



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

# *You Gotta ...* **BREAK TRACKS TO “MAKE TRACKS”!**

**YOU HAVE to Break Eggs to Make an Omelette ...**, and, similarly, you have to **“Break Tracks to ‘Make Tracks’”** if you want to have a new Railway where one used to be! — That is, in straight-forward terms, how work to recreate the Levenmouth Rail Link has begun.

It is now twenty years since the last trains down this railway ran. The closure of the *Methil Power Station* in 2001 put paid to that freight service, and nothing has stirred on these *metals* since then. Trees growing up were the only real “movement” on this route.

Now, though, things are very much different, and the sight of a bare track-bed which, 50 to 70 years ago, would fill travellers and rail enthusiasts with dread, is actually bringing a sense of optimism to the district. At least we did not *lose track* in 1969, or the 1970's., and the sight of at least a still-operational freight-line kept campaigners' hopes for the railway's renaissance alive.

It was late-July, into early-August, when the first reports of track-lifting came in; the *Fife Courier* and *East Fife Mail* newspapers both carried images of the *Network Rail* track-lifting team in action. It was not 'til around mid-August that people in Leven, or at Cameron Bridge, Windygates and in those Methilhill homes that overlook the rail route through the River Leven 'glen', could see for themselves, and anticipate the Future. ...

*LMRC News'* editor Alistair Aynscough had made a few trips from his Colinsburgh home in previous weeks specially for photographs of the cleared trackbed before he could get any at all, on Sunday, 15th. August.

## **‘Well, Everyone, it All Gets Underway from Now On’**

Much of the old track has gone, and the real work to reinstate our much-missed “Rail Link to the Outside World” gets underway once the last of the old track has been removed. Some of us watched as the new *Borders Railway*, between Edinburgh and Tweedbank (Galashiels), gradually progressed from seeing excavators working around the original bridges of the northern section of the former *Waverley Line*, to the bridges and trackbed there being put under wraps for thorough restoration, and cleared up and eventually laid with clean, (almost glistening, it seemed!) new ballast, before the tracks were laid in a matter of days over the entire thirty miles (48 kms.) or so of the new route.

Now, we prepare to witness all (or most) of this right

**The First Real Signs of Progress ... Even if Things May Not Look Quite Like It!**

**Right:** A view towards the *Fife Heritage Railway* yard, back in Leven — to where some of the old railway track was donated.



## **Main Image - “To Be Arranged...”:**

Close to the site of the new Cameron Bridge Station, a walker paces the now-bare trackbed as the River Leven passes the area. This location will be of particular interest to the River Leven regeneration group as well as station builders, and the *Active Travel* and *Levenmouth Reconnected* Teams.

here, in Levenmouth. The vast majority of old track has indeed been lifted during August, and the trackbed is being levelled-out. Rotten bits of wooden sleepers, along with what's left of the old ballast, are being carted off, but a great deal of preparatory work must be done before any new lines are laid.

As with the *Borders Railway*, we are likely to see excavators working around the original bridges, perhaps to unblock them, and along the rest of the route, and some of the bridges may need to be put ‘under wraps’ to allow for thorough restoration. Any rust would have to be sand-blasted away in the search for damage or corrosion and to allow this ... / **Page 3** →

**LMRC's next On-Line Meetings are at 6.30 p.m. on...**

**Tuesday, 28 September, and Tuesday, 26 October,**

**Please See Back Page for Information and Campaign Contacts...**

**LMRC Members are sent codes to allow them to access On-Line Video-Meetings.**

# Set To Work on "Active Travel" Programme – as Levenmouth Waits ...

## Role of One of Two New Green Party Ministers in Holyrood Government

Story: *BBC Reporting Scotland Website*, Monday, 30th. August.:

**THE TWO Co-Leaders** of the *Scottish Green Party* - Patrick Harvie and Lorna Slater - will, we're sure, not let power go to their heads ... but some of us in and around Levenmouth are possibly hoping they will be able to pack a powerful, 'political' punch...!

In the final days of Summer, the *Greens* and the ruling party at Holyrood, the *Scottish National Party*, were locked in "coalition" negotiations in a bid to afford the Scottish Government the majority they missed out on at the General Election earlier this year.

The *Conservatives* said they will vote against the merger of the parties, calling it merely "a nationalist gamble", but, with this backing, the Scottish Government now have a comfortable majority at Holyrood.

The deal at last sealed, Lorna Slater was duly appointed as minister for 'green skills and the circular economy'. Patrick Harvie, meanwhile, will take on responsibilities for 'zero-carbon buildings' and, rather significantly for us around Levenmouth, "Active Travel".

The appointments were expected to be approved at a vote by MSP's on Tuesday, 31st. August.

Whatever our readers make of any political backdrop to this merger - and, of course, the *LMRC*, and



*LMRC News*, are 'non-political'. We're not expecting or campaigning for any of this ... or dropping hints! ... but it would be intriguing just to see if the *Greens* will (or wish to) 'bargain' with the *S.N.P.* over a potential Forth Tunnel — the bold idea they came up with just a few months ago; we featured it in *LMRC News* in February. The proposed tunnel would consist of twin bores and extend for nine miles, or 14½ kilometres, from Edinburgh Waverley Station, via an *Underground*-style station to serve the docks area of Leith, east of the Capital, then northwards below the Firth of Forth before the tracks finally resurface somewhere around Seafield, between Kinghorn and Kirkcaldy. The *Scottish Greens* see their Forth Tunnel plans as "essential" to resolve the "bottleneck" of railway traffic around Haymarket Station (west of Edinburgh Waverley), which, they say, "affects the whole network". The Tunnel, estimated to cost "£4Bn. to £6Bn.", is part of the plans suggested by the *Scottish Greens* as part of their 'Rail for All' initiative, by which, they state, they would "improve the rail network and deliver on carbon 'net-zero' transport promises".

## BREAK TRACKS TO 'MAKE TRACKS'!

**A Busy Route?** Existing and Lost Bridges near the site of Leven's new Station...



... with Bawbee Bridge in the distance, and the Iron Bridges beyond that.



**Less-Favoured:** The line of railway between the River Leven and the *Sainsbury's* supermarket, where Leven Station *might* have been, **Below-Left**, with tracks towards Thornton, on Sunday, 15th. August., and, **Below-Right**, without them, on Wednesday, 25th.. **Right: Great News!** (from Waggon Road.)



**North-West of Bawbee Bridge**

**HOW OTHERS FAIRED.** - Most, if not all, Parliamentarians who have so kindly helped and/or guided the *LMRC* in recent years came through this year's *Holyrood* General Election campaign without too much trouble. **Jenny Gilruth** (Mid-Fife and Glenrothes) and **David Torrance** (Kirkcaldy), both of *S.N.P.*, held their places, as did **Claire Baker** (Mid-Scotland and Fife, *Labour*). **Altany Craik**, (*Labour*, and *Fife Council* Convenor, had bid for office in Mid-Fife and Glenrothes at the poll on Thursday, 6th. May, but was unsuccessful. **Ryan Smart** remains in Council office, for *Labour*, at Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages, while **Graham Richie**, creator of the *Levenmouth Whale Project*, and a keen *LMRC* supporter, continues in his role as *Scottish Conservative and Unionist* Councillor for the Leven, Kennoway and Largo ward. Meanwhile, **Eugene Clarke** is standing down from his role as *Chair* at the *LMRC* to follow his own political ambitions in the months to come. **Apologies** for anyone I've missed! ... Please tell me, and I'll mention you in *LMRC News* soon.

**Station Site:** The roofline of the *Levenmouth Leisure Centre* (swimming pool and sports complex, in Leven) is just about visible, **Below**, over the trees in the distance on Sunday, 15th. August. Somewhere around here will be Leven's new Station. **Right:** Tracks towards Methil Docks were gone by Wed., 25th..

**South-East of Bawbee Bridge**





# Be Patient..., or -

Preparatory 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 Aynsough / LMRC News.

[*'Make Tracks' ...* ←Cont from Front Page.] \ ... to be eradicated. Also, more-natural causes of damage - such as the burrowing of rabbits, hares and other creatures - will have to be looked for with high-tech. surveying kit, as will the *potential* hazards posed by the many old coal-mines that pass below our feet.

Remember our comment on waiting for the new Rail Link to come, despite the tracks being lifted...? Any *back-tracking* now will clearly leave the *powers-that-be* with **'Egg on their Faces'**!

**Below-Left:** An "Island" Platform, like this at the former station at Cameron Bridge, is now proposed for Leven, we hear. The track on its left has been taken up, but not the sidings to the right.

**Below-Right:** The track that passed *Diageo's* Cameronbridge Distillery, in this now-familiar view, is now also gone. **Lower-Left:** A closer look at the Below-Left scene features the bridge under the A.955 Leven-Kirkcaldy road - and the cut-off sidings. **Lower-Right:** A view from that same bridge, back towards the former station and Distillery. - **All Images from Sunday, 15th. August.**



## Our 'Other Local Campaigns' Column Will Return Soon ...

**August 1961: 'British Newspaper Archive' Website Recalls a Levenmouth Environmental Crisis of 60 Years Ago ...**

Archives of the "Leven Mail" from 1940 to 1959, *and 1961*, so far, are available now online, courtesy of the **British Library Board**. These are just some of the archives among almost **45,000,000** news pages going back to 1699 Edinburgh.

## 1961 — Steps to Cut Smoke Nuisance at Methil Docks

### DR. BEECHING'S ASSURANCE TO LEVEN COUNCIL

Story: 'Leven Mail' (pre-'East Fife Mail'), *Johnston Press plc.*, [JPI Media], and the **BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD** (©, **ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**); *British Newspaper Archive Website*, 9th. August, 1961.:

**AN EFFORT** is to be made to cut down the smoke nuisance at Methil Docks, which comes from coal-fired steam *husters* [or generators?] in a power station which provides the hydraulic power to operate the lock gates, coal hoists and cranes in the port.

Recently, Mr. John T. Leslie, Town Clerk of Leven, wrote to Mr. Harry Gourlay, M.P. for *Kirkcaldy Burghs*, protesting about the excessive smoke. - In the letter, Mr. Leslie stated: "My *Council* complained to *Buckhaven and Methil Town Council*, some two years ago, [this] being the local authority for the area of the Docks, and they in turn took the matter up with the *British Transport Commission*, but unfortunately the nuisance persists. On many days there is a thick cloud of smoke hanging over Leven and extending considerably further afield. My *Council* would like it [if?] you would raise the matter with the *British Transport Commission*."

In a reply to Mr. Gourlay, Dr. Richard Beeching, Chairman of the *British Transport Commission* [and set to release his infamous 'Reshaping of *British Railways*' report of 1963 - which actually recommended the Levenmouth line be retained], writes: "Sir. Robert Letch, Chairman of the *Board of Management, British Transport Docks*, who is responsible for the administration of Methil Docks, has made inquiry into this complaint, and he has asked me to express his regret for the annoyance caused by smoke from the power station at the port. When the previous complaint mentioned by the Town Clerk was received, in May 1959, an investigation was carried out and it was decided to install smoke-eliminator doors. In addition, the staff were re-instructed in the firing of the plant, and it was hoped that these measures would eliminate the black smoke; unfortunately, this has not proved to be the case. ...

↘ **Continues on Back Page** →

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



by the Creator of  
**'Brougham Hall News'**

Founded in Penrith, Cumbria; 1 December 1986.

[www.broughamhall.co.uk](http://www.broughamhall.co.uk)

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

## Former *Bi-Fab* Yard Has New Owners

LONDON-Based *InfraStrata* have bought the former *Burntisland Fabrications* ['BiFab'] yards at Methil in Fife and Arnish on the Isle of Lewis but, curiously, not that at Burntisland itself. *Infrastrata*, who own the iconic *Harland & Wolff* yard at Belfast, fervently hope their new yards will benefit from winning contracts for off-shore wind-turbine schemes and, maybe, ship-building.

## More Next Time .....

### Network Rail Scotland say ...

[*'Project Timeline'...*] - "THE RE-INSTALEMENT of the Levenmouth Rail Link is part of wider improvements to Scotland's railway infrastructure, and will provide a major boost to economic sustainability and connectivity. "It will deliver opportunities for local people - unlocking access to education, culture, entertainment and employment options, as well as attracting new business and investment."

### Stations and Infrastructure, Lifting of previous Track - 2020-2021

### Planning and Consenting Process for Stations - Summer 2021

### Main Construction Works Start on Site - 2022

### Re-Opening Date [Stated by Select Media Sources]. - 2023

## LMRC NOT Meeting Literally..., But *StiH* Virtually! For Now?!

The monthly LevenMouth Rail Campaign "Action Group" Meetings are Cancelled 'til Further Notice, due to *Coronavirus*..., but are instead being held via Zoom Internet-Based Video-Conferencing.

### Levenmouth's Climate Crisis of 60 Years Ago ...

← Continued from Page 3. \ ... "As soon as your letter was received, the Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer of *British Railways*, who acts as consulting engineer of *British Transport Docks*, arranged for his Fuel Efficiency Officer to visit the port, but it has not yet been possible to carry out further experiments as the station has been closed for the holidays.

"When work is resumed, it is proposed to 'use one part of anthracite to two parts of local coal', and the Fuel Efficiency Officer will stay for a week at the station to instruct the men on the correct method of firing. The *Board* hope that these measures will substantially reduce the smoke nuisance during the limited time that the station will remain in operation.

"A modernisation scheme is now in hand whereby the coal hoists and lock gates will be operated by local electro-hydraulic pumping units, and the hydraulic cranes will be scrapped and replaced with diesel-electric units. This scheme should be completed by the end of the present year [1961] at the latest, and then the power station will be scrapped."

● Whatever "modernisation" took place, a coal-fed power station continued to operate at Methil Docks, as many of us know, for another forty years, up 'til 2001, which was when coal trains stopped coming to Methil Docks, and the tracks fell silent ... over-grown, and all but 'forgotten' by many people. *Not*, however, by the current *LevenMouth Rail Campaign*, or their predecessors.

## LMRC Contacts



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**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/LevenmouthRail](http://www.twitter.com/LevenmouthRail)

### LMRC Action Group 'Virtual' Meetings

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

**All Meetings Start on Tuesdays at 6.30 p.m.**



- Tues., 28th. Sept'r., 6.30 p.m.;
- Tues., 26th. Oct'r., 6.30 p.m.;
- Tues., 30th. Nov'r., 6.30 p.m.;
- *A Tuesday in Dec'r.?, 6.30 p.m.*

LMRC Don't Normally have Dec'r. Meets, but one may happen via 'Zoom'.

## 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 a watch on progress. If you have concerns at any stage, you should still write to your MSP, MP or Local Councillor.

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### STILL So Little of your favoured Sport... ?

### Keep the Ball in Their Court !!!

### CAMPAIGN CALLING ...

### LOBBY YOUR MSP

... .. Say *LMRC*,

Please Keep This 'Ball' Rolling !