

## CAMPAIGN FOR BORDERS RAIL

### *One of the most successful grassroots rail campaigns*

The Campaign for Borders Rail has been one of the most successful grassroots rail campaigns in Great Britain, a story of concerned citizens from all walks of life getting together to right the 1969 injustice of complete closure of the 98-mile Waverley Route through the Borders. These are the landmarks in the history of CBR:

**October 1998** Discussions between Borders Transport Futures (BTF) – a company which came very close to securing the rebuilding of the southern end of the railway for timber traffic – and Galashiels resident Petra Biberbach result in the calling of a public meeting as a first step towards establishing a campaign group supportive of BTF's aim of getting the Borders back on the rail network for both freight and passengers.

**January 1999** CBR is formally launched at a Burns Supper in Melrose station restaurant with Petra Biberbach as Chairperson.

**Late 1999** 17,000 signatures are collected for a petition to be presented to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee, in favour of reopening the Waverley Route throughout.

**2000** The Public Petitions Committee meets in Galashiels to consider our petition. CBR members give evidence in a packed Volunteer Hall and a subsequent debate in the Scottish Parliament unanimously endorses the petition's aims.

**2001** In cooperation with Stow Community Council, funding is secured for carrying out a survey to establish potential rail use from the village. This eventually leads on to a separate (and successful) campaign for a well-located station in Stow.

**July 2002** The official proposals for an Edinburgh to Tweedbank passenger line are published. CBR participates in the subsequent consultation exercise and flags up many concerns.

**Late 2002** The Waverley Route Trust is set up by a number of CBR members as a separate entity to look at ways of securing a more innovative type of railway than that contained in the official proposals.

**2005** CBR members give evidence to the Waverley Railway Bill Committee at meetings in Newtongrange and Galashiels.

**2006** The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Act is passed by the Scottish Parliament, including a requirement to provide a station at Stow.

**2009** CBR welcomes Stewart Stevenson's comment that an extension to Carlisle is a "perfectly reasonable ambition" and Transport Scotland's visionary Pre-qualification Document issued to companies wishing to design, build, finance and maintain the new Edinburgh-Tweedbank railway. The document flags up many of the issues which CBR had been campaigning for – faster journey times, infrastructure provision for freight and passenger charter trains and a design facilitating extension south from Tweedbank.

**2012** CBR representatives, together with Claudia Beamish MSP, meet Transport Minister Keith Brown and successfully press the case for the design of the Tweedbank station infrastructure to be amended to accommodate viable tourist charter trains. Construction of the Borders Railway begins.

**2013** CBR launches its 'Onwards to Hawick' campaign and hears that its lobbying for 'paths' to be made available for charters within the ScotRail timetable has been successful.

**2014** CBR's AGM hears from new ScotRail franchisee Abellio that its campaign for Class 158 trains on the Borders Railway to be refurbished (with more bike and luggage space, and better seat / window matching) has also been successful.

**March 2015** The Westminster Scottish Affairs Select Committee concludes that 'The UK Government should work with the Scottish Government and with key agencies on both sides of the border to extend the new Borders Railway southwards from Galashiels to Carlisle.'

**September 2015** The new Edinburgh – Tweedbank Borders Railway is officially opened by HM Queen.

**2016** CBR calls for action to address problems arising from lack of operational resilience on the largely single-track line. Passenger statistics from the first year of operation confirm levels of patronage from Borders stations much higher than forecast, vindicating campaigners who had previously criticised the 'ludicrously pessimistic' business case.

**2017** CBR publishes its *Summary Case for a new Cross-Border Rail Link*, a report detailing the advantages of enhancing and extending the Borders Railway to better serve more communities directly.

**2018** The Campaign intensifies its political lobbying efforts aimed at securing cross-party backing for the principle of extending the Borders Railway from Tweedbank, through to Hawick and Carlisle.

**January 2019** Events are held to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Waverley Route.

**2019** The UK and Scottish Governments, together with local authority partners, jointly announce funding of up to £10m for feasibility work on extending the Borders Railway to Carlisle as part of the Borderlands Growth Deal.

**For the full story of the Campaign for Borders Rail – and the political tensions throughout the 21-year battle to re-open the railway – we recommend reading the 256 page "Waverley Route: the battle for the Borders Railway" by our life member, David Spaven. Published in May 2015. ISBN 10: 1908931825 ISBN 13: 9781908931825**