



“Much, Much More Than a Mere Transport Project!”

Clearing a Way to Rejuvenating Levenmouth! ...



Above-Left (Main): The tracks are still in place here, on the right of the path - but they're over-run with trees in this view from Saturday, 13th. July, last year. Work to clear such blockages from the line between Cameron Bridge and Methil (not far from the *Fife Heritage Rail-yard*), and all other trees along the 5½-mile (8¾ km.) track-bed, has now got underway. The tracks can be seen among the foliage in this scene, around 1¼ miles (2km.) from the centre of Leven. The *Active Travel* footpath-cycleway network, proposed to accompany the revived Rail Link, could loosely follow the course of the current footpath, and railway, at this location. **Above-**



Right: A platform edge is partially visible in this scene at Cameron Bridge Station on the same day - the third *Walk-The-Line* day. The backdrop is dominated by the vast *Diageo* distillery; this replaced a previous distillery on that ground - seen, **Inset**, in an undated image by **Ian Kirk** [www.rmweb.co.uk] that may be from around the time the station closed to passengers in late-1969, but before it began to deteriorate, or be demolished. The current, modern and extended distillery was billed as “one of the largest in the world” when it was opened in May 1991.



Network Rail Scotland Begin Line-Clearance

Work Formally Starts with Tree-Felling Along Route

“WE WILL Remove all Trees and Vegetation within Six Metres [19ft. 8ins.] of the Railway inside our Boundary”.

That was how Mr. Owen Campbell, Communications Manager for *Network Rail Scotland*, began his letter to members of the *LevenMouth Rail Campaign*, parliamentary representatives, local councillors, and all other interested parties, on Thursday, 10th. September.

“I am writing to advise you that we will shortly [on Monday, 21st.], start work to remove trees and vegetation on land within the railway boundary between Thornton Junction and Leven”, the letter begins; “... For trees beyond the six metres, we will look to safely retain trees where possible, but some will have to be removed. It will mean height-reducing and cutting-back, but this enables re-growth, continuing to provide carbon-storage benefits as well as a visual barrier.

“A Programme of Enhancements”

“For reference, the volume of trees [or] vegetation within 6 metres is minimal and low in biodiversity value. [The work] will include a general tidy-up, and will address any issues with fencing uncovered as the vegetation is cleared along the 6-mile [9.6 km.] route corridor.” / ... -►

LMRC's Next On-Line Meetings...

**Tuesday, 29th. Sept'r.,
and Tues., 27th. Oct'r.,
- Both at 6.30 p.m..**

Please See Back Page for Information and Campaign Contacts - LMRC members are sent codes to allow them to access On-line Video-Meetings.

Stay Safe ... Protect Others ... Save Lives !

Remember Your Mask ... and the "F.A.C.T.S."* !!

- ★ FACE COVERINGS in Enclosed Spaces;
- ★ AVOID Crowded Places;
- ★ CLEAN Your Hands & Surfaces Regularly;
- ★ TWO-METRE (6ft.) Distancing;
- ★ SELF-ISOLATE if You Have Symptoms.

[* From Official Guide Website.]

- says LMRC News

Stay SAFE ... and Stay SANE!

Tree-Clearance Work Starts: A Network Rail Letter

◀- Cont. from Front Page \ "We [Network Rail Scotland] will then follow on with site and geological investigation, which will help ... define a programme of enhancements ... to deliver on the aim of reintroducing the train service to Leven."

The work is taking place between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., having commenced on Monday, 21st. September - we presume on weekdays, and that new *Coronavirus* regulations, announced the very next day, haven't baulked it all - although it will not be "continuously at any one location".

"Managing the trees and vegetation alongside our railway to ensure the safety of passengers and railway workers is essential", Mr. Campbell writes; "... and it's something we plan carefully and with consideration.

This work is a core part of maintaining the railway, and will be carried out in compliance with our vegetation management standard. [Referenced and linked here to Network Rail's community and environment website page, at www.networkrail.co.uk].

"Ways to Work Efficiently"

"As our work is funded from the public purse, we always look for ways to work efficiently, and to minimise the impact on line-side communities. We also take on board feedback from those who [will] travel on, or live beside, the railway, and have used this to improve our policy and approach to the delivery of these works in Scotland."

IMPORTANT PASSENGER ANNOUNCEMENT :
The Next Train from LEVEN
to EDINBURGH
(and Other Destinations),
Calling at CAMERON BRIDGE, is
Now Due : 2023 !

Before the *Network Rail Scotland* track-clearance teams got to work, the agency's environment team was on the case with all necessary ecological and environmental surveys to learn of, and setting about "*Protecting our Environment*" - identifying and providing safer havens for any nesting birds and all protected species in the area; taking them out of harm's way.

"Appropriate methods of working" have been adopted, and *Network Rail's* aim "has been, and will be, to proactively identify and safeguard protected species, roosts and habitats of value.

"We hope that all this is useful information". The letter adds, advising anyone with concerns or suggestions to e-Mail LevenmouthConnected@networkrail.co.uk if they require further information on all this, or get in touch - in a more-'traditional' way - by calling the *Network Rail Scotland* round-the-clock helpline on **03457 11 41 41**.

"Opportunity to Meet With You and Allow You to Share Your Thoughts..."

"As we move forward with the project", the letter continues; "... you will see and hear more from us about the work - what is involved, and when and how it will be happening - and we hope to get the opportunity to meet with you and allow you to share your thoughts and views with us.

"[Once again], I hope this information is helpful, and we apologise for any inconvenience this essential work may cause."

● **LMRC News** had hoped to be able to tell the story - in words and, maybe, photographs - of the clearance work as it progresses and, later, actual re-laying of the railway track itself ... hence our desire to continue publication beyond the announcement of the line's impending revival - but now the *Coronavirus* crisis, and Health and Safety concerns, may put paid to those ambitions. - We plan to get message to *Network Rail Scotland*, to appeal for text and photographs as appropriate.

OTHER LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Our New Railway Updates Feature - No. 3.

Forth Circle Rail Link

Story Details: *Scottish Parliament Website* (www.parliament.scot).

THIS Campaign, established and petitioned-for at the *Scottish Parliament*, five years ago, by Martin Keatings, is his bid to "urge the Scottish Government to release funding for and establish passenger rail platforms at: Crossford; Cairneyhill; Torryburn; Valleyfield; Culross and Kincardine; thereby linking Stirling to the **Fife Circle**".

Indeed, in replying to the campaigners' message, a Mr. Grant Robertson wrote: "Existing signalling at Charlestown

Junction [about 3 miles, or 5 kilometres, south-west of Dunfermline], allows trains to access either platform at Dunfermline (Town), and reverse to Edinburgh [which is no trouble for modern passenger trains]. Services could either be: Glasgow-Stirling-Dunfermline; Glasgow-Stirling-Dunfermline-Edinburgh, or, more imaginatively, Glasgow-Stirling-Dunfermline-**Leven**". - Thankfully, for Levenmouth at least, that imagination is no longer essential.

A straight-to-the-point response to the *Holyrood* website came from a Mr. Angus Stewart - "The railway's there - use it".

Another of the 62 respondents to the 'site was none other than Jane Ann Liston, leader of the St. Andrews campaign - *StARLink* - and also now a senior officer at *RailFuture Scotland*. She commented: "This [proposal] would plug an important gap, and lead the way to establishing a West / East Glasgow-St. Andrews rail corridor via Stirling, Alloa, Dunfermline and Kincardine".

'Borders' Bound for The South?

Story: 'The Scotsman' Website (www.scotsman.com), 9th. February, 2018.:
● This Story first appeared in *The Scotsman* newspaper, close on three years ago, but has certain parts to it that make it very much worth retelling now. ...

IT IS NOW Five Years since the new **Borders Railway**, linking Edinburgh and Newcraighall to Galashiels and Tweedbank, was formally opened by H.M. The Queen, and, by all accounts, it has been a massive success - despite a few concerns, such as 'too much' single-tracking,

and bridges to suit only that. The *Campaign for Borders Rail*, understandably, ask for improvements, advancing it the 17 miles (28 km.) or so to Hawick and, ultimately, restoring the whole *Waverley Line* to Carlisle. "Hawick suffered most from the loss of the *Waverley Route* in 1969 [and] deserves to get its rail link back", said David Spaven - the respected railway engineer and specialist who has greatly supported Levenmouth's case. He calls for the 17 miles of new construction south of Tweedbank - "where local and central government failed to protect the line of route from the 1970's to the '90s.". "It's certainly achievable, and could also serve Melrose and Newtown St. Boswells, and [have] *park-and-ride* bus [facilities] for Kelso."

"Dear Diageo - Fancy Joining Us for a 'Wee Dram' to ...

Celebrate LMRC's Success?

... oh!, and Forthcoming 50th. Anniversary of Plans for Your Leven Base?"!

1970: Attracting Investment, Great Potential Even Without Passenger Trains; PREFERABLY WITH!
- What They Said in 'Seventy' ...

'Cannot Fail to Wonder...'

Whatever was said back then, in favour of the plans for the new whisky complex, we cannot fail to wonder if there was also a campaign to re-open the Levenmouth Rail Link to passenger trains only a year or so after the services ended. After all, freight trains were still running in the Autumn of 1970 and there ought not to have been an issue with re-starting passenger train

IT IS NOW A Year and Two Months since the formal 'Go-Ahead' was given for the reinstatement of the Levenmouth Rail Link. 2019, as we know, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the withdrawal of passenger trains between the stations of Thornton Junction, Cameron Bridge and Leven. The half-century theme, however, goes on, as October marks the 50th. Anniversary of the publication of plans, by the former *Distilleries Company Ltd.*, to build the huge bottling-plant that now stands dominant on the Mountfleurie estate, on the north-west edge of Leven.

To mark this anniversary - *Covid-19 aside!* - we (at *LMRC News*, anyway) would have liked to see how *Diageo* might react to an informal invite to them, to meet Campaigners, and even join in with the celebrations - with that customary *wee dram* raised in a "toast", both to their own golden anniversary, and to that of the *LMRC's* own great victory.

Perhaps, also, we would have got to discuss how the *Rail Link might well benefit Diageo*, too...!

Promising Future was Envisaged for New Bottling-Plant

Described as the "biggest-ever investment in Scots whisky" by the *East Fife Mail* on 14th. October, 1970, the Banbeath works would cost around £7,500,000 [equal to about £117,000,000 today*] "The firm hopes to erect a blending- and bottling-plant which would provide employment for around 900 people", the newspaper added. The plans for the new, 162-acre (65½-hectare*) site, it was suggested, "would come as a tremendous boost to the whole Levenmouth area, suffering from the effects of the *Michael Colliery* disaster in 1967 which [obviously besides leaving 9 miners dead and over 300 more needing rescue**] cost 2,000 jobs.

"Leven is accepted as the leisure and holiday playground of Levenmouth, and now it could become an area of growth for employment. This new project would carry the name of Leven to all parts of the world, along with the firms in the borough with international trade.

"The Levenmouth area would receive an injection of capital investment which would establish a solid base which attracts future development", the report continued.

services whenever the Banbeath plant opened, with the old station and the tracks to it still in place - as we have seen in photographs from late-1970. The hoped-for new workforce of around 900, plus many more from shops and other "support industries", and other commuters, would surely have made passenger trains financially-viable once again.

The town's railway station was located - logically! - on Station Road, and had the [still-trading] *Station Hotel* for a neighbour. That's within a mile of Banbeath; some workers may have favoured Cameron Bridge or another 'halt'.

Even despite losing its passenger trains, all this shows that Levenmouth was, **and is**, in a fine position to attract new business - four new "advance factories" and at least the Docks in 1970; the 'Low Energy' and other business development sites - **and also** the Docks - in 2020. With the railway back in action soon, the attraction of Levenmouth **now** to new business, and families, must be greater-still. ...

EAST FIFE MAIL. WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1970. Price: SIXPENCE.

Whisky galore brings new spirit to Leven

THE biggest-ever investment in Scots whisky—between 27 million and 28 million—is planned by the Distilleries Company Ltd. for a site at Banbeath, the Windygates Road, near Leven. The firm hopes erect a blending and bottling plant which would provide employment for around 900 people.

The announcement by the County Council of intentions for a 162-acre site came as a tremendous boost to the whole Levenmouth area, suffering from the effects of the *Michael Colliery* disaster in 1967 which [obviously besides leaving 9 miners dead and over 300 more needing rescue**] cost 2,000 jobs.

At present the unemployment rate for the district is at about six per cent, twice the national average.

A delighted Premier G. S. MacLennan said: "The news that this large-scale development was to be carried out in Leven is a tremendous boost to the whole Levenmouth area, suffering from the effects of the *Michael Colliery* disaster in 1967 which [obviously besides leaving 9 miners dead and over 300 more needing rescue**] cost 2,000 jobs.



▲ "This aerial photograph of Leven [in 1970] shows, in the centre-left corner, the 'research and development centre' occupied by Messrs. Henry Balfour. On the other side of the Windygates road from this building is an area surveyed recently when a field was pegged-off and test-bores were taken."

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Original Page: © *Johnston Press*, All Rights Res'vd.; Image also Courtesy: *Methil Public Library and Fife Cultural Trust*.

* Information from 'Bank of England Inflation Calculator' and 'Online Conversion' Websites. — ** Cheryl Peebles' *Fife Courier* report on the 50th. Anniversary Disaster Memorial, 11th. September, 2017.

'REINSTATE THE LEVEN-**EDINBURGH** RAIL-LINK !'

LMRC **NOT** MEETING
LITERALLY, But *Still*
VIRTUALLY ! - - - -

**LevenMouth Rail Campaign
are Sorry to Announce
that, due to Coronavirus,
their usual Monthly 'Action
Group' Meetings at the Fife
Renewables Innovation
Centre are Cancelled 'til
Further Notice ("For the
Duration"), but will Take
Place via "Zoom" Internet-
Based Video-Conferencing**

The Next 'Zoom' Meetings for LMRC, are as Planned:

LMRC Action Group **'Virtual'** Meeting
- Tuesday, 29th. September, 6.30 p.m.;

LMRC Action Group **'Virtual'** Meeting
— Tuesday, 27th. October, 6.30 p.m.;

LMRC Action Group **'Virtual'** Meeting
— Tuesday, 24th. November, 6.30 p.m.;

LMRC Action Group **'Virtual'** Meeting
— Tuesday, 26th. January, '21, 6.30 p.m.;

LMRC Action Group **'Virtual'** Meeting
— Tuesday, 23rd. February, 6.30 p.m.;

LMRC Contacts  



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**Justifying New *Active Travel* Routes,
... and those Cycle-Repair Vouchers !?**

**£2Bn. Package "Set to
Boost UK Cycling and
Pedestrian Capacity"**

Story: **Carl Dinnen**, *ITV News Website*, Saturday, 9th. May.:

IN EARLY-MAY the *Westminster* Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, announced a new scheme intended to boost cycling and walking activity in the United Kingdom. He lately launched a £2-Billion package to increase the capacity of the paths network; the need for this investment has been shown by a huge rise in commuters, and *they've* been facing new challenges in getting to work during the *Covid-19* crisis. In Levenmouth, cycling and walking isn't 'nose-to-tail' like it might be further south - but with the unsuitable, and in places, downright-dangerous, local roads, its popularity will increase.

Whatever people *hereabouts* tend to think of plans announced from London, these issues and worries about pollution and climate emergencies surely must justify a need for the *Active Travel* footpaths and cycle-ways to come with the renewed Levenmouth Rail Link - and for all those cycle-repair vouchers recently announced to boost cycle businesses.

Measures are to include "pop-up bike-lanes" and wider pavements - as well as *cycle-only* and *bus-only* streets.

The programme, with the "aim of doubling cycling and increasing walking to work by 2025", was publicised in June. It may *or may not* already account for a new Levenmouth 'path network but, anyway, Grant Shapps said it was "likely that peoples' commutes into work, using public transport, would be changed dramatically due to the impact of *Covid-19*. ... While it's crucial we 'stay-at-home' now, when the country gets back to work we need to ask people to carry on cycling or walking - and for them to be joined by many others, too."

CAMPAIGN CALL
"LOBBY YOUR MSP!" SAY LMRC

ALTHOUGH, of Course, we now have the wonderful prospect of the Levenmouth Rail Link being reinstated, the **LMRC** remain active — and continue to keep watch on progress. **If you have concerns at any stage**, you should still write to your MSP, MP or Local Councillor.

LMRC News is Produced by **ALISTAIR AYNSCOUGH** at Colinsburgh, Fife. Transmitted by **Adobe PDF** and e-Mail to the **LevenMouth Rail Campaign**.



From the Creator of

**'Brougham
Hall News'**

Founded in Penrith, Cumbria; 1 December 1986.

www.broughamhall.co.uk

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