



Press release from Campaign for Borders Rail – Thursday 6 November 2014

Campaign claims credit for upgraded Borders Railway trains

The well-attended AGM of the Campaign for Borders Rail heard guest speaker Mike Kean of Abellio promise that the trains deployed on the Borders Railway will be refurbished to a high standard, commensurate with the international appeal of the line as a scenic attraction. Mr Kean, who directed his company's successful bid to operate the ScotRail franchise, including the Borders Railway, said that Thursday's meeting in Galashiels represented the beginning of Abellio's engagement with communities in Scotland. Simon Walton, chairman of the Campaign for Borders Rail, said that refurbished trains would provide a much better experience for commuters and visitors alike. "We've lobbied for better trains all along," he said. "This refurbishment announcement is seen as the latest significant success for our continued campaigning work."

The Campaign was also praised by Stuart Mackay, communications manager of BAM Nuttall, the railway's main contractor. He noted that the very existence of the project was owed to the Campaign, and recalled the day he attended the Campaign's 2012 AGM, on the same day that his company was engaged to build what was the biggest domestic railway project in living memory.

Mr Mackay, who was also a speaking guest, surprised the Campaign with the presentation of a souvenir length of rail - cut from the first panel of track laid in the Borders - near Falahill, earlier that day. Even more warmly received was a valuable 1969 bottled malt whisky, which has been retained for future fund raising and charitable donation. Both gifts were made on behalf of BAM Nuttall and Network Rail.

Hoping for the day when the Borders Railway may reach Carlisle, the chairman of the Friends of the Carlisle-Settle Line, Richard Morris, outlined the similarities between the railway he supported, and the Borders Railway. He noted the huge tourism potential for such a scenic route and also applauded the announcement of refurbished trains, which he expected would be the envy of passengers on the Carlisle-Settle services.

Mr Morris said that extension of the Borders Railway to Hawick should be a priority, which drew applause from the audience of more than 80 Campaign members, packed into the church of St Peters in Galashiels. Chairman Simon Walton said the Campaign would continue to support the Borders Railway, while pursuing its mandate to seek restoration of the entire former mainline to Carlisle. "Our membership have this ambition at heart," he said. "The Campaign for Borders Rail is better served than ever by an enthusiastic and experienced committee and membership. We eagerly anticipate services commencing in September next year, but we will continue to work to see rail services restored along the remainder of the former Waverley Route and help with the economic regeneration of the Borders as a whole."

MORE INFO: Simon Walton, CBR Chairman, on 01578 760686 or chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[1] The Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) is the grassroots group set up in 1999 to make the case for restoring rail to the Borders – the only region of Britain without passenger trains. CBR's key aim was realised on 6 November 2012 when the Scottish Government's Transport Minister Keith Brown announced that Transport Scotland and Network Rail had concluded a deal to construct the new Borders Railway – bringing trains back after an absence of more than 45 years. See <http://www.campaignforbordersrail.org/>

[2] The new Borders Railway will run from Newcraighall in south east Edinburgh to Tweedbank in the Borders. There will be four intermediate stations in Midlothian and two in the Borders. At 30½ miles length, this will be the longest rail re-opening in modern British history when services from Edinburgh Waverley to Tweedbank begin on 6 September 2015. See <http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk/>

Simon Walton, chairman
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