the south, whereas it was quadruple prior to electrification. Finally Nigel was invited to speak at our East Linton Open Meeting.

Anyone wishing to read the Railtrack NMS (or any other available material) should contact our Secretary, Ralph Jordinson.

Tom Thorburn

New Summer Timetable for 1999 - from 30 May

As seen from the north-bound services below, there is an extra morning service from Dunbar - Monday to Friday at 0854 and 0904 on Saturday. There is an additional 1445 on Sunday. Note that some other times are slightly different.

Mondays to Fridays						
From	Newcastle	Doncaster	Leeds	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X
Dunbar	0747	0854	0950	1305	1655	2148
Edinburgh	0809	0917	1015	1332	1722	2214
To	Glasgow	Glasgow	Aberdeen			

Saturdays						
From	Newcastle	Doncaster	Leeds	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X
Dunbar	0747	0904	0947	1214	1333	1718
Edinburgh	0809	0929	1013	1242	1357	1742
To	Glasgow	Glasgow	Aberdeen			Glasgow

Sundays *					
From	Doncaster	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X
Dunbar	1131	1445	1540	1748	2226
Edinburgh	1158	1511	1607	1813	2253
To	Glasgow	Glasgow	Glasgow	Aberdeen	

The south-bound services from Edinburgh have an extra evening service to Dunbar at 1830, Monday to Friday. Note that the Saturday 1600 is now 1700. There is an additional 1800 on Sunday.

Mondays to Fridays								
From		Glasgow		Glasgow	Aberdeen	Glasgow	Glasgow	Glasgow
Edinburgh	0553	0900	1400	1700	1730	1830	1900	2100
Dunbar	0621	0922	1420	1722	1752	1852	1922	2122
To	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X	York				
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Saturdays						
From				Glasgow	Aberdeen	Glasgow
Edinburgh	0700	0930	1400	1700	1730	1900
Dunbar	0720	0951	1420	1722	1752	1922
To	Kings X	Kings X				

Sundays *					
From	Glasgow	Aberdeen	Glasgow		Glasgow
Edinburgh	1200	1630	1800	2020	2100
Dunbar	1220	1650	1820	2040	2120
To	Kings X	Kings X	Kings X	York	Newcastle

Remember - if these new trains are not used they may be removed from the next timetable!

This timetable has been compiled from the information supplied by Bob Bone. It is published in good faith and RAGES does not accept any responsibility for any error in it.

* The timetable warns that passengers travelling on Sundays should check train times before travelling!