



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

left: Preserved A3 60103 'Flying Scotsman' passes the near-completed East Linton station on 1st July 2023, showing platforms, shelter and advanced construction of the footbridge.

(Photograph: T. Dickson)

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EAST LINTON & MARKLE REPORT

EAST LINTON UPDATE

East Linton was listed for closure under the first Beeching report and duly closed on 4th May 1964. Planning consent was received in September 2021 and site preparatory work began December that same year with the main construction work commencing in January 2022. The planning application

number for the development of East Linton Railway Station is 20/01423/P. This is for the creation of a two-platform station with up to 115 car parking spaces. The station will be served by ScotRail and TransPennine Trains Ltd. The station platforms appear to be complete, and work is well underway for the completion of the platform 1 access pedestrian paths. However, regarding the

construction of the car park there seems to have been very little progress in recent months. Although on the BAM Nutall and Network Rail websites they both state that the station would be completed in 2023. **RAGES** have since been told that the station will enter service by March 2024, this entry into service date being to coincide with the Markle Level Crossing replacement project.

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HADDINGTON REPORT

A RESPONSE TO THE NEW CIVIL ENGINEER ENQUIRY ON HADDINGTON

With Reston being re-opened on 23 May last year, and with East Linton's new station about 90% complete and due to re-open by March 2024, Haddington has moved up **RAGES** agenda. During the Scottish Parliament 2021 election campaign, there was cross-party agreement for Haddington to be reconnected to the rail network. East Lothian Council commissioned its Case for Change following Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) in 2019; currently this has whittled down the options to five for Detailed Options Appraisal, including several which are rail-based. **RAGES** will continue to press for the heavy rail option with two stations.

Since the railway was finally closed and the track lifted in 1968, Haddington has seen a huge increase in its population, most of it government-led and especially in the last 20 years, but without corresponding investment in transport infrastructure. East Lothian and Midlothian are the two fastest-growing council areas in the country. Haddington is now about the size of Galashiels (which is benefitting considerably from the re-opening of its railway in 2015, with passenger numbers vastly exceeding expectations, as with most re-openings in Scotland) but unlike most large towns in East Lothian, Haddington - the county town - continues to be severely disadvantaged by its sole reliance on road transport, whereas electric trains are the safest, greenest and most efficient form of land transport.

Reinstating and electrifying the 4.75-mile line from Longniddry on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) would make cost-effective and efficient use of the existing well-constructed solum engineered in the 1840s. Minimal carbon emissions would be generated in refurbishing the solum (for which the replacement cost would be tens of millions at today's prices). It is virtually intact today, with the two exceptions of (a) the pre-devolution blunder of failing to protect the alignment and rail "envelope" at a point outside town where the new A1 was constructed across it 30 years ago, and (b) a few light commercial units having been built just west of the original station, which would require relocation.

RAGES envisages reinstatement of the railway with two single-platform stations, the first being a terminus on the original site, and the second 1.5 miles out towards Longniddry. The original site on Station Road is as close as reasonably practical to the town centre for walk-ups, active travel and connecting with local buses. The second station would be essentially a park and ride facility, as there is now only limited parking in the vicinity of the terminus station, following the renewal and expansion of the adjacent hospital.

All trains would run to and from (at least) Edinburgh Waverley. Given the ongoing critical lack of capacity on the ECML between Edinburgh and Dunbar and to avoid the need for more train paths, all (existing) ScotRail services for North Berwick and for Dunbar would each be formed of two sets. These would split/combine in a reinstated bi-directional loop on the south side of the existing Longniddry station (its former Platform 3), with one set

continuing to Haddington. This arrangement would minimise dwell time on the ECML and permit long-distance services to "overtake".

Benefits would include achieving Scottish Government/Transport Scotland objectives, but are not limited to:-

- Boosting connectivity by shortening journey times (currently the "express" bus takes up to 50 minutes to Edinburgh city centre and often lacks adequate capacity, whereas a train would take only half that time)
- Reducing severe A1 traffic congestion and road traffic accidents
- Reducing carbon and NOx emissions and improving air quality
- Increasing opportunities for education, work, leisure and tourism
 - Improving health, increasing active travel and social mobility
- Boosting local economic regeneration

In the medium term however, the ECML capacity problem will require quadruple tracking between Waverley and Portobello Junction to be re-instated, and quadrupling between just east of Wallyford and Drem. An in-principle decision on the latter needs to be taken urgently, so that planning protection for the narrow strip of land required can be effected prior to the inevitable intrusion of more housing developments.

DUNBAR REPORT

CROSSCOUNTRY TAKES DUNBAR PASSENGERS FOR A RIDE

RAGES Chairman, Barrie Forrest BEM and President Tom Thorburn were present at a virtual meeting hosted by Paul McLennan MSP with CrossCountry Trains management team Alex Bray and Ben Simpkin.

This meeting stemmed from

RAGES unfortunately unearthing that CrossCountry (XC) intended to withdraw a significant number of their services from Dunbar.

Prior to this meeting, **RAGES** contacted Alex Bray to mitigate this situation for Dunbar passengers, Alex explained that the services being withdrawn from Dunbar were to backfill holes left in the Berwick timetable by the reduction of services at Berwick by LNER but also appealed that we should hold off our press release as they were still open to negotiation on the Dunbar services. In addition, XC pointed out that the TransPennine Express (TPE) services serving Dunbar duplicate their services.

RAGES, keen as ever to enter into dialogue with XC patiently waited for a meeting to take place between themselves, XC and the politicians to actively seek a resolution to this issue. In the meantime, research was carried out by **RAGES** into the claim of LNER withdrawing several trains at Berwick not to be the case. The fact is that LNER are withdrawing the 06:20 to Kings Cross service as there are duplicate trains at 06:00 and 06:36 to Kings Cross! On the claim of duplication of services by TPE, this was also found to be an inaccurate claim – firstly, of the withdrawn services, TPE only



(above: One of the threatened CrossCountry 'Voyager' services at Dunbar station. Photograph: B. Forrest)

duplicates one Monday to Friday service, secondly, if XC's reason was bolstered by these supposed duplications by TPE, these duplications would actually then take place at Berwick when the Dunbar services are moved there.

When the meeting did take place, Ben Simpkin was keen that he be permitted to show a four page PowerPoint presentation which in essence justified XC to withdraw the services listed below from Dunbar station. He explained that a consultation had been carried out and it found that there had been no complaints/feedback from their proposals to withdraw services, the claim that these services would attract greater patronage at Berwick rather than Dunbar. **RAGES** strongly countered these points by stating that the 'Consultation' had not been seen by them, nor had the politicians seen it, and if **RAGES** had indeed seen it they would have pointed out that due to the present shortage of XC services at Dunbar (the 09:28 Southbound and 17:45 Northbound services that were never reinstated at Dunbar from the Covid-19

cutbacks of the timetable), Dunbar passengers were using their cars to travel to Berwick to pick up/alight their trains there, in essence XC's patronage figures at Berwick included a high proportion of Dunbar passengers! From the content and behaviour at this meeting it was blatantly obvious that XC had made the decision to withdraw their services from Dunbar and place them at Berwick, **RAGES** appealed to them not to do this, which would result in a great disservice to the passenger at Dunbar, especially given the town's past and future expansion, and also that East Linton will be shortly opening, allowing for even greater footfall at Dunbar. Sadly, our appeals fell on deaf ears.

In conclusion, CrossCountry have doubled-crossed **RAGES** and the Dunbar/Area passengers by stating that they were open to negotiation, when clearly there was no will on their part to fulfil or take part in this after delaying **RAGES** from putting out a Press Release some weeks ago.

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These cuts in XC services are totally unjustified, are going to have a devastating effect on Dunbar and the wider area of East Lothian not just for the Edinburgh commute but also for extended travel to the south and south west, quite apart from the fact that we are all trying to do our utmost to protect our planet; but it certainly appears that management within XC have a totally different agenda.

With regard to the supposed 'Consultation', **RAGES** insist that this is null and void as it clearly was not distributed to an audience which would have had these withdrawals kicked into the long grass. At their next committee meeting, **RAGES** will be discussing this hot subject with the possibility of mounting a petition to see the reversal of these actions by CrossCountry.

The trains that will be withdrawn are: -

Monday to Friday Northbound

13:41 to Edinburgh from Plymouth – this train will now call at Berwick instead.
15:40 to Edinburgh from Plymouth – this train will now call at Berwick instead.
19:48 to Edinburgh from Plymouth – this train will now call at Berwick instead. This train is to be replaced by the 18:43 to Edinburgh from Penzance.

Presently there is a two hour gap between services to Edinburgh

(19:48 -21:42); this proposal will make this a three hour gap!

Monday to Friday Southbound

11:27 from Aberdeen/Edinburgh to Plymouth (Penzance May 2023) – this train will now call at Berwick instead.

13:27 from Edinburgh to Plymouth – this train will now call at Berwick instead.

17:28 from Edinburgh to Bristol – this train currently calls at Berwick and will continue to call at Berwick. **Removal of this**

service which was by far the busiest service into Dunbar, will disadvantage a huge amount of passengers as it will either force these passengers onto the next service departing Edinburgh some 23 minutes later which in itself is very busy or have them returning to their cars!

Furthermore we cannot consider any longer that Dunbar has an Evening Peak Service which is required for this hugely expanding commuter town!

20:24 from Glasgow Central to York - this train currently calls at Berwick and will continue to call at Berwick. However, in May 2023 it will be cut back to an Edinburgh to Newcastle service.

Saturday Northbound

13:41 from Newcastle to Edinburgh – this train will now call at Berwick instead, and will revert to starting from Plymouth.

15:40 from Newcastle to Edinburgh – this train will now call at Berwick instead, and will revert to starting from Plymouth.

19:48 from Newcastle to Edinburgh - This train is to be replaced by the 18:43 from

Penzance to Edinburgh. Presently there is a two hour gap between services to Edinburgh (19:48 - 21:42), this proposal will make this a three hour gap!

Saturday Southbound

11:27 from Aberdeen/Edinburgh to Plymouth (Penzance May 2023) – this train currently calls at Berwick and will continue to call at Berwick.

13:29 from Edinburgh to Newcastle (will revert to Plymouth May 2023) – this train will now call at Berwick instead.

17:29 from Edinburgh to Newcastle (will revert to Bristol May 2023) – this train currently calls at Berwick and will continue to call at Berwick.

Sunday Northbound

17:37 from Newcastle to Dundee - this train will now call at Berwick instead, and will revert to starting from Plymouth.

21:46 from Newcastle to Edinburgh.

There is however an additional service at 11:51 from Leeds to Edinburgh from May 2023.

Sunday Southbound

11:26 from Edinburgh to Newcastle (will revert to Penzance May 2023).

13:30 from Edinburgh to Newcastle (will revert to Plymouth May 2023).

15:29 from Edinburgh to Newcastle (will revert to Plymouth May 2023).

20:39 from Glasgow Central to Newcastle.

There is however an additional service at 12:26 from Glasgow Central to Plymouth from May 2023.

The 2023 RAGES Annual General Meeting
will be held on Thursday 21st September
East Linton Village Hall, at 6.30pm for 7pm
RAGES members & members of the public are encouraged to attend.

BERWICK & RESTON REPORT

RESTON STATION MARKS FIRST YEAR OF SERVICE

(The report below is reproduced from Network Rail Media Centre with acknowledgement)

Reston, in the Scottish Borders, is celebrating the first anniversary of the return of rail passenger services.

On May 23, 2022, passengers were able to board trains in the village for the first time in 58 years following a £20m Scottish Government investment in the new Reston station.

To celebrate one year of passenger services, pupils from Reston Primary school were invited to plant a time capsule at the station.

Items placed in the time capsule include letters that the children wrote about themselves, the school badge, memorabilia from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and photographs of themselves from the station opening event itself.

Primary four and seven pupils from the school were joined by Kerry Simmonds, Chairperson for Reston Community Council and Barrie Forrest and Tom Thorburn from the Rail Action Group East of Scotland to officially bury the time capsule. The capsule is set to be reopened in May 2047 to mark the 25th anniversary of Reston station going into service.

Jill Horsburgh, headteacher of Reston Primary School said: "The children were so excited to be invited back to the station to plant the time capsule after having the pleasure of being there for the opening last year.

"The pupils thought long and hard about what they wanted to go into the time capsule and made sure it was fitting for their May 2022 memories. "The return of Reston station to the village has been fantastic and I am certain that it will enhance the social, leisure, education and employment opportunities for our young people and everyone else in the village in the future."

Lisa McKenna, Network Rail's project manager for the Reston station development said: "This was an exciting project to be part of and it was great to build a station for a village that will really benefit from the improved transport links to

Edinburgh, Newcastle and beyond.

"It's so lovely to hear that a legacy is also being created by pupils from Reston Primary School in the form of a time capsule to mark the first anniversary of the return of the station to the village."

Reston sits on the East Coast Mainline, with platforms which cater for up to 10-carriage trains. It is fully accessible with step-free access from ground level onto platform 1 and across the railway via a footbridge with lifts.

It is served by eight trains per weekday in each direction mainly operating between Edinburgh and Newcastle. Seven services are offered by TransPennine Express with the others being offered by London North Eastern Railways (LNER).

It serves the village and wider Berwickshire area and enables easy access to Edinburgh, Newcastle and onwards across the national rail network. As well as improving transport connectivity, it is designed to transform the economic outlook of the area it serves.



(below: Reston Primary School pupils prepare the ground for burying the time capsule to mark the anniversary of the re-opening of the station. Photograph: B. Forrest)

(above: Reston Primary School pupils and staff with RAGES Chairman Barrie Forrest and Network Rail staff prepare to bury the time capsule. Photograph: B. Forrest)



(above: The plaque marking the site of the Reston station commemorative time-capsule, with instructions for its opening in 2047. Photograph: B. Forrest)

PRESTONPANS STATION MURALS

4 MURALS UNVEILED AT PRESTONPANS STATION

After almost two years work by the Community Rail Partnership, the new murals at Prestonpans Station were formally unveiled on 27 April by Harry Barker, Chair of the Partnership. Attendees at the event included the artists responsible for the new paintings, representatives from Preston Lodge High School who

Painted one of the murals, community members from Prestonpans, CrossCountry Trains representatives and ScotRail staff.

"The new paintings have been photographed on to polyurethane so they will not fade in the sun as the previous ones did" explained Allison Cosgrove, **RAGES** member and Secretary of the Partnership. "The originals are housed in Preston Lodge High School".

The murals depict the Waggonway, the earliest railway in Scotland, the famous Mallard locomotive, the Preston Grange Heritage Museum and a Wiles bus which used to be a regular sight around the Prestonpans area.

The project was funded by CrossCountry Trains.

(below: The 4 murals at Prestonpans station. Photograph Courtesy of: J. Yellowlees)



DAVID CRAWFORD

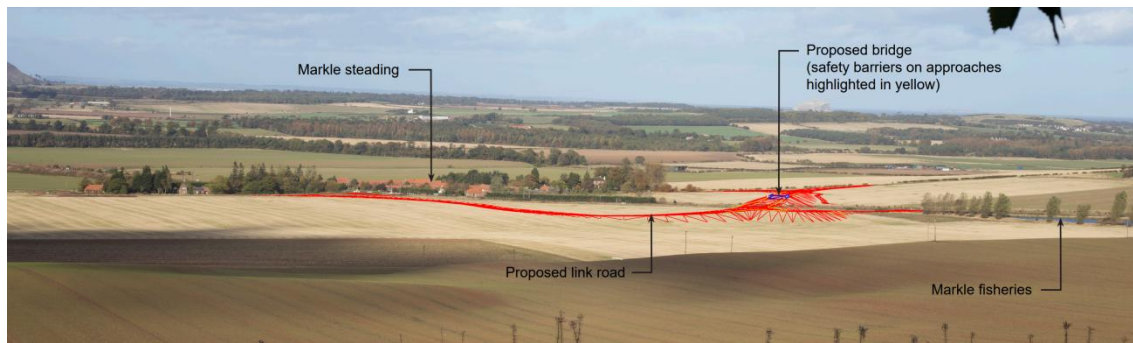
David Crawford was one of the oldest members of **RAGES** from 2001 until 2018, when he moved into a nursing home. He was born in Carstairs Junction in 1915 where his father was a booking clerk at the station. His father was a Railway Brakesman. When David and his sister visited their maternal grandparents, his grandfather would take them to watch the trains. David's mother was Dux at Carstairs Junior School and was presented with a medal on 20th August 1902 by the Directors of the Caledonian Railway Company. Not having a car, trains were the main mode of transport when going to see his mother-in-law in Perthshire, changing at Ballinluig for Aberfeldy. When he moved to Haddington, Russell Darling, his son-in-law, would show him The **RAGES** Rag with the aim to re-open the station at Haddington, and then he became a member to support the cause. David died peacefully in Hilton Lodge Nursing Home on 5th July.

East Linton & Markle Report
(concluded from page 1)

MARKLE LEVEL CROSSING REPLACEMENT

ELC approved the design

(right: Proposed route of new bridge at Markle looking towards Pencraig Hill and the Bass Rock. Photograph Courtesy of: East Lothian Council)



(22/01328/P) for the new flyover on 05/05/2023. To date there has been no sign of construction work commencing. It is expected that it will take 10 months to complete this project.

RAGES has expressed their concern

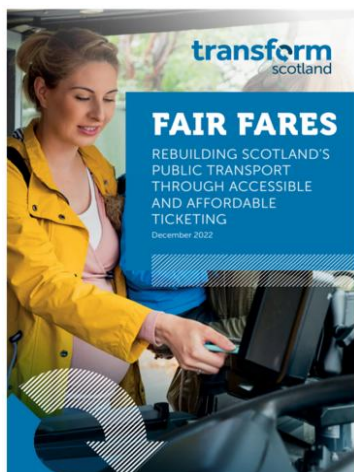
that this work could delay the entry into service of East Linton Railway Station. Transport Scotland have stated they are considering various options for Markle to mitigate any delays for the East Linton Station becoming operational.

RAGES JOINS TRANSFORM SCOTLAND

RAGES JOINS TRANSFORM SCOTLAND

RAGES has taken the decision to join Transform Scotland, which is Scotland's alliance for sustainable transport. Its diverse membership brings together public, private and third sector organisations from across Scotland.

Transform Scotland is the only



organisation in Scotland that campaigns for all modes of sustainable travel, from bikes to ferries. The diverse membership brings together passengers, local authorities, communities, environmental charities, universities and transport operators.

RAGES will now have the opportunity to influence



Rail Decarbonisation evidence session | Sustainable Transport CPG

Transform's national campaigns and have their backing to support our objectives, including the proposal to re-open the Haddington branch line and station.

RAGES joins a diverse membership as illustrated by some of the logos below. **RAGES** Committee members are already starting to become active in Transform's campaigns with attendance at their most recent events: Fair Transport Pricing and Decarbonisation of the Rail Sector.



!! STOP PRESS !!
RAGES WINS GOLD AWARD FOR 'BEST CAMPAIGN'
AT RAILFUTURE AGM – Full report in next issue

RAGES Aims and Objectives are:-

- To improve rail transport in the east of Scotland with the aim of reducing social isolation and the relief of persons living in deprived economic circumstances.
- To promote rail transport as an essential element in an integrated transport system serving all sections of the community.
- To promote rail as an environmentally friendly and sustainable mode of transport.
- To reopen the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington and the opening of one or more stations for Haddington, with all services running through to Edinburgh.
- To improve the rail services between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed, and the intermediate stations including North Berwick.
- To keep under scrutiny the standards of passenger facilities at stations between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed, including North Berwick. This would include car parking, bicycle storage and ticketing and to draw the attention of the relevant bodies to shortcomings which arise.



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 1st April each year.

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

Tom Dickson
Membership Secretary (RAGES)
44 Kirk Park
Dunbar
EH42 1BJ

Alternatively, payment can be made by bank transfer using the following details:-

Bank: Bank of Scotland
Branch Address: 95 High Street, Dunbar EH42 1ER
Account Name: Rail Action Group East of Scotland
Account Number: 00321093
Sort Code: 80-13-28

And by e-mailing the completed form below to information@rages.org.uk to confirm payment.

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

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