

# The RAGES Rag

SPRING 2016, Issue 66



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

*(left: 'Visit East Lothian' banner at Edinburgh Waverley station. Photograph: J. Yellowlees)*

Follow us on



Twitter @RailActionGrpES



www.facebook.com/RailActionGroup

## Meeting between RAGES and ScotRail

### MEETING BETWEEN RAGES AND SCOTRAIL

The **RAGES** Chairman and Vice Chairman, **Tom Thorburn** and **Barrie Forrest**, met with ScotRail Directors, **Rob Shorthouse** and **Jerry Farquharson**. Also present was **Pippa Swan** from **Dunbar Community Council** who was

invited to hear about ScotRail's Community Engagement Programme.

Points raised/discussed were:

**Second ticket machine installation at Dunbar.** Confirmation was given that the second machine would be installed and commissioned on Thursday 17th Dec;

**Requirement that both machines**

**would show Edinburgh Single and Musselburgh tickets on main opening menu.** Confirmation given that this would be addressed; **Club 50 is not on 'on line' drop down menus.** In addition it was pointed out that the visually impaired who did not use 'on line'

*(continued on p2)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Meeting Between **RAGES** and **ScotRail**
2. **ScotRail** 3-Year Improvement Plan 2016-2018
3. **Virgin Trains East Coast** Revamp
4. Local Rail Meeting
5. Interview With Harry Barker, Chairman of ELCRP
6. Dunbar Station Update
7. Hitachi Open Day Report
8. Meeting between **RAGES** and **Virgin Trains East Coast**
9. Memories of Lost Border Railways

(Meeting between RAGES and ScotRail - continued from p1)

ticketing, would only get 10% at station ticket office. Teething problems with **Club 50** were being addressed and that a **new £16 walk on fare** should be announced early in the New Year;

**Dunbar fares are not in line with other ScotRail stations inasmuch that there is no off peak fares available, and the fares to Berwick is too high (not proportional to mileage between the two stations).** Fares issues would be taken back and reviewed; **Dunbar and Drem car parks require to be extended as they are full by 08:00.** It was explained that the 'Stations Fund' will not allocate any monies to car parks as the fund is for new station build only. Dialogue between **East Lothian Council** and **ScotRail** to take place on this matter;

**Edinburgh to Berwick Local Service Train paths application to the ORR**, where there was confusion inasmuch as **The Transport Minister** confirmed that **ScotRail** had written to the **ORR**, yet the **ORR** denied this. It was confirmed that **JF** had written to **Ian Williams** at the **ORR** on **15th May 2015** but had not heard back. The **RAGES** representatives suggested that **ScotRail** write to the **ORR** again on this vital issue. The committee were informed that the **Process of Full Track Access Agreement** with **ORR** the Route Plan was published last week - enhancement options in our area are to **lengthen Grantshouse Loops to dynamic loops, relocate Drem platforms onto the loops and install loops between Prestonpans and Wallyford.** The first on the new **Hitachi** Electric Trains would be introduced

on the **Edinburgh and Glasgow** service by **Dec 2016** and at the same time a **6 car set** on the **North Berwick to Glasgow** service. **ScotRail** were looking at the feasibility of running an **hourly Edinburgh to Berwick Local Service** - the franchise agreement allocated a two hourly service. Overcrowding on **North Berwick** service especially between **Wallyford/Musselburgh** and **Edinburgh** was becoming an issue with passengers at times being left behind. In conjunction with this there are high numbers of fare evasion. It was agreed that the Revenue Protection team would be visiting stations in the New Year. The committee enquired if **ScotRail** would be willing to contribute any finances to the construction costs of **East Linton** and **Reston** stations. This would be taken back and discussed.

## ScotRail 3-Year Improvement Plan 2016-2018

The **ScotRail Alliance** has announced the start of its largest-ever train improvement programme which will deliver thousands of extra seats, new trains and enhanced facilities such as at-seat power points and better WiFi.

Over the next three years, the improvement programme will result in:

- **180 carriages will be added to the fleet** – bringing the total to almost 1,000
- **Two-thirds of current ScotRail trains will be refurbished by 2018**
- **More than 17,000 at-seat power**

**points will be added to trains**

- **346 more trains will be equipped with free WiFi**, and:
- **Seven Class 320 trains will be introduced in Scotland from early 2016.**

By the end of the multi-million pound programme, **75%** of **ScotRail's** train fleet will be either new or fully refurbished. The works are being carried out by **Eversholt Rail**, who will also be providing the additional **Class 320** trains.

All **21** of **ScotRail's** **Class 318s** are being fully refurbished inside and out, with **new, accessible toilets**,

**wheelchair spaces and companion seating**, while **power sockets** are being fitted for the first time, with **cycle storage, CCTV and free WiFi** to follow next year. These trains are used on various **Strathclyde** routes linking **Balloch/Milngavie/Dalmuir** to **Airdrie/Cumbernauld/Lanark/Larkhall** via **Glasgow Queen St** and **Glasgow Central Low Level**.

The first extra rolling stock that will be delivered on Scotland's railways will be **seven Class 320 trains**, which will phased in from **early**

*(continued on p3)*

**ScotRail 3-Year Improvement Plan 2016-2018 - concluded from p2**

**2016.** Then the first of **the 70 new Hitachi electric fleet** will start to operate in **autumn 2017** on the **Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk High** line with the remainder appearing across the **Central Belt** the following year. In addition, **27 fully refurbished HSTs** are being introduced onto

**inter-city routes** during the **second half of 2018.**

I know that one of the biggest issues concerning our customers is **busy trains**. I hope, with the programme we are announcing today, people will see we are taking action. Alongside the massive projects we are currently delivering, this programme will bring more seats, shorter journey times and a rail service that is better for our

environment.

We are not just about running metal boxes up and down tracks. We want to connect people with jobs, business with customers and tourists with destinations. Our vision of Connecting Scotland is about using the railway to help our country to grow and prosper. The transformation of our fleet in the next few years will help deliver that.

## Virgin Trains East Coast Revamp

**Virgin Trains** has unveiled the first of its **newly refurbished trains** as part of a **£40m project** to improve its customers' experience.

All of **Virgin's** trains on its **East Coast** route are being given a makeover with stylish new interiors bringing added customer comfort and a touch of the glamour for which the **Virgin** brand is famous.

A total of **£21m** has been earmarked to complete the refurbishment of the trains' interiors, including adding **luxurious leather seats to First Class, new carpets and fittings throughout**, as well as bringing the distinctive **Virgin** red on-board.

Since taking over the **East Coast Mainline** in **March 2015**, **Virgin Trains** has invested millions of pounds to improve the customer experience. The refurbishment programme, which also includes a **£16m investment in new diesel engines** and the **re-branding of the exterior of the trains**, has been brought in ahead of the arrival of **Virgin's new fleet in 2018**. These trains are being built in the UK by

**Hitachi.**

**David Horne, Managing Director of Virgin Trains** on its **East Coast** route, said: *"Our new fleet of trains arrive in 2018, but we want to ensure the trains people are catching right now deliver the same comfort and glamour for which **Virgin Trains** is known."*

*"The **East Coast Mainline** features some of the world's iconic rail*

*journeys and has played host to some of the most famous locomotives ever made, including the **Flying Scotsman**. Our own uniquely **Virgin Flying Scotsman** was unveiled last year and is a symbol of this major investment that will bring the **Virgin** style and a dash of glamour **Flying Scotsman** back to the **East Coast** route in the build up to the launch of our new trains."*



*Photograph Courtesy Virgin Trains East Coast*

# Local Rail Meeting

## LOCAL RAIL MEETING

Attending were representatives from **SESTrans, Scottish Borders Council, East Lothian Council, RAGES, Iain Gray MSP** and **John Lamont MSP**. The meeting was chaired by **Councillor Michael Veitch**.

There was discussion about car parking at **Drem, Dunbar** and **Longniddry** station sites. **Peter Brett Associates** have been commissioned by the Council to assist in the development of an **East Lothian Parking Management Strategy**.

On overcrowding on services, **Iain Gray** advised that **ScotRail** don't have extra rolling stock. **ScotRail** have been made aware of the large amount of fare evasion and will do

station checks at **Musselburgh** and **Wallyford**.

At **Dunbar**, a new ticket machine had been provided and a meeting to discuss the second platform was being arranged by **ELC**.

The question of **toilet provision** **outwith station grounds** was being pursued.

The **ORR Route Study** was currently out for consultation, with a lot of possible investment in Scotland. A meeting with **ELC** and **Network Rail** was arranged for **8 March** to discuss further.

The main item during the meeting was **East Linton** and **Reston stations**. There was discussion on **signalling costs** for the two stations; **Markle level crossing** and how it would impinge on the new station site in **East Linton**; an **hourly** or **2**

**hourly** service (noting that the **ORR Study** allowed for a 2 hourly service); **other operators** using the stations; and the **possibility of other funding mechanisms** to provide the stations. After considering a number of options, including the possibility of funding from the **Scottish Stations Fund**, it was agreed that **Transport Scotland** should be asked to take this forward and that a case should be made to the **Transport Minister**, preferably before the **Holyrood election process** began. It was noted that negotiation on paths would take place in April/May for the next two years, so it was important to move quickly. A meeting with the **Minister** was arranged for **23 March** and would be attended by **Tom Thorburn** as well as councillors and MSPs.

## Interview With Harry Barker, Chairman of ELCRP

### INTRODUCTION

The **East Lothian Community Rail Partnership** is an alliance of **community groups, local businesses, ScotRail** and **East Lothian Council** who are working together to promote the use of the railway in **East Lothian**. Since forming last year, they have produced a line-guide featuring places of interest along the local lines from **Edinburgh** to **North Berwick** and **Dunbar**, and

refurbished the murals at **Prestonpans** station. One of their long-term goals is to work with bus operators to improve connections at stations, and they are currently working on a project to provide more **local information on the platforms**. To find out more contact **Harry Barker**, chair of **ELCRP**:

[harry@barker4074.freemove.co.uk](mailto:harry@barker4074.freemove.co.uk)



(continued on p5)

**INTERVIEW WITH HARRY BARKER** (continued from p4)

Meeting Harry Barker for the first time you realise very quickly that this man knows a lot about buses. He can quote you timetable details, route changes and possible amendments that would make life easier for North Berwick folk, as well as those living in the rural hinterland of East Lothian for whom a bus can be a rare sight.

But dig a little deeper into Harry's background and you find someone with an extensive background in banking, from a Branch Manager in Hawick back in 1989 to his final appointment - before taking early retirement in 2006 - of responsibility for all retail deposits

within HBOS including the 'not for profit' operations; working with the UK Government on the introduction of the Charities Act 2006; and on the way taking on the Presidency of the Institute of Bankers in Hull and the East Riding. Perhaps an unlikely life history for a bus enthusiast? Not a bit of it - despite his workload, Harry continued his interest in The Omnibus Society as Treasurer from 1987 and moved on to include railways in his remit in 2013 when he was appointed to the steering group of East Lothian Community Rail Partnership.

Harry talks about the Partnership with enthusiasm and a true feel for how it might develop in the future. He is keen that the railway be used to encourage tourism in East Lothian,

and the Partnership has already supported the restoration on the murals at Prestonpans station and welcomed the floral displays at Platform 4 at Waverley Station. "East Lothian should be the first destination choice for Edinburgh visitors" says Harry. "It's easy to get here by train, and when you do, we have wonderful beaches and tourist attractions for families to enjoy".

Harry is the kind of person who makes things happen. With his energy, determination and great transport knowledge, he is an ideal Community Rail Partnership Chair. Watch this space and we will bring you regular updates of the Partnership activities.

## Dunbar Station Update

### DUNBAR

The volunteers who look after the gardens at **Dunbar** station planted up this train barrel feature donated by **ScotRail** last autumn. It is now springing to life with bulbs and bedding plants to adding welcome colour to the platform. Despite only meeting up at the station for a few hours every couple of months, the volunteers are making headway against the shrubs and vegetation which had taken over the carefully planted gardens. Space has been cleared for sitting and features such as the lighthouse statue have been uncovered and repainted. If you can spare a little time now and again, why not contact



[mhaddow@betula.me.uk](mailto:mhaddow@betula.me.uk) and see if you can help - or leave your phone number with station staff and one of the volunteers will be

in touch.

(Above: Barrel planter at Dunbar station. Photograph: M.Haddow)

# Hitachi Open Day Report

By *Tom Thorburn*, **RAGES** Chairman

I was very privileged to receive an invite to the opening of this very impressive works at **Newton Aycliffe** on 3rd September. This will see the return of train building back in the North East, only a few miles to the south at Darlington which had a large locomotive works and a stone's throw North at Shildon was the massive wagon works. My busy day started with a brisk run up the ECML to Darlington where visitors were collected by coaches and taken to the **Hitachi** works. Nothing was left to chance - security, registration and entertainment were all of a very high standard prior to being ushered into the seated conference area for the opening speeches. One of the opening speeches I was particularly taken by was of a young Mr Hitachi who escaped from Japan in the early 1800's with three of his friends (it was illegal to leave Japan in those days) to come to England to take in all that was going on in this revolution of the birth of the railways. After spending time at University College, London, he then arranged to export locomotives from the North East to kick start the railways in Japan. What a coincidence that some almost two hundred years later things have gone full circle and **Hitachi** are here now with an ultra modern works on a 35 acre site building trains for **East Coast Main Line**, the **Western Main Line** and most importantly for ourselves in Scotland, the **ScotRail AT200's** (class **385's**). **Chancellor, George Osborne**

and **Prime Minister, David Cameron** also made very enthusiastic speeches on this great day, not just for the North East but for Railways in general. On conclusion of the speeches the drapes came down, whereupon a power car for the '**Super Express Train**' fleet was revealed.

After lunch it was time to take in the guided tour of the works, both inside and out. From memory, there were 8 internal roads and some five and a half miles of test track on which to carry out commissioning runs with all the new trains prior to them being allowed out onto the network. Inside, we were treated to being shown through a standard class coach bound for the **ECML**. I have to say I was

very impressed with the layout, availability of luggage space and most importantly plenty of leg room - unlike some of the cramped trains we have to experience. In addition we were told about the dual powered sets that would be used on the **London to Aberdeen** and **Inverness** services, where they will be propelled **electrically** to **Edinburgh** and then by **diesel** for the remainder of their journey.

We look forward to seeing and travelling on these new **Hitachi** trains on the **North Berwick service**, **Dunbar/Berwick service** and on the **Virgin Trains East Coast services**.



*Above: Tom Thorburn inspects one of the new Super Express Train Standard Class Carriage layout. Photograph: P. Abell*

## Meeting between RAGES and Virgin Trains East Coast

**RAGES** Secretary **Allison Cosgrove** and Vice Chairman **Barrie Forrest** met with **Virgin Trains East Coast Managers, Emma Vincent** and **Jennifer Mearns** in Waverley Station Edinburgh on December 21st 2015 and were made very welcome.

It was good to hear from Emma and Jennifer of Virgin Trains future plans including the **refurbishment of trains**, the **upgrading at Craightinny Maintenance Facilities**, the **new morning service from Stirling**, and **at Berwick Station over the Christmas period stalls with a variety of gifts**. More events like this are planned for 2016, to which

**RAGES** will be kept posted.

**RAGES** then discussed the following points/requirements: -

- A **near mid morning VTEC Train calling at Dunbar** such that passengers with young families, those with heavy luggage and senior in age/disabilities do not have to change trains en route at Newcastle or Darlington. It was pointed out that not all passengers boarding trains at Dunbar are travelling to stations as far as York - currently there are no London services between 06:08 and 17:51 at Dunbar.

- Similarly a **train departing Kings Cross at around 10:00, calling at Dunbar around 14:00** is required for similar reasons - there is only one direct service at 18:00

from Kings Cross

- A **later Saturday night VTEC train from Edinburgh to Newcastle calling at Dunbar and Berwick**. Currently the last train being 19.00, which is totally inadequate

- The **fare differences when travelling from Dunbar to London** was also raised, in that it was £76.60 less to travel from Edinburgh versus Dunbar.

It was a pleasure to inform the Managers of the good work being done by the staff at **Berwick Station** and **Dunbar** albeit now **ScotRail**. Emma and Jennifer have informed **RAGES** that they will take away the aspirations we discussed and arrange to meet again in the New Year.

## Memories of Lost Border Railways

### **MEMORIES OF LOST BORDER RAILWAYS**

**Bruce McCartney** has just published his book on the above subject which is a collection of memories of people who knew and used the old railways. There are

one or two articles in our area.

The book is **A4** size, with **170** pages and over a **100 illustrations**, and costs **£16.50 plus £3.00 post and package** and can be ordered by:

either with a **cheque for £19.50** made out to **RB McCartney** posted to him at **“Cairndhu”, Walter**

**Street, Langholm. DG13 0AX**

or via **PayPal** by visiting <http://www.paypal.co.uk> and making a payment to [rowbank@gmail.com](mailto:rowbank@gmail.com) for **£19.50**.

If you use **PayPal**, could you also email your name and address to him?

**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 .....