



20% Midlothian growth drives latest increase in Borders Railway passenger traffic

By Robert Drysdale

IN December the Office for Rail and Road (ORR) released its annual analysis of station usage across the UK for 2017-18.

The figures show an overall increase in usage of 10% on the Borders Railway as a whole, but with the three Borders stations (Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank) showing only a small increase, while Midlothian stations have shown significant increases (19.7% on average), particularly Eskbank (23%) and Shawfair (42%) – although the latter is still the least-used station on the line. Newtongrange is up by 11% and Gorebridge by 17%.

Total entries and exits for the year amount to 1.96 million, so not far short of two million single journeys per year, excluding those passengers who travelled without a ticket. The equivalent figure for 2016-17 was 1,783,682.

Read Robert's report on the line's recent problems, see p7

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Class 50 number 50007, carrying the identity of scrapped classmate 50006 Neptune, stands at the buffers at Tweedbank with the Waverley Reunion railtour from Birmingham New Street (c) Alwyn Johnston

Special events mark fifty years since Waverley Route closure

A SERIES of events has taken place marking the 50th anniversary of the closure of the old Waverley Route on 5th January 1969, writes Atholl Innes.

THE first commemoration was in London on 18th December, with a reunion of some of the campaigners who delivered a petition to 10 Downing Street on that day in 1968.

Next up was a railtour from Birmingham to Tweedbank on 5th January. Titled *The Waverley Reunion*, the special train was hauled by two class 50 locomotives, at least one of which had worked over the old line before closure.

Perhaps most fitting of all the events, a well-attended community gathering that evening at the site of the old level crossing in Newcastleton recalled the dramatic moment when the last train over the line was held up by demonstrators.

CBR's main involvement in the

commemorations was in support of the 50th anniversary 'rally' held in Stow Town Hall on the same day.

Organiser and CBR member Bill Jamieson was delighted with the turnout from invitees, doubting if the village had seen as many visitors in one day!

Lord (David) Steel, MP for the region at the time of the closure, was aboard the last train which was halted at the level crossing gates in Newcastleton before the MP intervened and secured the release of the late Rev Brydon Maben, who had led the protest.

Lord Steel chaired and opened and closed the afternoon meeting, at which the power-point presentation was one of the highlights, showing a huge range of photographs including the protest; Rev Maben being led away by police; and Dr Beeching himself, whose report recommended closing it and many other lines across the country.

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View from the chair

Simon Walton argues how the Campaign helps all communities and why everyone in the Borders and beyond needs to be behind the project



THE Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership is a wide-ranging association. It has active members from Eyemouth to Innerleithen; Lauder to Langholm. Tourism, like most commercial activity in the Borders, is a big business made up of very many small businesses. It's only through the clout of associations that any single voice can be raised for the good of the community at large. Right from the start, the overall value of the Borders Railway was not lost on the Tourism Partnership. CBR has been represented on the management group (we have a vacant seat), and the Partnership has organised several industry-wide conferences, devoted to making the most of the fantastic opportunities the railway offers for promoting the Borders.

The tourism industry was first to embrace the collective potential of the railway. They realised that being directly on the line was only part of the benefit of having the Borders in the spotlight. Tweedbank has acted like a land cruise terminal, with many businesses taking advantage of the opportunity to collect new customers at the railheads. Kelso Races "Track to Track" transfer service springs to mind, bringing new punters to the friendliest racecourse in Britain. Not that I've backed any winners yet, so it's just as well the return fare's included.

How, though, can the Campaign for Borders Rail harness that enthusiasm, and help promote the Borders as a whole? That's a question we've asked ourselves since our very first day. Our answer

has always been that the Campaign is not just about railways and not just about routes.

CBR has always been committed to economic development and social sustainability, two benefits most readily facilitated by railway reinstatement. To that end, we've always made it clear that our aim is to see the former 'Waverley Route' main line reinstated as a primary goal. As our study document, "*Summary Case for a new Cross-Border Rail Link*", explains in detail, reinstating the main line is the most achievable way to benefit the widest possible cross-section of businesses and communities in the whole of the Borders. By providing this new backbone of an integrated transport and communications network, there are benefits for every community. Tourism has already grasped that concept, and business and communities in general are following that lead.

As a group, we've always encouraged communities to embrace the possibilities that a new Borders railway will provide. It's always been easiest to make that point in places that are now served by the Borders Railway, and will be served by the extension of the line. Increasingly though, as exemplified by the tourism industry, there are real benefits to be gained from taking a positive attitude towards making the railway part of your business and your community. Being on the line has obvious advantages, but being able to say: "we're in the Borders,

where the Borders Railway runs", is proving just as advantageous for positive thinking businesses and communities.

The further we can get the line into the Borders, the better. More and more communities will be able to take up the reins, just like Kelso Races have done, and bring fresh custom to their doors. Make no mistake, we're closer than ever to that finishing line - even if I'm no closer to picking a winner on race day.

New Book

New title "**Border Union Dream**" by CBR member David Spaven tells the story of the 1969-70 bid by the Border Union Railway Company to re-open the axed Waverley Route from Edinburgh to Carlisle, which captured the imagination of Borders folk and the wider railway world. Many were left sorely disappointed when the dream crumbled, but the story continues to fascinate rail enthusiasts. With the 50th anniversary of Waverley Route closure on 6th January 2019 and drawing on newly unearthed archive material, it is time to tell the full story: a heady mix of blue-skies thinking, political jockeying with British Rail, and over-optimism, sometimes bordering on fantasy. The book is illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs.

Available from **Stenlake Publishing** stenlake.co.uk
ISBN: 9781840338300

Treasurer's report

*By Christopher Norton
CBR Treasurer*

IF I may introduce myself, I was elected as your new treasurer at the AGM in Hawick on 20th October.

I have spent much time getting to know the procedures, the financial commitments that CBR has along with looking at the income side primarily generated by you the members.

Please note that I am Treasurer, not Membership Officer, as is mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter. I look forward to a volunteer coming forward to fulfil that a vital role.

Following on from the decision of your committee to introduce independent auditing of CBR's accounts, I have recommended, and the committee has accepted that our year end should change from 30th September to 30th June each year. This will give sufficient time for the accounts to be examined and issued to all members before the AGM in October. Consequently the year reported on in 2019 will actually be some 9 months, not 12.

Additionally the committee has introduced, following last year's AGM, a detailed expenses policy for those committee members engaged in fulfilling the Campaign's objectives on a day to day basis.

Each of the above have been done to promote what your committee and I consider to be best and transparent practice in dealing with the finances of the organisation.

I continue to look at aspects of the Campaign's finances with a view to making further recommendations to the committee's next meeting in May of this year. In the meantime if any members have any questions regarding any financial aspect of CBR I shall be pleased to hear from you.

Hawick AGM success

*By Nick Bethune
CBR Secretary*

A WELL attended AGM at the High School hall in Hawick on 20th October 2018 saw the 2019 committee elected (details on p8) and approved the adoption of a new constitution.

After reports from the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, the re-elected Chair, Simon Walton, gave a powerful address reaffirming the Campaign's commitment to the reinstatement of the route between Tweedbank and Carlisle.

A public meeting followed in a 'Question Time' format with a distinguished panel of guest speakers hosted by Simon Walton.



'Question Time CBR' guest panel (L-R): Professor Brian Eaton; Cllr Shona Haslam; John Lamont MP; Paul Wheelhouse MSP; John Stevenson MP; Richard Morris (Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line).

Membership officer required

By Nick Bethune, CBR Secretary

THE committee is looking for a volunteer willing to fill the vacancy we have for a membership officer.

This important role involves managing our membership list of around 1,400, including applications, renewals, etc.

As an office-bearer the membership officer will have the opportunity to contribute to discussions and decision-making involving general campaign strategy.

If you are interested, please contact me for more details of the tasks involved.

n.bethune@btinternet.com

Call for Carlisle volunteers

By David Howe, Committee Member based in Carlisle

WHEN I first joined the Committee, I leafleted the station, tourist information centre, Crown & Mitre Hotel etc and had an article in the Cumberland News.

Since then, good contacts have been made with the Station Manager and many station staff, and Virgin are prepared for CBR to have display material on the station in the form of a banner or similar, and we are to be invited to open days.

Thanks to initiatives by Richard Carlile, publicity stalls have been held at The Holm Show, Netherby Hall Christmas Market and Longtown Fair, with some memberships sold and much interest shown. Some locals do not know of us at all and this will hopefully be remedied.

Lately I have chatted to both the Deputy CEO and the new Destinations Officer of Carlisle City Council. I am being informed of all city-centre events that we might consider attending. The Destinations Officer is allowing us to have a display in the tourist information centre (and will keep leaflets too) and the library is always open to groups displaying there, even if just a poster.

Events are a good way of meeting locals, but **the big problem with attending events is that we are very short of manpower**. Only three committee members live locally; too few to staff a stall for a weeken, for example.

We need a few more local (Carlisle, Longtown, North Cumbria, Southern Scotland) to come and volunteer, so, please get in touch if you can help in anyway at all.

My email is:

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50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION



18 Dec 1968

Madge Elliot, David Steel MP and the Earl of Dalkeith MP at 10 Downing Street, 18th December 1968 with the Waverley Route petition. (c) Bruce McCartney



18 Dec 2018

Reunion of Waverley Route petition group at the Palace of Westminster on 18th December 2018: L-R front row: Pat Caris (Hunter); Kim Elliot; Lord Steel.



5 Jan 1969

Demonstrators at Hawick Station in January 1969 with the 'coffin'. Andrew Boyd can be seen wearing the top hat. (c) Bruce McCartney



5 Jan 2019

Speakers at the Stow event on 5 January 2019. L-R: Nick Bethune; Andrew Boyd; Lord Steel; Kim Elliot; David Spaven. (c) Andrew Bethune



6 Jan 1969

David Steel MP addresses the demonstrators at Newcastleton level crossing in the early hours of 6th January 1969. (c) Bruce McCartney



5 Jan 2019

Greg Cuthbert (CBR committee member) addresses villagers gathered at the site of the old level crossing on 5th January 2019.



6 Jan 1969

Demonstrators at Newcastleton blockading the level crossing in the early hours of 6th January 1969. Arthur Bethune in foreground (*). (c) Bruce McCartney



5 Jan 2019

Veterans of the 1969 Newcastleton demonstration Jim Robson (L) and Arthur Bethune (R) with Greg Cuthbert at the old level crossing on 5th January 2019.

Coffins, detonators and bomb threats: Closure of the Borders Railway recalled



By Alastair Dalton, Transport Correspondent, *The Scotsman and Scotland on Sunday*

IT was marked by bomb threats, detonators exploding on the track and the final train being halted for hours by protesters barricading a level crossing in the middle of the night.

The Waverley Route between Edinburgh and Carlisle went out with very much a bang rather than a whimper 50 years ago last weekend.

Those who took part in the dramatic events relived them at an event at Stow to commemorate the anniversary.

It provided a vivid illustration of the strength of feeling in the Borders at the loss of its railway.

Former Liberal Party leader Lord Steel, among those who unsuccessfully campaigned for its retention, told the meeting, which he chaired: "I felt really shocked the railway was closed. No one thought it would happen."

Other speakers included Kim Elliot, who, as a schoolboy, accompanied his mother Madge to present an 11,600-signature petition to 10 Downing Street, and Andrew Boyd, then a law student, donned undertaker's garb complete with top hat to load a mock coffin onto one of the last trains from Hawick.

Even more dramatically, Mr Boyd recalled that a caller from Galashiels had claimed there was a bomb on the train.

Lord Steel also said a locomotive had to be sent ahead of the last service - an Edinburgh-London sleeper - to clear the line of warning detonators placed on the track.

The former Borders MP, who was aboard the sleeper, related his key role in calming furious

protestors who had blocked its path by occupying a level crossing at Newcastleton - pictured on the front page of *The Scotsman* of 7 January 1969.

Lord Steel described the blockade as a 'very serious demonstration of anger' at the closure decision.

He recalled being summoned from his berth to speak to the protestors, addressing them from a footbridge in the early hours of what he said was a bitterly cold night.

They only agreed to disperse after Lord Steel negotiated the release of the local minister, a protest leader who was being held by the police.

Of course, the injustice felt in the Borders at the closure was partially righted in 2015 with the re-opening of around a third of the line, between Edinburgh and Tweedbank.

But the campaign to extend it south is very much continuing, spurred on by growing passenger numbers, especially at the three Borders stations, where the number of travellers has far exceeded forecasts.

The Campaign for Borders Rail's approach seems an eminently sensible one. It realises, like many experts, that rebuilding the line all the way to Carlisle, through sparsely populated country, is a long shot, despite attracting support from politicians.

However, as secretary Nick Bethune explained to the meeting, simply focusing on an extension to Hawick would risk it becoming lost among the many other Scottish re-opening campaigns.

I'm told by those in the know that there are fewer physical obstacles

in returning the line to Hawick than there were to Tweedbank.

However, Mr Bethune said it was crucial to maintain a 'cross-Border vision', which would also improve Hawick's links with the south.

Who knows, if proposed upgrades to the east and west coast main lines as part of extending HS2 to Edinburgh and Glasgow founder, and they become increasingly congested, there could be a case for restoring that historic third Anglo-Scottish rail link.

Our thanks to Alastair for allowing us to publish this article which first appeared in The Scotsman on 11th January 2019.

...continued from p1

Among the other speakers were Rae Montgomery on the "Life and Times of the Railway after Beeching"; the campaign against closure (Lord Steel); the delegation to Downing Street (Lord Steel and Kim Elliot); Events at Hawick and Newcastleton as well as Galashiels (Lord Steel); the Last Week of Operation (Andrew Boyd); and the Borders Union Railway 'saga' (David Spaven) before Campaign secretary, Nick Bethune, closed the talks as he looked ahead to hopes of an extended line to Hawick and Carlisle.

David Spaven also sold copies of his Waverley Line book (see p2), memories were shared of a famous line and the future addressed as the Campaign gained more momentum.

The meeting ended with general conversation and tea and coffee before many departed to catch the trains to Edinburgh and Tweedbank.

"It was a very successful meeting," said Bill, "and thanks to everyone who attended and took part."

"It was a tremendous meeting," added Lord Steel; a point agreed by all.

Borderlands initiative driving railway ahead



By Colin Glover, Leader, Carlisle City Council

RECENT weeks have seen further progress in our journey to deliver the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, and meetings with both UK and Scottish Government Ministers have seen encouraging signs as we move towards a deal.

The five Councils on both sides of the border, Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Northumberland County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council, have been working closely in partnership to develop proposals that will be truly transformational for our communities and the local economy.

This multi-million pound proposal aims to bring significant investment into the Borderlands region to promote growth through innovative projects. With a population of over one million people, the Borderlands region covers an area larger than Wales.

The deal is ambitious and focuses on how we can make the region more attractive to investors and visitors, as well as providing the important infrastructure and facilities to support and grow our economy, providing good quality jobs and supporting new and existing businesses.

Our proposals outline some important areas that will benefit our region and include innovation in clean energy generation, accelerating reach and quality of digital connectivity and delivering business infrastructure to promote growth and diversification. The deal also aims to improve access to learning and training, a place programme to stimulate and improve town centres and deliver inclusive growth across the region and to provide investment that builds the reputation of the Borderlands as a visitor destination, raising the profile nationally and

internationally.

There are also four key place based projects in our proposals. All of the Borderlands partners see Carlisle as an important transport interchange and the Carlisle Station Gateway project will provide a hub to improve connectivity and regenerate that part of the city.

There are also proposals to develop the Chapelcross site as a major economic asset for the Borderlands and to provide a new theatre and conference centre in Berwick and a Mountain Bike Innovation Centre in the Scottish Borders.

The Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank has been very successful and our proposals are now asking the UK and Scottish Governments to provide funding for a feasibility study to extend the line on to Hawick and Carlisle.

Actions speak louder than words

By Councillor David Parker, convener Scottish Borders Council



THE 25th of January 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the official launch of the Campaign for Borders Rail.

When the Viasystems factory closure was announced in 1998, CBR held its first meetings towards the end of that year, but the group was officially established in January 1999 and the grassroots campaign to reopen the Waverley Line began in earnest.

In the early days, a feasibility study was required, a business case developed and an Act of Parliament drafted to make the line a reality.

Between 1998 and 2003, all these things were delivered: the feasibility study confirmed that Edinburgh to Tweedbank was viable; the business case justified the expenditure on the new line and showed that reopening to Tweedbank made financial sense.

The Act of Parliament was laid before the new Scottish Parliament for three years of scrutiny, with the legislation being the longest running Bill in Parliament to this day.

Twenty years after CBR officially began, those involved can look back with great satisfaction at a job very well

done. CBR and its members played a critical part in making the case for the new railway, the grassroots campaign was a strong one and their lobbying impressive.

They represented the voice of real people, who for all sorts of reasons came together to campaign to see the railway reopened. Today, the line has been more successful than anyone ever anticipated.

No doubt this year there will be time for appropriate celebrations, and some time to reflect on what has been achieved, but for CBR the campaigning is continuing.

With a larger membership than ever before and a real focus on extending the line from Tweedbank through Hawick on to Carlisle, 20 years on the Campaign still has much work to do, as always, with a passionate and determined focus.

The frustrating thing is that our region's politicians at Westminster and Holyrood, some newly converted to the Borders Railway, are offering lots of warm words and they are always happy to be in a press photo-call,

but disappointingly there is no formal feasibility study on how to extend beyond Tweedbank.

Transport Scotland and the Department of Transport in London aren't actively working on the delivery of the extension, and despite promises of a feasibility study as part of the Borderlands growth deal, no one yet knows if that study will actually happen or whether the deal itself will be approved. CBR has consistently shown that their belief in the railway was well placed and its campaigning abilities have been praised, quite rightly, by politicians representing every party; so it is time that our MPs and MSPs stopped giving us warm words and started to deliver real action to make extension beyond Tweedbank reality.

Tweedbank was always the first piece in the jigsaw, the stopping point on the way to Carlisle. Over the three years since the line reopened, there has been more than enough time to put in place the necessary feasibility work for the extension, and the new railway's own performance has demonstrated that an extension is justified.

Call for user group as ScotRail woes hit Borders Railway performance

By Robert Drysdale, CBR Committee Member

WE reported in our last newsletter that problems with overcrowding on Borders Railway services had been particularly noticeable during the summer. Sadly, the run-up to Christmas saw those problems reaching an acute level, with passengers being unable to board packed trains – hardly a good way of encouraging rail travel in Midlothian and the Borders. Some peak-hour services were running with only two carriages, totally inadequate for the volume of commuters using the service, while others were cancelled altogether.

These problems were experienced not just on the Borders Railway but across central Scotland.

On Friday 14th December, 104 trains into or out of Edinburgh Waverley were cancelled, and on the following Monday the number of cancellations rose to 127 trains, including some Borders services. The problems lessened after Christmas, but short trains and cancellations were still being experienced by long-suffering passengers.

ScotRail has accepted that standards have been well below what is required, but have explained that the problems were due to a combination of circumstances, in particular the late delivery of new and refurbished trains, and delays in driver training, the latter caused

in part by industrial action (now resolved).

Overcrowding and cancelled trains on the Borders Railway are not new features of the service, and right from the start of the service in September 2015 CBR has been pressing for better and longer trains on the line. ScotRail had promised that three-carriage Class 170 diesel trains would be transferred from the Edinburgh – Glasgow

all peak-hour trains are formed with at least three carriages, and ideally four to six carriages. CBR will be meeting Alex Hynes, managing director of the ScotRail / Network Rail Alliance, in March to discuss this and other operational issues.

Such was the scale of the problems experienced in December, one aggrieved passenger from Newcraighall started an on-line petition pleading with ScotRail to

provide longer trains, and CBR made contact with the passenger to discuss the situation. The *Edinburgh Evening News* also publicised the petition and highlighted the plight of passengers from intermediate stations who were unable to board packed trains.

Although CBR will continue to

campaign for better services on the Borders Railway, at the same time as pursuing the aim of securing extension of the line through the Borders to Hawick and Carlisle, it is clear that formation of a 'Users Group' of regular passengers would be a big step forward. Such a group, with members who are all travelling on the line frequently, would be in a strong position to monitor train capacity and operational problems, and take up these issues with ScotRail, assisted where appropriate by CBR. It is to be hoped that such an initiative will emerge as a result of the recent difficulties on the line.



Crowds at Edinburgh Waverley waiting to board a Borders Railway departure to Tweedbank, formed of a 2-car Class 158 unit. Contrast this with the spacious Fife Circle service alongside. (c) Robert Drysdale

service onto Borders services as soon as the replacement electric trains for the Glasgow line were introduced. However, long delays in the delivery of these new electric units has resulted in a shortage of diesel trains across the network, compounded by contractual obligations which have led to some of ScotRail's diesel fleet being transferred to other railway companies in England.

While CBR accepts that some of the recent difficulties have not been of ScotRail's making, and have hit passengers in Fife as well as on the Borders line, we believe that more could be done to ensure that

Kenneth A Gray

Railway photographer, Hawick resident and long-standing CBR member Kenneth Gray had been in failing health recently and passed away on Friday 18th January not long after his 80th birthday. Bruce McCartney recalls:

I WAS introduced to Kenneth Gray in 1968 by fellow 'Teri' railway enthusiast Robin Barbour during the final weeks before the Waverley Route closed.

Kenneth was a life-long railway enthusiast. He wistfully surmised that perhaps while being pushed in his pram in Hawick, he had seen an NBR 'Atlantic' but his real spotting days started in 1947. He recalled visits to Sprouston and Jedburgh with his parents. I was envious that he had travelled over Leaderfoot Viaduct and all the Border branch lines.

On leaving Hawick High School for his first post in the Civil Service in Newcastle, he used the Border Counties line via Bellingham travelling from Hawick for a short while before the line's closure in 1956.

Kenneth had various positions in the Civil Service including spells in London, before retiring and settling near Thirsk. After the death of his parents, he kept on their house in Hawick and frequently was seen in the town. Being very 'old school', Kenneth never appeared without a shirt and tie, whatever the occasion.



In this classic Kenneth Gray photo, 1949-built class B1 locomotive no. 61357 stands at the up platform at Hawick station. Allocated to St Margaret's Depot, Edinburgh, the locomotive was withdrawn in June 1965.

Kenneth's knowledge of railways, and the Waverley Route in particular, was legendary amongst Hawick enthusiasts. If ever there was a query, asking Kenneth usually produced the answer!

But Kenneth wasn't 'just' a railway enthusiast. He played pipe organs in various churches around Thirsk and occasionally was called to churches in Hawick should the regular organist be unavailable. I recall after the 9/11 attack in the US, Kenneth mentioning playing the Battle Hymn of the Republic as the extroit: Kenneth had views, often strong views about many things! His favourite hate latterly was 'muzak' in shops (indeed anywhere!), and ventilators on some DMU classes and buses. He'd been known to change his route to avoid such irritations.

Kenneth would visit churches with interesting pipe organs and with

his meticulous methodology record details of stops and pipes for the National Pipe Organ Register. A thoroughness no doubt enhanced by his recording of locomotive details. His list of steam and diesel locomotives to have worked through Hawick was never circulated in any quantity – he was very concerned that it may have contained an error or two – and did not wish it used as a yard-stick.

Kenneth took photographs from the late 1950s onwards, but never had any printed! After seeing the results of my scanning of Robin Barbour's negatives in 2006, he asked me if I could scan his unprinted (and unseen) collection. I hadn't bargained for Kenneth turning up with a small suitcase of negatives: scanning 3,800 negatives certainly helped me pass the winter! He generously allowed them to be uploaded to the net where they have been enjoyed world-wide and can still be seen.

He had a great affection for our Border Terrier and frequently remarked that he would like a dog, but that his lifestyle just was not compatible with owning one. When I visited him in Hawick, I was always told to bring Guthrie along. So it is this image of a serene gentleman, and gentleman he was, relaxed in his well-worn armchair in Hawick contentedly stroking my Border Terrier's ears that I will recall when I remember Kenneth.

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