

# Extra sterling for Stirling

## Scotland stumps up £27m more

Construction work started last month on reopening the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail line, following the Scottish Executive's decision to provide increased funding.

The good news in Scotland came two months after the Barry rail reopening in Wales in June.

Scottish Transport Minister Tavish Scott gave a guarantee of funding while visiting the site of the proposed new Alloa station and confirmed that the Executive will invest a further £27.6million, in addition to the £30million previously awarded in 2003.

The line will introduce passenger services between Stirling and Alloa, reconnecting Alloa to the national rail network for the first time since 1968.

It will take freight trains off the Forth Rail Bridge, paving the way for improved Fife-Edinburgh passenger services.

Mr Scott said: "We want a transport system that gets Scotland's goods and people moving. This devolved government has ensured sustained investment in Scotland's transport network, with increased spending of £1billion per year, of which 70 per cent will be targeted to public transport.

"While the rise in the initial estimated costs is disappointing, we must not lose sight of how valuable the reopening of the line will be to the local communities that will benefit from it. The rise in costs will not affect funding for any of our other major projects, and will be met from our existing budget."

Keir Bloomer, chief executive of Clackmannanshire Council said: "This council and its predecessors

have been determined to bring rail back to the area. Our plans to see hourly passenger services between Alloa, Stirling and Glasgow will now be realised. A key objective of this council in terms of the economic regeneration of the area, the reopening of the Stirling-Alloa-Dunfermline rail line in Spring 2007, will be a tremendous boost to the communities involved."

The project will reopen 13 miles of existing, disused and abandoned railway lines between Stirling Station and Longannet Power Station in Kincardine.

A new railway station will be built in Alloa town centre, allowing direct hourly passenger services to operate between Alloa, Stirling and Glasgow Queen Street Stations. Changing trains at Stirling Station will allow passengers to travel onwards to and from Edinburgh Waverley station.

### Another reopening

A new station opened on 28 September at Kelvindale, Glasgow, as the first stage in the £35million Larkhall-Milngavie project which will restore Larkhall – which lost its passenger service in the 1960s – to the rail network next year.

The completed Larkhall-Milngavie line will provide a half-hourly service between Larkhall and Dalmeir, via Hamilton, Glasgow and Partick.

It will also enhance the frequency of cross-city services between the south east and north west of Glasgow with new stations at Merryton and Chatelherault on the Larkhall line and Dawsholm on the Maryhill line.



**Stop the rot:** This was the line looking towards Dunfermline in April. Now work has started on reopening Picture: Railphotolibrary.com

## European managers learn to love rail

By Trevor Garrod  
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In July I was invited as chairman of the European Passengers' Federation to give a presentation at the summer seminar of the European Training Centre for Railways in Bruges.

This annual event, hosted by the Belgian National Railways, brings together over 40 railway managers from all over Europe for in-depth discussion – this year on the theme of "Competitiveness of Rail".

I explained the aspirations of EPF, which comprises 18 associations including Railfuture, under the slogans "Easy Rail, Accessible Rail, Responsible Rail".

Interesting points emerged from the discussion. Some participants felt quite strongly that rail should concentrate on fast journeys of up to three hours, beyond which air travel became more competitive.

Others, however, considered that the three-hour limit could easily be pushed to four or five hours, if the trains were comfortable and the facilities attractive.

Much also depended upon the convenience and cost of the competitive modes.

One (non-French) manager commented that he would never drive to the centre of Paris if he could get there by train!

The effect of high-speed lines on classic routes also provoked interesting comments.

One manager, for example, said that after billions of euros had been invested in the new high-speed line between Amsterdam and Brussels (due to open in 2007) it was important to maximise the numbers of passengers using it, even at the expense of the classic route. This scenario has also been experienced between Paris and

Brussels since the opening of the high-speed line.

Another participant said that few of his colleagues would disagree with the aims of EPF, but where would the money come from to achieve these?

I explained how partnership funding in our country had enabled operators to introduce new services or adapt trains to carry more bicycles.

It was certainly one of our tasks to lobby politicians to make funds available to kick-start new services and facilities. We also put to them the case for a level playing field.

If rail operators had to provide compensation in the event of delays, for example, then so should coach and ferry companies.

Airline fuel taxation is also an issue that must be looked at again. The 1944 Chicago Agreement had

achieved its aim of stimulating a then young industry. But is it appropriate for the 21st century?

EPF is providing speakers for events in Linköping, Sweden, and Milan, Italy, this autumn as well as for a conference in Berlin.

We are also now planning our 2006 annual general meeting and conference, which will be on Saturday 18 March at Maastricht in the Netherlands.

All individual members of Railfuture and other EPF affiliates are entitled to attend this event, which it is also hoped to combine with optional excursions in the area where the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium meet.

Details will be available after Christmas. To be sure of receiving them, please send an SAE to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ.