

railwatch

Celebrating the
Scottish Borders Railway

October 2015



Edinburgh
Waverley

Midlothian

Brunstane

Newcraighall

Shawfair



Gorebridge

Gorebridge old station



Eskbank

Dalkeith

Laying new track at Newtongrange



Bonnyrigg

Newtongrange

Gorebridge



158 on Waverley Line

The new Eskbank station



Lauder

Stow

Scottish
Borders



Early days at Tweedbank

Earlston

Galashiels

Tweedbank

Melrose

Newtown St Boswells



Back to the Future?

Full steam ahead on the old Waverley line
approaching the Eildon Hills

To Selkirk & Hawick

Bringing Rail back to the Borders

www.railfuturescotland.org.uk

Twitter

@Railfuture

....and the people who made it possible

The Politicians

From Lord Steel of Aikwood
David Steel was a young MP when the Waverley Line closed

“We are all looking forward to the opening of the Border railway. Having been on the last train out of Galashiels in 1969 it has always been my ambition to be on the first train out again in 2015. That I shall achieve, the original closure having been the greatest single disappointment in my parliamentary life.”



Councillor David Parker presides over the 1800 square miles that form the Scottish Borders, an area with a turbulent history of ancient battles, ruined abbeys and the Border Reivers. The world famous Borders textile industry is a more recent and peaceful addition to the manyfold charms of this unspoiled area.

However, until September 6th 2015 it has also had the distinction of being the largest area in Western Europe without access to a railway.

Since the Waverley Route closed in 1969 as a result of the Beeching cuts, the Border towns have seen a loss in jobs and lack of connectivity to Edinburgh year on year.

Councillor Parker explained “The Scottish Government funded a feasibility study after a major employer in the area closed down in 1998, and in 1999, Campaign for Borders Rail started a petition to reinstate the railway. There were some objections as time went on – the likelihood of increased housing in the area was of concern to some local people – but in 2003 the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament.”

The Bill was the longest-running piece of legislation ever in the history of the Scottish Parliament and was the biggest planning application seen, with the Bill Committee having to scrutinise 1,918 separate plots of land which would form part of the new Railway. Councillor Parker paid tribute to Tricia Marwick MSP, and the other members of the Waverley Railway Bill Committee in steering the Bill through the years of negotiation in order to bring it to fruition. He added that the complexities of scrutiny of the Bill had caused the system to be simplified for the future.

Looking to the future, does Councillor Parker think that there would be a case for extending the Railway on to Hawick and ultimately Carlisle? He points out that it would provide an alternative route to the East and West Coast Main Lines when these routes might be unexpectedly closed.

He is very upbeat about the benefits he expects the Railway to bring to the Borders, and is hoping for a population increase to the Border country as a whole, an increase in tourism, and the prospect of new businesses setting up in the area, saying “a number” of companies and developers are already interested. He is also enthusiastic about the Great Tapestry of Scotland coming to Tweedbank in March 2017, and the increased traffic expected to the newly refurbished Abbotsford House.

Reasons to be cheerful? I would say that on 6th September 2015, after waiting almost 50 years for the return of the railways to the Borders, Councillor Parker will be a very happy man!

Right on Track

Scottish Borders council chief has an enthusiastic welcome for the new railway

Railfuture Scotland Chair,
Allison Cosgrove talks to
Scottish Borders
Council Leader
David Parker



The Contractors

Rebuilding a railway that has been out of use for almost 50 years brings its own challenges. In some areas the trackbed has been built on, or roads have taken its place. Some stations have disappeared almost entirely. As Councillor David Parker noted, more than 1000 separate portions of land required to be assessed by the Waverley Rail Bill Committee. In addition, there were changes to the contractors who would undertake the work, so it was with some relief that the final contractor was named and works began.

The Scottish Executive had concluded that reinstating the entire route would offer few benefits and be expensive due to significant breaches south of Tweedbank. It also concluded that a passenger service between Edinburgh and Tweedbank was likely to be viable.

This Act gave the Promoter powers to acquire the land required to build the new railway. It also included a unique ‘I’ve started so I’ll finish’ or Mastermind clause. This addressed concerns that future funding issues might result in the line only being built to Gorebridge and so required the promoter to complete the line once work started.

The Mastermind clause was triggered in March 2010 with the start of advance works, including scour protection and utility works, managed by Transport Scotland, which had taken over the role of authorised undertaker from Scottish Borders Council in August 2008. For the main works, their procurement strategy was a design, build, finance and maintain (DBFM) contract which made the contractor responsible for the railway after it had been built, instead of it being part of Network Rail’s infrastructure. The intention was that the contractor’s design and build practice would be influenced by his responsibility to operate and maintain the line.

Three consortia expressed an interest after Transport Scotland started the DBFM tender process in December 2009, expecting to let this contract in autumn 2011 and have the line re-opened in December 2014. However, when two of the original three consortia withdrew, possibly because of finance issues in the then economic climate, Transport Scotland decided that Network Rail should manage the project.

Thus, in September 2011, Network Rail started to manage the project with Transport Scotland remaining the authorised undertaker. Before Network Rail could take over this role, the design had to be developed and constructability assessed to produce a robust estimate of cost and programme. In November 2012, this was agreed with Transport Scotland and the Office of Rail Regulation (as it then was) so that Network Rail could become the authorised undertaker. This agreement included a September 2015 opening date.

Prior to the agreement being formalised, Network Rail could only undertake advance works. This was done under a



framework contract awarded to BAM Nuttall in March 2012 that included vegetation clearance, fencing, environmental mitigation, mining remediation and property demolition.

In December 2012, the design and build contract for the main works was let to BAM Nuttall and it was announced that the construction cost would be £294 million. This included track materials, engineering trains and BAM Nuttall's contract cost. The contract was target cost with a pain-gain share arrangement. At the time, Gavin Gerrard of BAM Nuttall advised that the company's involvement in the previous DBFM process had forced BAM Nuttall to think about maintenance as never before and so the final design featured reduced maintenance costs. So although DBFM was dead, it had a positive influence.

After the main works started in April 2013, major earthworks were largely completed by the end of October after which the focus shifted to structures such as the 137 bridges on the route of which 42 were new. The line's largest new structure at Hardengreen took shape in February 2014 with the installation of four 107-tonne beams. This caused some significant disruption on the A7 with the re-alignment of the Hardengreen Roundabout, but as with the earlier temporary re-alignment of the busy Sheriffhall Roundabout, this was a positive sign that work was progressing. Track laying was completed in a comparatively short time, from October 2014 to February 2015, often watched by interested residents. After completion of signalling and station work, the line was commissioned on 6 June.

Hugh Wark, Network Rail's project director, advised David Shirres from *Rail Engineer* magazine (for whom we are indebted for the major content of this article) that the physical work done during the commissioning weekend was relatively simple as the signalling is only at the loop ends. This entailed re-programming the Millerhill SSI and minor physical work such as removing derailleurs and buffer stops at the start of the line after a route proving train checked the line. The big challenge was ensuring that all relevant certification was in place to demonstrate that works were properly designed and were built in accordance with the design, such as stressing certificates and certificates of compliance for switches.

Only class 158 and 170 DMUs have blanket approval to run on the line. Any other rolling stock, such as steam hauled special trains, requires a special instruction before it can run on the line that may specify limitations such as speed limits over certain bridges.

The sign off included handing over the stations to ScotRail during the weekend of 14 June.

Finally, the environmental element of the project was a big challenge. South of Falahill, the project ran through a Special Area of Conservation for the River Tweed that includes its Gala Water tributary. Hence, particular attention had to be paid to construction silt run off after heavy rain. There were many protected species including river lamprey, otters, badgers and bats, with one hundred and sixty badger setts being affected.

Summing up the project, Hugh Wark advised David Shirres of the degree of satisfaction in bringing old railway infrastructure back into use, especially the Gala Water's many wrought iron bridges. One of his most memorable moments was the phenomenal number of people who greeted the track laying train.

Source – *Rail Engineer* "Borders Railway Complete" by David Shirres, 2015

Photographs: Barrie Forrest



Stow Station Rebuild

The Campaigners

Madge Elliot

Everyone who knows about the fight to reinstate the Waverley Line will have heard of Madge Elliot from Hawick.

Back in 1969 she did something unheard-of – she went to Downing Street with a petition to challenge the Government of the day on their decision to close the line after a recommendation by Dr Beeching. With today's email, Twitter and easy access to Scottish parliamentarians, it is hard to believe how revolutionary this was. Back then, the Government was the authority that must be obeyed. People, especially ordinary people like Madge Elliot, did not challenge decisions made in London – rather they accepted what they were told. But it was a measure of Madge's determination to save the line that made her act as she did more than 45 years ago, in the hope that the railway that connected small and scattered communities in the Borders would not be allowed to die.

Sadly, Madge's campaign fell on deaf ears, despite her petition having a record 11,768 signatures. But her persistence saw the growth of the Campaign for Borders Rail rise up and eventually become an unstoppable force in the Borders resulting in the announcement that the Borders Railway would be reinstated as far as Tweedbank.

Madge's long term commitment to the Railway has been commended by the naming of a train after her – a well-deserved honour for a lady who has stuck to her guns in the knowledge that one day, trains would run again to the Borders.

Madge – we salute you!



Petra Biberbach

Petra Biberbach, pictured with fellow campaigners l-r, Claudia Beamish MSP, David Spaven and Bill Jamieson.

Petra Biberbach was the first Chair of Campaign for Borders Rail which was launched in January 1999 and encouraged Borderers to believe

that they really could get their railway back. One of their first actions was to obtain 17,200 signatures on a petition presented to the new Scottish Parliament in 2000, calling for the return of rail services.

As well as the core strategic achievement of the return of a railway from Edinburgh through Midlothian and Galashiels to Tweedbank (agreed by the Scottish Parliament in 2006), local rail campaigners – notably CBR, Stow Station Supporters Group and the Waverley Route Trust – can take credit for other successes, including Stow as a station stop. (Source – CBR website)

Simon Walton

Simon took over as Chair from Lorne Anton in 2012 and was still in post when the works on the Railway were coming to fruition. By working together, he sees the Borders Railway as not just a transport link, but an inspiration for greater collaboration in the Borders, and an example of the value of commitment and collective endeavour.

He's committed to seeing restoration in the light of modern needs, and fully supports the push further south. (Source – CBR website)



BORDERS RAILWAY

EDINBURGH – GALASHIELS – TWEEDBANK

SUMMARY OF SERVICES (to 12th December 2015)

STATIONS:

Edinburgh Waverley
 Brunstane
 Newcraighall (Park and Ride)
 Shawfair (Park and Ride)
 Eskbank
 Newtongrange (Scottish Mining Museum)
 Gorebridge
 Stow
 Galashiels (Public Transport Interchange)
 Tweedbank (Park and Ride, route to Abbotsford)

SERVICES

Mondays to Saturdays

Half hourly departures from 05.20 to 20.00 then hourly to 23.54 except for Stow Station which is half-hourly in peak hours but mainly hourly departures.

Sundays

Hourly departures all day from 08.45 (Tweedbank), 09.11 (Edinburgh) to 23.11 (Edinburgh), 23.28 (Tweedbank).

Because of the track layout departures are not fixed times past the hour but vary by a few minutes.

Until October 15th individual trains may be cancelled on Wednesdays and Thursdays to provide paths for steam and diesel excursions.

For details of train times 'phone 08457 48 49 50 or www.scotrail.co.uk See also: www.bordersrailway.co.uk

ABBREVIATED TIMETABLE GUIDE to 12 DEC 2015

Mon to Friday

EDINBURGH to TWEEDBANK

Edinburgh	05.43	06.22	06.51	then 24 and 51 mins past the hour to	19.54	20.53	21.54	22.54	23.54
Newtongrange	06.12	06.45	07.14	then 46 and 14 mins past the hour to	20.16	21.16	22.16	23.18	00.16
Stow	07.08	07.37		then at 08 mins past the hour to	20.38	21.38	22.38	23.41	00.38
Galashiels	06.45	07.16	07.46	then 17 and 45 mins past the hour to	20.47	21.47	22.47	23.49	00.47
Tweedbank arr	06.49	07.21	07.50	then 21 and 50 mins past the hour to	20.51	21.51	22.51	23.54	00.51

Saturdays

Edinburgh	05.55	06.25	06.51	then 24 and 53 mins past the hour to	19.53	20.56	21.56	22.55	23.55
Newtongrange	06.17	06.47	07.15	then 46 and 17 mins past the hour to	20.17	21.18	22.18	23.18	00.17
Stow	07.02	07.37		then at 08 mins past the hour to	20.39	21.40	22.41	23.41	00.39
Galashiels	06.46	07.18	07.46	then 17 and 46 mins past the hour to	20.48	21.49	22.49	23.49	00.48
Tweedbank arr	06.50	07.22	07.50	then 21 and 50 mins past the hour to	20.52	21.53	22.53	23.53	00.52

Sundays

Edinburgh	09.11			then at 11 mins past the hour to	20.11	21.11	22.11	23.11	
Newtongrange	09.33			then at 33 mins past the hour to	20.34	21.34	22.35	23.33	
Stow	09.55			then at 55 mins past the hour to	20.56	21.56	22.57	23.55	
Galashiels	10.04			then at 04 mins past the hour to	21.05	22.05	23.06	00.04	
Tweedbank arr	10.08			then at 08 mins past the hour to	21.09	22.09	23.10	00.08	

Mon to Friday

TWEEDBANK to EDINBURGH

Tweedbank	05.20	05.59	06.28	then 58 and 28 mins past the hour to	19.28	20.28	21.28	22.28	23.28
Galashiels	05.24	06.03	06.32	then 02 and 32 mins past the hour to	19.32	20.32	21.32	22.32	23.32
Stow	05.33	06.41		then at 41 mins past the hour to	19.41	20.41	21.41	22.41	23.41
Newtongrange	05.53	06.31	07.01	then 31 and 01 mins past the hour to	20.01	21.01	22.01	23.01	00.01
Edinburgh arr	06.15	06.53	07.29	then 59 and 24 mins past the hour to	20.26	21.24	22.24	23.24	00.23

Saturdays

Tweedbank	05.30	06.00	06.29	then 00 and 30 mins past the hour to	19.31	20.31	21.31	22.31	23.31
Galashiels	05.34	06.04	06.33	then 04 and 34 mins past the hour to	19.35	20.35	21.35	22.35	23.35
Stow	05.43	06.42		then at 44 mins past the hour to	19.44	20.44	21.44	22.44	23.44
Newtongrange	06.03	06.32	07.02	then 32 and 02 mins past the hour to	20.04	21.04	22.04	23.04	00.04
Edinburgh arr	06.25	06.54	07.24	then 56 and 28 mins past the hour to	20.26	21.26	22.26	23.26	00.26

Sundays

Tweedbank	08.45	09.45		then at 45 mins past the hour to	19.45	20.45	21.45	22.45	
Galashiels	08.49	09.49		then at 49 mins past the hour to	19.49	20.49	21.49	22.49	
Stow	08.58	09.58		then at 58 mins past the hour to	19.58	20.58	21.58	22.58	
Newtongrange	09.18	10.18		then at 18 mins past the hour to	20.18	21.18	22.18	23.18	
Edinburgh arr	09.40	10.40		then at 40 mins past the hour to	20.40	21.40	22.40	23.41	

Full list of stations: Edinburgh Waverley, Brunstane, Newcraighall, Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange (Mining Museum), Gorebridge, Stow, Galashiels, Tweedbank

Stow Station: There are some additional peak hour stops

Edinburgh: There are early departures at 16.50 and 17.18 Monday to Friday

Due to the track layout there are slight variations (few minutes) in departure times through the day

Until October 15th some trains may be cancelled on Weds and Thurs to provide excursion paths

National Rail Enquiries at 08457 48 49 50 or www.scotrail.co.uk