



Teachdail Rèile na h-Alba

RAILFUTURE SCOTLAND BACK IN BUSINESS AT GLASGOW MODEL RAIL SHOW

What a relief it was to return to Glasgow Model Rail Show from 25-27 February, after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. We had the usual rush to get everything prepared; then all was kindly delivered by Ralph Barker to the SECC. A rota of members took it in turn to be at the stall, meeting our members, discussing the latest rail news and chatting to all those who attended.

And attend they did: Friday is usually the busiest day for rail enthusiasts but I have never seen such a busy Saturday with dozens of families coming along, delighted to be able to visit once again. For us, it was such a pleasure to see our members again and catch up with them, as well as encourage new people to join us; distribute many copies of Railwatch and other rail user group magazines, and as always, our maps are a great source of interest, showing our aspirations for new stations and lines across Scotland.



Allison Cosgrove and Ron McLean enjoying a short break

We hope to see you at Perth, Cupar, Aberdeen and Falkirk Model Rail Shows later in the year!

50 STATIONS UPDATE

In 2014, Railfuture Scotland thanks to the dedicated work of the late Roddy McDougall, produced a series of maps showing the targets we had for new stations and major and minor lineworks around Scotland. Ralph Barker has been working on updating these for some time, and the 50 Stations Map was recently the subject of an article for the Herald by Jane Ann Liston, our Secretary. Various extracts from this article were published in newspapers around the country. We reproduce overleaf the original article, together with the revised map showing station re-openings and our revised targets.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Our Annual General Meeting will take place in person at the Quaker Meeting House, Upper Bow, Edinburgh on Saturday 4 June. Tea and coffee available from 1.30pm, meeting starts at 2pm.





This year our speakers will be from Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES), who will do a presentation on "Reston Station – From First Brick to Finished Station".

Some years ago, Tom Thorburn from RAGES spoke to us about the group's aspirations for the re-opening of Reston Station, so it will be wonderful to see this project now come to fruition.

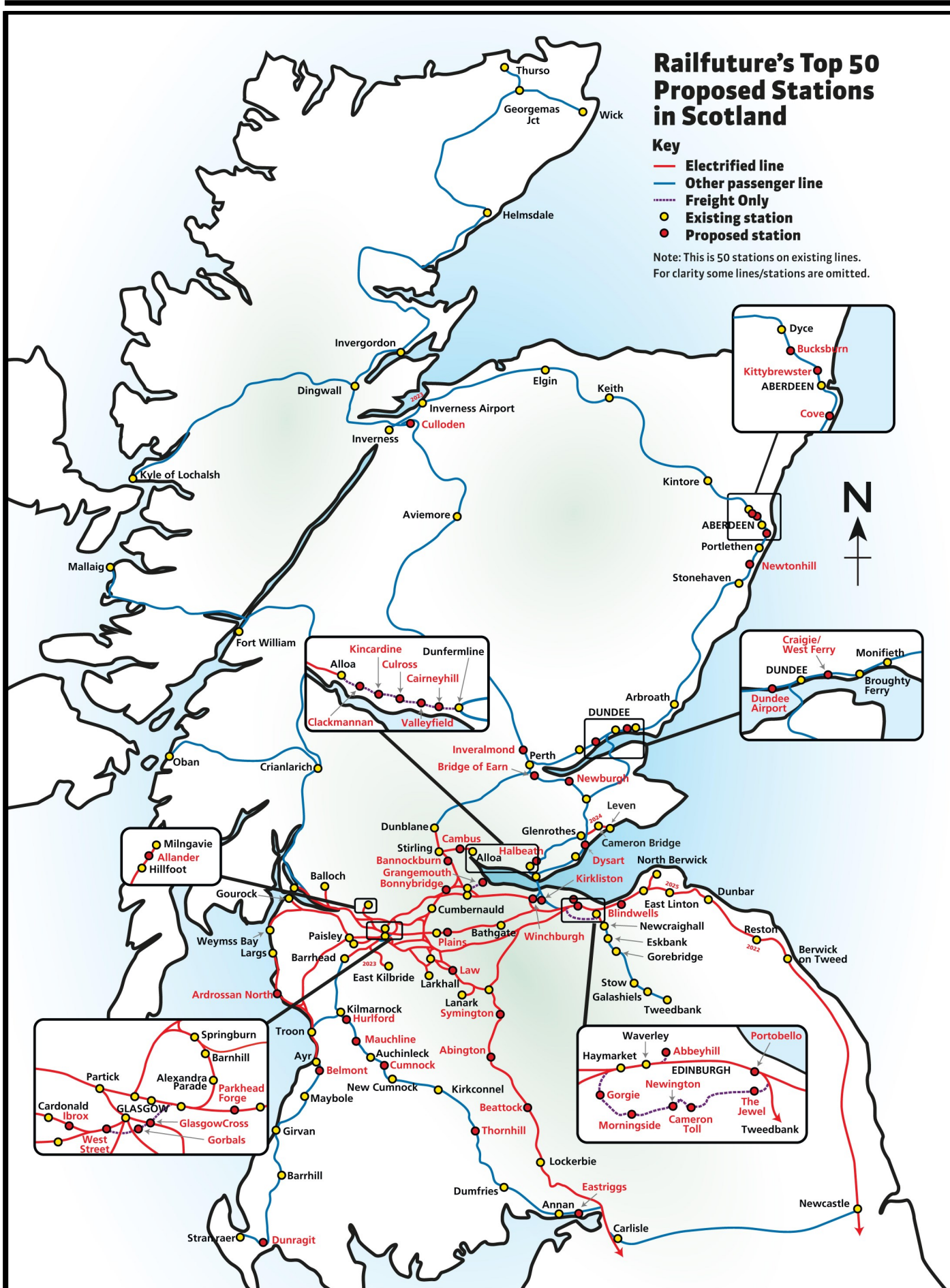
The usual AGM matters will take place after the speakers.

Railfuture's Top 50 Proposed Stations in Scotland

Key

-  **Electrified line**
 Other passenger line
 **Freight Only**
 **Existing station**
 **Proposed station**

**Note: This is 50 stations on existing lines.
For clarity some lines/stations are omitted.**



railfuture
SCOTLAND + ALBA

*the independent campaign for a better
passenger and freight rail network*



RAILFUTURE SCOTLAND'S TOP 50 CANDIDATE STATIONS ON EXISTING LINES FOR RE-OPENING

Some years ago Railfuture Scotland produced a list of 50 stations on existing lines which should be re-opened sooner rather than later. These stations are considered necessary to provide an attractive and environmentally-friendly alternative to road vehicles. Each of the locations has some specific feature as to why it needs a station, such as an attraction which brings in many people, a major employer or simply a large number of residents who need to travel. These stations would open up more of the country to non-road travel.

Since the late Roddy McDougall of Railfuture Scotland, first produced this list, 7 have been or are being re-opened: Leven, Inverness Airport, Cameron Bridge, Robroyston, Kintore, East Linton and Reston.

The original justifications for the stations on the list, revised by Railfuture Scotland's Ralph Barker, still stand but to them must now be added the imperativeness of attracting people back to trains in the wake of the pandemic, as the message that public transport is not safe still lingers in the public consciousness with the result that passenger numbers are still well below what they were prior to March 2020.

Top of our updated list, with an anticipated minimum annual usage of 2,000,000 passengers, is Glasgow Cross. This would form the linchpin of Glasgow Crossrail, a vital link enabling cross Scotland rail travel without changing stations. No expensive tunnelling would be required, just 2 miles of track. As well as serving the eastern city centre, Calton and several development areas, Glasgow Cross as an interchange would reduce passenger pressure on the very busy Central and Queen Street termini. Also on Crossrail are our third and fourth stations, Citizens (Gorbals) and West Street, carrying a combined likely 600,000 passengers, accessing Lauriston, Hutcheson, the Citizens Theatre, sheriff court, mosque, and new development areas, plus an interchange with the Underground.

The second candidate, with an estimated 360,000 passengers, is Grangemouth, population 18,000 and a major industrial complex and port.

Next comes West Lothian's Winchburgh, with 3450 planned new homes, Kittybrewster, north-west of Aberdeen, Cumnock in Ayrshire and Portobello in east Edinburgh, each serving 10,000 residents making an estimated 200,000 journeys, as is predicted for Newtonhill south of Portlethen, with 9,000 proposed new homes.

Forecast numbers for Bonnybridge, near Falkirk, population 9,000, and Allander, near Milnagavie and the A81, with significant Park & Ride potential, resemble the 180,000 predicted for the new Leven station. Edinburgh's Abbeyhill would serve the Scottish Parliament and tourist destinations including Holyrood Palace.

Stations at Culloden and Bannockburn, would serve the historic battlefield sites plus residential areas of 8,000, while Cambus in Clackmannanshire, Ardrossan North and Belmont near Ayr would each have a sizeable residential catchment. Inveralmond near Perth has a retail park and brewery; Mauchline, Hurlford (both Ayrshire), West Ferry (east of Dundee) and Cove (south of Aberdeen) also serve populations of 5-6,000, whereas Parkhead Forge in Glasgow would access a shopping centre and retail park.

Stations at Beattock, Symington and Abington, on the West Coast Main Line, would bring rail access to Moffat, Biggar, Crawford, Leadhills, Elvanfoot, Crawfordjohn & Robertson, Blindwells would serve the 1,600 new houses near Prestonpans and Dundee Airport station would serve the west of Dundee as well as air passengers.

Other Fife candidates are: Halbeath, for the Dunfermline East expansion and the bus interchange, Dysart, Cairneyhill, Valleyfield and Kincardine, the historic town of Culross and Newburgh, for connections with Perth and Cupar. Further along the Ladybank-Perth line, historic Abernethy and the growing town of Bridge of Earn are proposed.

The remaining Glasgow station on our list is Ibrox which would serve the industrial area as well as the football stadium. In Lanarkshire, Law station would serve a sizeable village as would Plains on the Airdrie-Bathgate line. The area north of Aberdeen would also benefit from a station at Bucksburn. There should be a station at Kirkliston, in West Lothian, which is growing quickly with many new housing developments and also one at Clackmannan.

The Edinburgh South Suburban Line needs stations at Gorgie, Morningside, Newington, Cameron Toll and The Jewel, the last two near large shopping centres.

Finally in the sparsely-railed south west, we recommend stations at Thornhill and East Riggs on the Nithsdale Line, and another at Dunragit near Stranraer, which would facilitate access to the Glenwhan Gardens and the important archaeological sites.

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Transport Scotland's STPR2 (Second Strategic Transport Projects Review) closed on 15th April. We await the final report. The title sounded good but it was hardly strategic, had no significant rail projects and did not seem consistent with SNP Government policies. It made clear that rail was for main trunk routes between cities and that is where rail investment would go. As others have remarked, rather reminiscent of the 1963 Beeching Report. The rail projects proposed were improvements to the Highland Main Line and the Aberdeen Line, obviously welcome but no specifics. Anything else appeared to be classed as "Metro" which was described as anything between high frequencies on existing local lines to high frequency bus route routes.



225 on Highland Main Line by Ron McLean

There was not even a mention of a direct route from the Forth Bridge to Perth which had been hinted at in the original review and without which rail could never compete with the improved road to Inverness. While there may be some scope for "Metro" or tram trains Railfuture Scotland is not in favour of downgrading standard railways to expensive specialised systems with their on-street safety concerns and slow journey times which can only compete with roads when they are congested.

The review ignored Scottish Government Policy for Net Zero which, as transport is the biggest source of green house gas emissions in Scotland, must mean a massive reduction in road traffic. Without a good network of electrified rail lines and local stations people will not be attracted from road transport to rail. Either Transport Scotland cannot see the future or is actively undermining Government policy. On freight the review only mentioned support for rail freight terminals but no mention of investment or policies to help rail compete with road haulage. Neither was there any mention of HS2 trains coming to Scotland and squeezing rail freight off the West Coast Main Line with no real alternative routes. STPR2 is supposed to set projects for 20 years: most disappointing.



An Avanti on the Kilmarnock line
by Ralph Barker

SCOTRAIL NATIONALISATION

Nationalisation of ScotRail has been promoted by many agencies for years. Of course, the rail infrastructure was nationalised by Gordon Brown decades ago and timetables and fares are, in any case, largely set by Scottish Government. The indications so far are that while road traffic and congestion are now exceeding pre-covid levels ScotRail expects that passengers will not return to trains at the levels attained pre-covid. Therefore ScotRail does not intend to re-instate the previous train frequencies which means previous train frequencies which means some end to end journey times are increased as fast and semi-fast train schedules are combined and in some cases keeps services below viable levels for passengers.

There are other subtle hints. After the Carmont Fatal Rail crash inquiry the Scottish Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP, said the HST trains do not meet safety requirements and will be taken out of service as soon as possible. The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) never said these trains were unsafe and even came back to emphasise that if there was a safety risk the trains would have had to be modified. The detail concerns mentioned also apply to several thousand other trains operating in Britain. It is quite obvious that with no passengers in the leading vehicle, no engines or fuel tanks under passenger coaches and not operating at anywhere near their maximum design speed these trains, for passengers, are the safest, roomiest, smoothest most comfortable trains in ScotRail. That comfort, however, comes at a cost and the eagerness to get rid of these HST trains must betray the intention for more cost cutting now ScotRail is nationalised.

Our rail unions have campaigned for nationalisation. Now they want pay increases but are no longer up against private companies who lose money in strikes but are now up against the power of The State. The last thing we need is more disruption on our railway!