



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

Harland & Wolff Yard’s “Jacket” Dispatches

Promising Signs of Industry Visible on The Firth of Forth



Left: ‘Jackets’ produced by former yard owners “Bi-Fab.”, or *Burntisland Fabrications*, appear behind raised ground near Denbeath, Methil (and Buckhaven), on 10th. August, 2017, as the “Poppy” wind-turbine (just!) - as well as the hills Largo Law and Kellie Law - appear beyond them.



Freight Yard Fortunes? – Story: Page 2

LMRC’s Next On-Line Meetings...

Tuesday, 22nd. February,
& Tuesday, 29th. March,
- 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.

Above: Two new jackets (or support towers for off-shore wind-turbines) are visible over Earlsferry rooftops, and close to the iconic shape of Bass Rock, on Thursday, 20th. January. They were two of many seen on the Firth of Forth recently.

OTHER RAIL CAMPAIGNS

★ **“Special Report”** ★

Okehampton Overjoyed...!

PASSENGER TRAINS RETURN TO DARTMOOR RAILWAY

End to Dreaded ‘Rail Desert’

Story: **Jamie Hawkins** and **Frankie Mills**,
‘DevonLive’ Website, Saturday, 20th.
 November.:

ON SATURDAY, 20th.

November, history was made in the Dartmoor National Park when a railway to the Devon town of Okehampton, from Exeter, was re-opened to passenger trains after almost half-a-century - and after a closure so soon after the line’s Centenary.

The original station at Okehampton was opened in 1871, but even whilst plans to celebrate the hundred-year mark were being made, for October 1971, the announcement of a discontinuation of passenger trains in 1972 rather spoiled *that* party.

The railway itself was saved, however, as a nearby quarry was needed for the ballast used for most other railway track-beds. By the time that quarry closed, in 2011, ‘special’ charter trains, and certain other services, had been serving the railway for 14 years, so all this helped the campaigners in their bid to have regular passenger trains back at Okehampton Station.

Finally, *last year*, another official announcement came. The locals’ dreaded ‘rail desert’ was finally banished to the history books, and, on Wednesday, 17th. November, Jamie Hawkins and Frankie Mills, of the *DevonLive Website*, along with other local and national media, found themselves amid a joyous throng as folk prepared once again... / **Page 4** ▶

Levenmouth's Potential Windfall and Prospects for New Rail Link – Especially with Freight Trains?!

£700M. Raised at Auction of *ScotWind* Off-Shore Windfarm Sites

Main Story: **Kevin Keane, BBC (Environment) News Website**, Monday, 17th. January.:

WHATEVER

YOU May Think of the recent decision to sell off plots for several off-shore wind-farms, in order to raise around £700,000,000 for public funds, the Levenmouth economy is now *potentially* in line to benefit from the recent auction of rights to erect these substantial wind-farms, out at sea, around Scotland.

The news could also be a significant boost for the *LevenMouth Rail Campaign*, which continues to keep watch on progress on the re-instatement of the Levenmouth Rail Link — and members have continued to press for the inclusion of a decent freight service when the line is due to reopen in the latter weeks of *next year*. From the outset, campaigners have called upon the likes of spirits-distilling giants *Diageo*, among others, to adopt the railway for their future freight-transport needs, perhaps with the backing of *Malcolm Logistics*, the noted road-haulage company who already transport much of *Diageo's* produce. Senior representatives of the haulier have already thought much of the use of “inter-modal” containers that transfer from lorries to rail-trucks.

“Much Hope for The Future” for Levenmouth

Now, however, the recent take-over of the *Bi-Fab* yard at Methil, near Leven, by *Harland &. Wolff*, and the sight of several, huge wind-turbine ‘towers’ (or ‘sub-structures’, called *Jackets*, on the Firth of Forth in recent weeks and months, must give everyone in this district of Levenmouth much hope for the future, with the prospect of more of these, and so much more construction, being done here ... but, of course, that would need the revived railway to bring a re-newed freight connection with Methil Docks as well.

A significant increase in valuable trade for this area would also bring with it the very real promise of meaningful employment, particularly for Methil folks who have had, for generations, to do without so many of the basic things in life — let alone luxuries — that others have received over the years.

The auction of sea-bed plots for “major off-shore wind projects”, around the Scottish coast, has, as we’ve already noted, yielded £700M. for the Scottish Government and public finances. There’s been a fair amount of disquiet at *Holyrood House* - the Scottish Parliament building - over this sale, but with it now over, they must find new and worthwhile uses for those funds. Some of the reasons behind the demise of *Bi-Fab* show just how important that would be; it was alleged that they were denied contracts to build

components, particularly those jackets, for a new wind-farm being built just along the coast from their yard. Another company, from halfway around the world, had won the contract — and were then shipping the components many thousands of miles over the high seas, right here to east-Central Scotland, supposedly with sufficient manufacturing capacity of its own.

Fully-Functional, Full-Capacity - and ‘Heavy-Duty’.

In these days spent worrying over saving valuable energy, and the Earth’s resources, and not wasting so much, those long sailings did not exactly leave a great impression, and locally-manufactured products *ought* to find favour — whether it’s in the same country, or even in the same region or district.

Fully-functional, full-capacity, and ‘heavy-duty’, passenger and freight rail connection is needed for Levenmouth — and for so many other communities left out-on-a-limb many years ago. Of course, here at Levenmouth, we are thankful to Transport Minister Michael Matheson, for giving the go-ahead for this railway revival, and also to the many local MP’s., MSP’s., councillors, community champions, walking schoolchildren, and all others who have supported the *LevenMouth Rail Campaign* over the years.

That’s not to forget *RailFuture Scotland*, *BRAG Enterprises*, *CLEAR Buckhaven &. Methil*, *Network Rail*, *Sustrans*, *River Leven (and Back Burn) Projects*, *Fife Council*, *Leven Reconnected* and so many other agencies, or charities, who have so kindly helped us ... or still do. Now we call on the powers-that-be to reinstate as many other long-lost railways as practically possible, for social and also economic reasons.

Be Bold! We cannot help but think that so much money was lost to battling the virus that it’s worthwhile now to invest in services and infrastructure to pave the way to prosperity in the years to come.

And, **no...**, just in case you, dear readers, were beginning to think we were rounding everything up before closing down, *LMRC News* will keep going. Campaigning for suitable freight services, as well as a good and reliable passenger service, is now one of this campaign group’s chief duties.

“**COME WITH THE WIND...?!**”

THIS IS The Brief Story of the seventeen proposed wind-farm projects that were recently sold off. They will cover a total of 7,000km² (or 2,703 square-miles), and were selected for the first ‘leasing round’ of its kind for ten years. These sites will give a combined, potential electricity generation capacity of 25 *Giga-Watts* - two-and-a-half times the 10 *GigaWatts* that

“Energy Park Fife... World-Leading Facility”

(Quote from the *InvestFife Website* [www.investfife.co.uk])



The
136-acre
[55-hectare]
'Engineering'
part of “Energy
Park Fife”, shown
here on 10th. August,
2017; The Park actually includes

Methil Docks and the now Harland & Wolff yard.



Largo Bay, and the Firth of Forth, with drilling rigs, is seen on 3rd. March, 2017, with Leven and other built-up parts of Levenmouth district, and beyond. The view is from the A.915 road as it climbs the sides of Largo Law on its way towards Largoward and, eventually, St. Andrews.

The “**Low Carbon Investment Park**” — at Muirhead, on the edge of Levenmouth — appears on 10th. August 2017. There’s plenty of space, *and* scope, for ideas and investment, at this “ideal location for supply-chain companies” - as the sign, **Right**, proclaims. ...



As Quoted on Entranceway Sign ...
“**Ideal Location for Supply-Chain Companies.**”



The **Fife Renewables Innovation Centre**, on Ajax Way, Methil Docks, flies the (sail)-flags of the *LevenMouth Rail Campaign* on 2nd. September, 2015, the day of their first, (well-attended), big Annual General Meeting.



The **Isle of May**, a **Seabirds' Paradise**, is shown from the west (Anstruther) side on 21st. April, 2016..., but are its many feathered residents now about to be endangered by increasing numbers of wind-turbines?

were expected at the time of the auction ... and the **BBC News** report noted that some people had said it could be as much as *five times* that amount of power.

Scotland has 1.9 GW. of operational off-shore wind-generating capacity already, and another 8.4 GW will be available when other sites are completed. The leasing auction, arranged by *ScotWind* and overseen by *Crown Estate Scotland*, attracted 74 bids from a world-wide mix of major oil companies, investment funds and utilities businesses. Now it remains to be seen whether or not the auction can truly herald a “revolution” in renewable energy provision.

Successful Bidders

Most of the sites are on the east, north east or northern coast, with just one on the western side of Scotland. Six sites are to be sited out at sea, east of either Fraserburgh or Aberdeen, and were successfully bid for by *B.P. Alternative Energy Investments* (2,907 MegaWatts); *SSE Renewables* (2,610 MW.); *Shell New Energies* (2,000 MW.); *Falck Renewables* (1,200 MW.); *Vattenfall* (798 MW.), and *DEME*, with 1,008 MW..

DEME have also secured a second site, of 1,008 megawatts, east of the Orkney Islands, and *Falck Renewables* have got a 1,000 MW. site east of Caithness; others there include another secured by *Falck Renewables* (500 MW.); and one each for *Ocean Winds* (1,000 MW.); *Scottish Power Renewables* (3,000 MW.); and *BayWa*, at 960 MW.. *Off-shore Wind Power* have a site north of Sutherland (2,000 MW.), and *Northland Power* will set up one, of 1,500 MW., north-west of Cape Wrath, Sutherland.

Two more sites are to be established north of the Isle of Lewis, Inner Hebrides, by *Magnora* (495 MW.), and by *Northland Power* (840 MW.) The only site to be offered off the west coast of Scotland, other than around the Hebrides, will be *Scottish Power Renewables'* 2,000-megawatt installation, which is intended for a location south-west of the Isle of Skye.

Scottish Power won the sea-bed rights to develop three offshore wind farms, with 7 GW. total capacity, and *Shell New Energies* is the lead applicant on the most-expensive development, of 6 sites, off the Aberdeenshire coast, estimated to cost £86M in option fees. *B.P. Alternative Energy Investments* and *SSE Renewables* will each pay £85.9M. in fees for two sites. Winners have been offered option agreements which reserve the rights to specific areas of sea-bed.

ScotWind represents a major change in electricity generation in Scotland. By the time they are all built, an estimated six-million tonnes of carbon-dioxide will no longer be entering our atmosphere each year; that is about one-eighth of this country's emissions for 2019..., and we have already largely removed the carbon from our electricity-supply sector — but, due to most wind-turbines currently being unable to store electricity in batteries, for it to be used on the less-windy of days, extra turbines are still needed. That means the use of smart technology and increased storage - through batteries or '**green hydrogen**' - will become critical in future.

Coronavirus Caution!

Despite the U.K.'s hugely-successful Vaccination campaign, 'Covid-19' remains a serious threat. ...

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

- ★ **FACE COVERINGS** are **Still Required** in Enclosed Spaces * ;
 - ★ **AVOID** Crowded Places; ★ **CLEAN** Hands & Surfaces Often;
 - ★ **TWO-METRE** (6ft.) Distancing; ★ **SELF-ISOLATE ... Still!**
 - * Face Coverings Required on Public Transport, in Shops, etc.
- [* From Official N.H.S. Guide Website.]

**1962
Now**

ANOTHER Year's Local News Archives has been added to the ever-growing collection that is the **British Newspaper Archive Website**. The **Leven Mail** coverage for **1962**

— when some railways were already being closed down a year before the 'Beeching Axe' began to take effect — is now included, and that newspaper can be traced back to **1940**. Another 'paper, the **Fife Herald**, is archived right back to **1824** - thirty years before the Leven tracks opened.

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LEVEN MAIL, WEDNESDAY, 11th. APRIL, 1962.:

Leven Council Wants Shorehead Sidings TO MEET BRITISH RAILWAYS

LEVEN Town Council are to approach **British Railways**, to inquire about the acquisition of the railway sidings at Shorehead.

At the monthly meeting, Provost W. Laing told members it had been a pet scheme of ex-Provost James Cormie, who had been very anxious that the sidings should be acquired on behalf of the burgh.

He thought the idea was to use the ground for the showground — and also for a 'bus station.

At that time, the magistrates had met the railway company and discussed the whole thing with them. They had been agreeable to removing the sidings, and a [cost] had been mentioned, but nothing more was done. Councillor J. Sinclair moved that the approach to **British Railways** be made, and thought that the ground would be a valuable asset to the town.

If the showground was shifted it would give them the use of the whole beach for visitors during the summer. Councillor J. Barnier *seconded*.

Provost Laing, however, pointed out that the **Labour Exchange** [the 'Jobcentre Plus' of its day], still had a number of years before their lease expired.

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www.facebook.com/LevenmouthRail

LEVEN MAIL, WEDNESDAY, 14th. FEB., 1962.:

'Part-Time' Crossing at Waggon Road ... WILL SPLIT LEVEN IN TWO — BAILIE

LEVEN will be a town split in two, alleges a town councillor. Bailie C. Gardner, at February's meeting, was referring to a proposal by the **British Transport Commission** to put the railway crossing at Waggon Road on a 'part-time' basis.

[*This level-crossing was sited where Rose Street meets Waggon Road, on its west side, and Haughgate Terrace and Lemon Terrace both head off in the opposite direction, in a wide-open space, towards a former railway bridge to the east - which still has '14.' (for 'No. 14.') marked on a parapet, as can be seen on Scoonie Road.*]

In their letter, the **Commission** said the step was in keeping with economy cuts for **British Railways**. They pointed out that the crossing was little used by vehicular traffic in the early-morning and evening, and that they proposed to withdraw one keeper and retain the services of the other from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m..

"Save £500 a Year"

The cut would save **B.R.** in the region of £500 a year, they said, and as the crossing was an "occupational" one, **B.R.** were under no legal obligation to keep it open. [There were concerns for schoolchildren using the crossing each day - and also calls to keep a watch on it from 8.30 to 4.30., to account for this — and the morning commute as well. ...]

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

OTHER RAIL CAMPAIGNS ★ "Special Report" ★

Okehampton Overjoyed..., Continued...

◀ **From Page 1** \ ... to welcome passenger services. The town's celebrations for the railway's 100th. Anniversary were utterly ruined - but, although it was a few weeks late, the "150th." was a *rave-up* not to be missed, or forgotten - 'Covid-19' permitting, of course !

The **Campaign for Better Transport** were amongst the more-prominent groups to be involved in efforts to reverse this particular closure of fifty years ago, and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, despite being involved in a cycling accident a week or more previously, attended a 'preview' event before the official reopening of the station and railway for passenger trains.

Mr. Shapps dubbed the re-opening of this renewed **Dartmoor Line** an "incredible achievement — and an unbelievable journey"..., adding: "This is not just historic for Dartmoor, not even just for Devon. It's actually historic for restoring your railways [after] all of those different cuts, the *Beeching Axe* that fell in the '60s., and '70's., [even in the '80's.], are now, for the first time, being reversed".

Immediate Effects of The Original Opening

The original opening of the then **London & South Western Railway** network came on 3rd. October, 1871, and the effects were almost immediate, it was said.

When train services first reached Okehampton, residents of the town suddenly acquired whole new opportunities for work, leisure or study in Exeter — or anywhere else within reasonable reach of home.

The effects of the new railway to Leven, seventeen years previously, were both rapid and profound, as we trust and expect them to be once again, when the Levenmouth Rail Link is reopened (we hope) towards the end of next year. The edition of the **Fife Herald** that reported the original opening, in August 1854, talked of a brisk business for steam-ships — but the then network of horse-drawn carriages very soon began to dwindle as the trains took hold of the imagination, and a need for faster and more-reliable transport of their passengers. Road carriages, including mail-coaches, still ran wherever railways did not, but the general public could sense the changes.

This time, there will still be buses, but, *we're told*, they will tie-in better with the train timetables, and there will also be the much-talked-about **Active Travel** network of interconnecting cycle-lanes and footpaths around the railway, stations, and nearby settlements.

The first passenger train back at Okehampton was, understandably, met by cheering crowds - and three brass

Be Patient..., or -

They're Now Preparing for Work 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.

bands. The scenes on *Platform Three* at *Okehampton Station* on Saturday morning, 20th. November, last year, echoed those of the day the station first opened. — *This time*, trumpets sounded and a ladies' 'swing' group sang in company. Tea and scones were served. Children from local schools lined up en-masse, all along the platform, and, waving flags, they were all clearly eager to catch a glimpse of the first train to arrive.

The *DevonLive* reporters began looking for more to their story. They met up with friends Eleni Barlow and Mari Baldwin. Eleni said to them: "The first thing anyone here learns to do here is drive. . . . I always planned to move out of this town as soon as I could because it's just so difficult to get anywhere,"

Mari said; "The problem with Okehampton, *they say*, is the lack of jobs available for young people. There's so many of us in a concentrated area trying to find a job, and we're all applying for the same thing."

"The next place to work **now** is Exeter", said Eleni; "Travel to Exeter **was** thwarted by a precarious bus service that often failed to show, meaning that the only options available for young people were to either learn to drive or try and make do with the scant opportunities available locally. Now people could stay here now and do really well", said Eleni; "I can get a better job."

Mari, who has a younger sibling who is now planning to study at *sixth form* in Exeter, added; "Peoples' minds have been changed by it".

"Before all this, things were just 'so insane'."

"All That is About to Change..."

The new *Dartmoor Line* services herald great changes; The first regular passenger train in a long time departed *Exeter St. Davids* at 6.32 a.m. on Saturday, 20th. November. Stations along the way include *Exeter Central*, *Crediton* and *St. Davids*, as well as *Newton St. Cyres*, which will have a lesser service. The journey one way is one of about 40 minutes. At first, trains will leave every two hours, either way, seven days a week, and will then start an hourly service sometime this year. Summer Sunday services have run since 1997.

While younger residents waited for the first out-bound train from *Okehampton* - it leaves at 7.30am on Saturdays - others looked forward to the promise that a frequent, in-bound train holds for the town. John Ellson and Mary Seddon, who run a youth hostel and

bike-rental service alongside the railway, soon realised that they could not be better-placed for an influx of visitors seeking a "more-sustainable way to travel".

Their home and business is also at the start-point of an eleven-mile (18km.) cycle-route that is renowned for its views, and is known as the *Granite Way*.

"Working Tirelessly ... While Calling for ... Re-Opening."

Sue Baxter, 'chair' of the *Dartmoor Railway Association*, said: "During the near-fifty years that *Okehampton Station* has been closed, myself and the other members of the *Association* have been working tirelessly to keep the place in shape, while calling for its re-opening." — Their efforts have paid off; one of the reasons the *Dartmoor Line* was selected as the first stretch of track to re-open is partially due to the good working-order of both the station and the tracks.

Sue attended the line's "preview" event dressed in an "antique" *British Railways* conductor's uniform.

OTHER LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Hopes Raised for 'StARLink' Campaigners as...

Scottish Towns Bid for U.K. 'City Status'

Honours Mark Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Main Story: *Ketsuda Phoutinane, Daily Record Website ('Reach, plc.')*, Thursday, 23rd. December.:

A NUMBER of Scottish

Towns are to bid for official U.K. *City Status* in a few months' time, with the victor to be chosen by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in a contest to honour her forthcoming Platinum Jubilee - and a successful bid for one of them in particular *could* mean being reconnected to the British railway network after over half-a-century.

In all, 39 towns are bidding for these lucrative honours, which will be bestowed upon one of them in early-June, when all Britain enters a four-day public holiday to mark the Queen's epic, 70th., year on the Throne. Eight of them are in Scotland, including two in Fife alone - St. Andrews and Dunfermline. — We wait to see if any of these two is successful in following Perth (2012), Stirling (2002), and Inverness (2000), in gaining such prestigious honours, which will, no doubt, come with increased trade, cultural assets, and tourism. Winning *City Status* can provide a boost to local communities - and bring new opportunities for those who live there. **A new Rail Link, anyone ?**

Certainly, StARLink, the St. Andrews rail campaign group, will be sitting up and listening - in real hope !!

LMRC News is Produced by ALISTAIR AYNSCOUGH

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'REINSTATE THE LEVEN-EDINBURGH RAIL-LINK !'



City of St. Andrews?

Hosting the British Open on a wet 17th. July, 2015, and, Left, far-famed Swilken Bridge.



Story on Page Five.

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
- Winter 2020-2021

Planning and Consenting Process
for Stations - Summer 2021

Fencing-Off, and 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?!

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.

LMRC Contacts ...  
  

LMRC Action Group 'Virtual' Meetings

All Meetings Start on Tuesdays at 6.30 p.m.

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

- Tuesday, 22nd. February, 6.30 p.m.;
- Tuesday, 29th. March, 6.30 p.m.;
- Tuesday, 26th. April, 6.30 p.m.;
- Tuesday, 31st. May, 6.30 p.m..

LMRC Don't usually have July Meetings ... but one may happen via 'Zoom'

CLEAR Buckhaven, 36 College St., Buckhaven,
KY8 1JY. - [Opposite Library and Council Offices]

E-Mail: LMRC@mail.com 'Phone: 01592-713078

Website: www.levenmouth.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LevenmouthRail

Twitter: www.twitter.com/LevenmouthRail

CAMPAIGN CALL

"LOBBY YOUR MSP!" SAY LMRC

ALTHOUGH, of Course, we now welcome the fact that the Levenmouth Rail Link is now being restored, the LMRC will remain active and continue to follow its progress. ... If you have concerns at any stage, you should still write to your MSP, MP or Local Councillor.

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Railway "Revivals" in Your Thoughts ... ?

Keep the Ball in Their Court !!!

CAMPAIGN CALLING ...

LOBBY YOUR MSP

... .. Say LMRC,

Please Keep This 'Ball' Rolling !