

Autumn Meeting
Sat 11th November at 14:00
in Radisson SAS Hotel
301 Argyle St., Glasgow, G2 8DL
Speaker: Ian Mylroi of Transport Scotland

Programme:

- Talk by Ian Mylroi
- Questions to the speaker
- Coffee/Tea break
- Open discussion

Location: It is diagonally opposite the Argyle st/Hope st (low-level) entrance to Central Station.

Ian Mylroi is head of Rail Projects at Transport Scotland, and prior to that was the Engineering Director for ScotRail. For a time he worked on the Wolverhampton tram and the Manchester Tram - Metrolink. He has also contributed to the Rail Photo Archive and supported this year's Easter Egg run on Kelvin Way! I believe that he is also a motorcyclist.

Glasgow Crossrail

SPT (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport no longer Strathclyde Passenger Transport) has produced a 46-page document setting out the case for proceeding with the £187m scheme which would link the two principal terminal stations for the first time. It is urging MSPs to back the scheme.

Queen Street development

For the 13m passengers who depart from or arrive at Queen St station each year, the proposed building of some kind over the car park would provide funds to improve the station. The existing 300-space car park would be kept whether the new building were shops, offices or a leisure complex. Network Rail announced the £50m scheme in early August.

Chance would be a fine thing - could Crossrail, GARL, Airdrie-Bathgate and Queen St station development all be worked together?

Electrification of the E&G?

Transport Scotland is now looking at this as a real possibility. Although recommended in a 1994 local authorities/ScotRail study this has repeatedly been pushed aside. Considering this in the light of all these other developments (EARL, Crossrail etc.) gives an extra argument for extending electrification.

Tavish Scott lays track

On 29 September the Minister laid the first piece of track on the Stirling-Alloa link. The line is due to open in summer 2007.

Cross-Country franchise

Passenger Focus has made an extensive (71-page) response to the DoT's proposals for the changes to the present set-up of the Cross Country system. Their basic premise is that rail use is growing, rail performance is improving and passenger satisfaction is increasing. They would therefore expect that changes to the franchise would build on these factors, rather than demolishing them for the sake of some dubious gains in timekeeping. If reading the whole of the 71 pages is too much for you, I would recommend reading the short Executive Summary. Passenger Focus consulted with 32000 individuals and many rail user groups, cycling groups, community councils etc. Railfuture contributed to this, and Railfuture agrees with their conclusions.

Savers

First Scot-Rail has announced changes to Saver tickets for longer journeys. These will effectively add about 10% to the cost of travel on the Edinburgh/Glasgow to Inverness and Aberdeen lines for those who travel before 0915. Passenger Focus and other groups are protesting.

EXTRAS

First ScotRail again provided additional late-night trains to Glasgow and a few other places during the Edinburgh Festival.

Virgin provided train travel to those stranded by air terror activities if they had Virgin air tickets.

GNER provided additional trains to Edinburgh over the weekend of 19-20 August, also to cover those affected by air travel disruption, but also the additional traffic to Edinburgh caused by the Festival.

The cynical would say these were all purely commercial decisions designed to poach customers. The generous would say they were providing a community service. Most of us would see a bit of both in their actions.

Waverley building progress

If you want to see photos of work at Waverley, on the website www.scot-rail.co.uk look for messages from Bruce Kitchenor (or go direct to <http://brucesrailpics.fotopic.net/c1023415.html>). [Having been in hospital since April 22nd this is all new to me. *Editor*]

Bathgate-Airdrie issues

Extra stations at Plains & Blackridge would cause delays equivalent to loss of 200,000 passengers per year says Network Rail. Local MSPs are asking for these stations. Railfuture thinks that, properly managed, there could be an increase of 200,000! If you are affected by this write to your MSP and to Network Rail.

Railfuture is a CAMPAIGNING organisation. As well as making our official responses to consultations, we need members to make personal ones - to the government, local authorities, Transport Scotland, Regional Transport Partnerships, Network Rail, TOCs and the rest. Please help us. If you can send us an electronic copy of your letter it would be useful.

Waverley Line - getting it right !

Parliament has now given the go-ahead. It is important now that the details of implementation are adequately considered. The Corus proposal of double track and local service as far as Gorebridge with a faster service to Tweedbank modifies the original proposal, but offers a more acceptable service to more customers.

The Waverley Route Trust said in June

Following the passage of the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill through the Scottish Parliament today, the Waverley Route Trust (1) has welcomed the Bill's success but also urged the railway promoter, Scottish Borders Council, to take action to improve the scheme and enhance the business case for the railway. Trust spokesman David Spaven commented:

"Today's parliamentary debate, and the very long time this Bill has taken to get through Parliament, are warnings. Unless the Promoter ups its game and improves the business case, there remains a serious danger that the funding conditionally awarded by the Scottish Executive will not actually materialise.

"The Borders deserves its railway back, but between Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Executive this particular scheme has been badly managed from the word go. The uninspiring one-size-fits-all timetable which 'emerged' in 2000-2001 has saddled Borders trains with making all the intermediate stops in Midlothian and Edinburgh. With seven calls between Tweedbank and Edinburgh, the trains would take 61 minutes for the 35-mile journey from Tweedbank to Edinburgh - hardly an eye-catching proposition for the motorist contemplating letting the train take the strain. As a result the business case has been relatively poor, compounded by the promoter's fixation with an inflexible track specification which means no spare capacity for freight or charter tourist trains, except at night and on Sundays.

"We have been pointing the Promoter towards better and more realistic ways of building and operating the railway since we set up in 2002, but they have failed to look seriously at practical improvements. To reflect market realities, they must now look at two separate train services - a fast (less than 45 minutes) express service every hour from the Borders to Edinburgh, and a half-hourly 'inner suburban' service calling at all stops between Gorebridge and Edinburgh. The 2004 Corus report for the Trust demonstrated that this much more attractive service would cost broadly the same as the current scheme."

With a price tag of £129 million for 30 miles of new track, the Waverley Railway Project - promoted by a local authority consortium and Scottish Enterprise - has been struggling to make a "business case" to justify funding by the Executive.

Fortunately, the Waverley Route Trust (WRT) was set up in 2002 in response to concerns that a conventionally planned railway to Tweedbank would fail to generate sufficient "value for money" to secure the necessary public funding.

WRT is a registered company with charitable status, established to promote the case for a "community railway" to and through the Borders and to provide a platform for discussion and debate on innovative rail solutions nationally.

In early 2004, with a view to showing how new ideas could add value to the Waverley Railway Bill passing through parliament, we commissioned specialist rail consultant Corus to undertake a study called Delivering an Innovative Borders Railway.

The study has been funded by the Rail Passengers Committee Scotland, the New Opportunities Fund, the Campaign for Borders Rail, Railfuture Scotland and by the trustees themselves.

GEORGE CHARLES TRAIN died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 25 September, 2006, following a heart attack. He was 73.

Trained at Glasgow University, George became one of Scotland's foremost actuaries, serving the Scottish Provident, Scottish Amicable and Scottish Widows companies in London and Edinburgh. He was elected chairman of the Association of Scottish Life Offices in the 1980s but following the death of his wife, Wendy, in 1986, he suffered a devastating illness which cut short his career.

He was, however, eventually able to continue his abiding interest in transport, being a founder member of the Glasgow University Railway Society, the Omnibus Society and the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society.

In 1964, he gathered together a group of friends to form the Coastal Cruising Association in order to restore the pleasures of cruises to sections of the UK coastline that had long lost this activity. The CCA promoted large numbers of cruises which were planned and funded by George giving pleasure to tens of thousands of day trippers.

He will be remembered especially for his work in securing the preservation and return to service of the "Waverley", the last ocean-going paddle steamer in the world and he was a regular passenger on her annual round Britain cruise.

He also ensured that the Loch Lomond paddler, "Maid of the Loch", was not broken up.

George belonged to just about every transport enthusiast body in the nation including Railfuture and his wit, wicked sense of humour, and thoughtful wisdom will be greatly missed.

This article: <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/obituaries.cfm?id=1553472006>

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