



"Much, Much More Than a Mere Transport Project!"

LMRC News 69
SERVICE
DELAYED

A MIX OF Work on Three Different Newsletter titles, and a well-meaning suggestion on the scheduling of one of them, has led to a delay in publication of this *LMRC News*, No. 69.

Some readers of *LMRC News* might know that editor Alistair Aynsough also writes newsletters for his former employers, *Cumbria Cerebral Palsy (CCP)*, and the *Brougham Hall Charitable Trust*, who are involved with the conservation and rebuilding work at the old mansion home of a mid-19th.-Century Lord High Chancellor near Penrith, Cumbria. As with *LMRC News* these are converted to 'PDF' files, before being checked and e-Mailed to readers.

Some time ago, to ensure Festive stories "stayed fresh" for *CCP* folks, Alistair began their bi-monthly newsletters' year with January, March and other 'odd-numbered' months, and that was why the 'even' months - February, April, and onwards - were chosen when *LMRC News* went bi-monthly at the beginning of 2020; the Rail Link's reinstatement had been given the go-ahead and, possibly, Christmas was not as important as it might be to people whose lives can be so badly-affected by disability.

The suggestion of dating *LMRC News* for two months at a time led Alistair to forget that he hadn't actually produced an issue for "May-June 2021", so he will now put it right with individual issues for July and August, before returning to bi-monthly with "(September?-) October 2021", etc..

... With All Due Apologies!!

INSIDE . . .
"RIP IT UP!"

Up and Out with
The Old Tracks

... as Plans for Levenmouth
Rail Link Go Public

Showing Initiative

... Not Just
BRAG-ging!

Why are the Social
Enterprise Group
Levenmouth Together
and the local 'Third
Sector' Initiative *BRAG
Enterprises* Keen to
Purchase Leven's
stripped-out, former
W. H. Smith Shop... ??

Read More INSIDE... !

The *LMRC's* Next
On-Line Meetings :

are on

Tues, 31st. August,

and

Tues., 28th. Sept'r.,

- Both at **6.30 p.m..**

LMRC members are sent codes
to enable them to access these
On-line 'Zoom' Video-Meetings.

Please See **Back Page** for More
Information — and for our
Campaign Contacts.

"KEEP GOING, LMRC!"

'Keep Pressure On to Get Station
Facilities Suitable for Everyone'

A PRODUCTIVE MEETING; "Hold Leaders' Feet to The Fire"



Left: The very moment, at Methil Docks on 8th. August, 2019, when Michael Matheson, MSP., Transport Secretary, told the *LMRC* that they should keep up their good work of campaigning — despite their celebrations that day, **Right.**

"KEEP GOING, LMRC!" — That was the message readily heard and heeded by members of the *Levenmouth Rail Campaign* at their June 'Zoom' meeting.

Eugene Clarke, Chair of the group, added to his comments from their meeting of six months earlier by repeating: "It is clear everyone felt we still have an important role to play. This includes ensuring that the local community's views and needs [are] effectively represented to decision-makers; that a watchful eye is kept on the development, particularly in regards to facilities; that some sort of co-ordination takes place among the various projects in the area; and that local businesses' interests are addressed.

"Particular mention was made of the environmental issues, and it was suggested we could link up with various groups to ensure there is proper integration of transport modes.

"There may also be opportunities created by the 'COP-26' Conference in Glasgow in the Autumn".

All this follows advice from Michael Matheson, M.S.P., the Transport Secretary himself, which he gave to the campaigners on 8th. August, 2019, the very day he announced the rail revival "Go-Ahead".

At last month's *virtual* gathering, the phrase "Hold [political and local administrative] leaders' feet to the fire" was quoted at least three times . . . and members of the *LMRC* were urged to "keep the pressure on to get 'station facilities suitable for everyone'".

Still... 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**!

Showing Initiative . . . Not Just **BRAG**-ging!

A 'Community Hub' Role for Leven's Former **WHSmith** High Street Shop



Above: The *W.H. Smith* shop in Leven, and the neighbouring *Store Twenty-One*, on 31st. October, 2017 ... , soon after they both closed.

Below: Recently acquired by the *BRAG* social enterprise group and now fitted-out as new-business units and offices, *Thompson House* is seen here on Friday, 23rd. July, this year, at sun-blessed Methil Docks.



Story: **Jon Brady**, "**Fife Today**" Website (for **East Fife Mail**), Thursday, 25th. March.:

THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE 'Levenmouth Together' - a group run by the local "third-sector initiative" **BRAG Enterprises** - are now busy creating a "Community Hub" within the stripped-out, former *W.H. Smith* shop on Leven's High Street. Nearly every town and city on these shores has at least one of these famous newsagents-cum-stationers - so, when this one closed

2 - **LMRC News** - July 2021 - www.facebook.com/LevenmouthRail

IMPORTANT PASSENGER ANNOUNCEMENT :

The Next Train from **LEVEN** to **EDINBURGH**

(and Other Destinations),

Calling at **CAMERON BRIDGE**, is

☺ **Now Due : Dec'r. 2023!** ☺

in the Autumn of 2017, after a series of closures of other shops and banks round about, it was seen as a major shock to the town and district. Naturally, the loss became a major talking-point for campaigners for our "Rail Link to the Outside World".

The shop was bought by *BRAG Enterprises* for £210,000, at least, assisted by funding from the Scottish Government "Town Centre Fund". *Fife Council* have also agreed to provide £20,000 towards 'fit-out' costs for the shop unit, and *BRAG Enterprises* intends to apply for £50,000 more, from the Government's *Levenmouth Blueprint* funding, to help with the renovations by *Levenmouth Together*.

The ex-newsagents' outlet is being transformed into a new *community space* for Leven ... and will, someday soon, be offering a range of activities for community members.

Councillor **Ken Caldwell**, the Convener of the *Levenmouth Area Committee*, said: "The plans for this vacant retail unit will make an impact on several priorities for the area - improving the town centre; increasing training and employment opportunities; and supporting tourism.

"This project is a good example of the *Council* working with partners - in this case, *BRAG* - to bring about positive changes in our town centre."



"Good Example of Council working with Partners." - **Councillor Ken Caldwell** joins *Fife Council* Rail Link 'Go-Ahead' celebrations at Carberry House, Leven - with the *LMRC* - on 4th. September, 2019.

Methil Jobs Boost as New Owners Hire More Staff

InfraStrata Re-Open Former **Bi-Fab** Yard and Buildings

Story: '**BBC News**' Website, Friday, 16th. April;
also: '**Sunday Times**' Website, 30th. May.:

THE FABRICATION Yard here at Levenmouth, Fife, is re-opening this month [July 2021], after its new owners *InfraStrata* landed a contract to build eight wind-turbine towers, or *platforms*. In fact, things look so promising that, having announced 290 new jobs in April, they are now offering a total of over 400 - with one media source even suggesting "600".

The yard and buildings were owned, 'til December, by *BiFab*, or *Burntisland Fabrications*, who were plunged into business administration. They owned this yard, and ones at *Arnish* (Isle of Lewis), and at *Burntisland* itself... *but that yard remains closed.*

Be Patient... or -

Work is Now Underway on the Long-Awaited . . .

Levenmouth Rail Link

The Public are advised to Stay Away from the Railway Trackbed while these Works are in Progress. Heavy Machinery will be in Use – and there will be many other Hazards on the whole Line.

Better Late for a Train than, Well..., **"LATE"**!



Poster Imagery by Alistair Aynscough / LMRC News.

Up and Out with Old Tracks

Plans for Levenmouth Rail Link Go Public

Story: Owen Campbell, *Network Rail 'Media Centre' Website* (www.networkrailmediacentre-co-uk), Tuesday, 15th. June.:

DOUBLE-Tracking and Electrification are "to be progressed" for the new Levenmouth Rail Link – and the locations for the two stations along the route have also now been confirmed.

Work to dismantle the old track got underway, in mid-to late-July, with around a mile (1.6 kms.) of this being donated, by *Network Rail*, to the *Fife Heritage Railway* group at Kirkland Sidings, in Leven. This clear-out comes ahead of all necessary repairs and restoration of the trackbed, ahead of the laying of the new tracks, signalling, and everything else that the new railway will require.

Levenmouth's long-anticipated rail services have thus "moved a step closer", the 'Media Centre' website of *Network Rail* also reported on Tuesday, 15th. June; this wonderful news was made official that day by Graeme Dey, the Scottish Government Transport Minister, on a visit to Leven. Mr. Dey stated: "that the line would be double-tracked and electrified", and he also said; "... Leven Station is to be located behind the *Levenmouth Leisure Centre*" [so, not far from the town's Bus Station], "...and Cameron Bridge Station will be to the east of the A.915." The old station was next to the *Diageo* Distillery, west of that busy Levenmouth-Kirkcaldy road. These decisions were made after "detailed development work" and "stakeholder consultation" — that recent survey of industrialists, local agencies and the local population, on what they want from the new Rail Link].

Network Rail have now been commissioned to design and construct the Levenmouth Rail Link. A 'Final Business Case' document will be published sometime before the end of 2021, and this is to include the overall costs of the reinstatement project.

Although we hear that the line will be equipped with overhead electric wires when it opens, battery-powered trains will initially be used on the services "in order to reduce the number of diesel trains operating on the network as early as possible".

OTHER LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Apologies — Our regular Railway Updates Column is with-held for Various Reasons!

"Project timescales will 'depend on *Fife Council's* planning processes', subject to which the line should be open in 2024", the *Network Rail* website continues.

2023, especially December 2023, has been mentioned by some as the potential re-launch date for passenger services to Levenmouth, possibly because December — and May — have been the months of national rail timetable changes for several years.

Mr. Dey said: "I'm pleased to confirm that we plan to double-track and electrify the Levenmouth Rail Link, and also open two new stations. This will ensure that local communities can benefit from improved connectivity and sustainable travel options.

"Our Programme for Government made a commitment to de-carbonising *Scotland's Railway*, and the growth in rail use is an essential part of de-carbonising the total transport mix. Investment in sustainable transport must be front and centre when deciding on future priorities. This scheme will see the re-opening of the disused rail-line between Thornton Junction and Leven, providing new passenger rail services to connect the Levenmouth area to Fife, Edinburgh, and the wider rail network.

"I look forward to seeing this exciting project get underway in the coming months, and would like to thank everyone involved in getting it to this stage."

Kris Kinnear, *Network Rail's* Capital Delivery Director (who accompanied the Minister on his visit to the seaside town in June), said: "We're working hard, alongside the Scottish Government, to bring the benefits of the railway to communities across Scotland. The Minister's announcement today is 'a green light to reconnect Leven to the mainline network. The new railway will enhance the communities it serves, and contribute positively to the lives of the people who live there by unlocking access to social, cultural, employment and educational opportunities'. We will continue to engage with the local community and stakeholders as we work to develop and deliver the project by December 2023. Electrification reduces journey times, thus expanding labour markets and improving access to education, potentially benefiting socio-economically-disadvantaged groups".

Improvements to local bus services, *Active Travel* plans and the *Blueprint Fund* are "being progressed by *Fife Council*", *Network Rail* point out.

LMRC News is Produced by ALISTAIR AYNSCOUGH

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by the Creator of

'Brougham Hall News'

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www.broughamhall.co.uk



LMRC News - July 2021 - e-Mail: LMRC@mail.com - 3

REINSTATING LEVEN-EDINBURGH RAIL-LINK

LEVENMOUTH'S "BRIGHTER FUTURE"

LAST TIME, in *LMRC News*, we reported on the much-anticipated "Brighter Future" for Levenmouth. This time, we continue the story, which was penned by **Jon Brady** for the *East Fife Mail* of Wednesday, 7th. April.

Levenmouth has the worst unemployment levels of all the districts of Fife, and the "mothballing" of the *BiFab* yard in Methil - now also being brought out of its slumbers - had dealt a particularly-severe blow to this area.

Despite the challenges, officers at *Fife Council* are confident that future investment in the area - not least the new Rail Link - will reverse the more-troubling trends.

Ken Caldwell, *Fife Council's* Area Convenor for Levenmouth, said: "A third of all 16- to 64-year-olds living in Levenmouth are considered to be 'economically inactive'."

Cllr. Caldwell continued; "They are neither employed, nor looking for a job. On average, they are less likely to have the qualifications to help them land better-paid [or more-rewarding] jobs — but we **do** have organisations in the area which provide alternative routes to help local people gain qualifications and get into apprenticeships."

A new 'decommissioning facility' will be created at the wide-ranging *Fife Energy Park*, bringing around 50 jobs; *SGN* are creating an £18-million hydrogen demonstration project in the same complex; the Scottish Government and *Fife Council*, meanwhile, are optimistic that the renewed Levenmouth Rail Link, and its accompanying, £10 million, *Blueprint Fund*, will bring new business to communities alongside the train tracks. *BRAG* [local 'Social Enterprise'] are creating their new *Community Hub* out of Leven's old *W.H. Smith* store, and the *Fife Employment Access Trust* are to restore the Silverburn Flax Mill to compliment their successful 'Glamping' [or 'Glamorous Camping'] business.

LMRC NOT Meeting Literally... , But Still Virtually! For Now?!

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


Prince Philip's "Methil Moment" ?

Story: *East Fife Mail*, Wednesdays, 7th. and 14th. February, 1996.:
THE LATE H.R.H. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who passed away in April, at 99, was due to visit Levenmouth in 1996, (we find, during our research of previous railway campaigning). His Royal Highness was famed for his "straight-talking" ways, and it seems someone, possibly a journalist out to 'stir-up a homets' nest', recalled a story, from 1964, in which the Duke was *alleged* to have told a Glaswegian (who once lived in Methil) that "Methil was a terrible place to live". On the day he arrived, however, the Duke was given his own "Royal Pardon" by locals, who seemed "prepared to forgive and forget" despite the deprivation, and 'train-deprived' life-styles, of Levenmouth in 1996!

LMRC Contacts

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LMRC Action Group 'Virtual' Meetings
The Next 'Zoom' Meetings for LMRC are as Planned:
All Meetings Start on Tuesdays at 6.30 p.m.

	— Tuesday, 31st. Aug., 6.30 p.m.;
	— Tues., 28th. Sept'r., 6.30 p.m.;
	— Tues., 26th. October, 6.30 p.m.;
	— Tuesday, 30th. Nov'r., 6.30 p.m..

Sooner or later, we will return to 'Normal' ... and Meet Up Once Again!

CAMPAIGN CALL
"LOBBY YOUR MSP!" SAY LMRC

ALTHOUGH, of Course, we now have the excellent news that work *has begun* on the Levenmouth Rail Link, the *LMRC* are still active, and continue to keep a watch on progress. **If you have concerns at any stage**, you should still write to your MSP, MP or Local Councillor.

4 - *LMRC News* - July 2021 - 'Phone: 01592-713078

STILL Feeling Short of Sport ... ?
Keep the Ball in Their Court !!!
CAMPAIGN CALLING ...
LOBBY YOUR MSP
... .. Say *LMRC*,
Please Keep This 'Ball' Rolling !