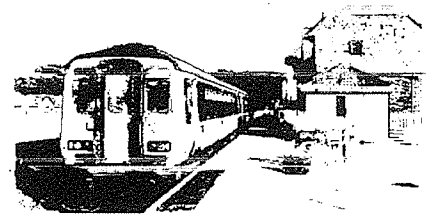




# return to **KESWICK**



## ...on a modern train from your station !

UPDATE NUMBER 20.

APRIL 2002.

### 30 YEARS ASLEEP !

The 6th of March 2002 was the thirtieth anniversary of the closure of the line between Keswick and Penrith. This was a bitter-sweet occasion, full of regrets for the loss of the line but an ideal opportunity to look forward, knowing that the project to reinstate the line is coming together piece by piece. The last passenger trains ran on the 4th of March 1972, but freight trains ran to Blencow for a few months afterwards.

The local media in Cumbria were very interested in the anniversary - the News and Star newspaper ran a double page feature with nostalgia plus discussion of the reconstruction project.

BBC Radio Cumbria and Border TV both ran features with a forward looking theme.

Radio Cumbria included very positive comments from Dr. Paul Salveson of the Transport Research and Information Network (TR&IN).

Some national railway magazines have features in the pipeline for later in the year.

### HISTORY - MANY VERSIONS

The "blame" for the closure is usually placed on Doctor Beeching. The line did feature in his report but the closure decision was made for reasons other than the usual cost cutting ones, as the line was starting to be modernised and had always earned a healthy income. In later years costs and income were attributed in ways which did not properly reflect the value of the line to the network as a whole, but this was a reaction to protests as much as a justification for the "axe".

The line from Workington to Keswick closed in 1966 to allow construction of the A66 road, seen at the time as a lifeline for west Cumbria and a means to encourage new industries such as the Leyland bus factory into the area.

The bus factory has long gone, and west coast industries now cry out for better transport links !

Some people have remarked that this is going to be a difficult task because the track is long gone - in fact relaying track is only the engineering equivalent of re-surfacing a road. About 90% of the earthworks and structures are intact and serviceable, and these represent about three quarters of the construction cost of a railway. It is really a case of finishing off, not starting from scratch !

In some ways reconstruction at this stage is easier than upgrading the line would have been. Effectively the line is now a clean sheet of paper and exactly the right type of railway can be built, rather than trying to adapt something left over from the past.

East of Keswick the A66 was mostly built while the line was still in place, so little damage was done until the removal of some bridges to ease the passage of larger road vehicles in the 1980s. Some of the bridges did not even crumble when attacked with explosives - testimony to the robust construction of the line.

## NOT IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

CKP Railways plc applied to the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) for Rail Passenger Partnership (RPP) funding in January 2001. After several rounds of correspondence the SRA has decided not to have anything to do with the scheme. The SRA has not even asked to see a business plan but has apparently made the decision on the basis of its own desktop exercise.

Without seeing such information it is difficult to understand how they can justify such a decision.

However, the national papers late in March show that the SRA has reduced its ambitions considerably and is now concentrating major investment funds solely on the West Coast Main Line modernisation and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

The SRA has made some money available for improvements to the performance of existing services but seems to have entirely abandoned any efforts to expand the network. This will make it extremely difficult to meet the Government's targets for shifting journeys from road to rail !

## STRONG SUPPORT LOCALLY

The Keswick Area Partnership and the Penrith Area Partnership are the groups putting together the funding strategies for money under the Government's Market Towns Initiative.

Both partnerships have recognised that the new railway has a tremendous amount to offer both towns by improving access, reducing road traffic dependency, providing transport for those without access to cars and allowing car users the choice of another mode.

Both towns can benefit from the new rail service. Keswick obviously gets put back "on the map". Penrith has a station on the national network but not all trains stop there - the extra traffic to and from Keswick would boost Penrith's status. People from the outlying parts of Eden, particularly Alston, use Penrith as their railhead and strongly support the Keswick reinstatement for precisely this reason. Some councillors have yet to understand this reasoning.

Cockermouth, Workington and Whitehaven become more accessible for business and tourism.

A proper combination of rail, bus, taxi and boat services can make a large proportion of everyday journeys possible by public transport. It works in some other countries - it is not rocket science ! With a line built to modern standards, upgraded to 90mph running (60mph in the past) and modern trains, journeys between Keswick and Carlisle via Penrith in as little as 40 minutes would be possible - quicker than the direct road journey.

## "NO INFRASTRUCTURE, NO ECONOMY"

This was a memorable quote by Sir Alistair Morton on Radio 4 discussing the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the need for national involvement in creating an effective rail network which serves all parts of Britain to maximum advantage.

The argument applies equally at regional, county, district and local levels.

Provision of appropriate and accessible transport is fundamental to economic well being, social inclusion and protection of the environment. Stability and confidence are crucial.

Long term solutions and therefore sensible investment are needed.

Quick fixes may create a warm comfortable feeling, but tend to be fragile and short lived.

People can not organise their lives around transport which is seasonal, short term or irregular.

The major problem is that there is rarely a single body with a complete overview, and little enthusiasm for any one of them to be first to put a "toe in the water". Transport tends to be a political football - but while the game continues everybody except the politicians suffers.

## **FIRST DRAWINGS PRODUCED**

**In March, Corus Rail Consultancy handed over a draft set of drawings to CKP Railways plc. These drawings show what can be built on the original alignment, potential for accommodating various types of train at Keswick station, suggested layouts for intermediate stations, plus options for improving capacity, speeds and journey times on the route.**

**At this stage it is crucial that all potential uses of the line are considered. Some options would add significantly to the construction costs but multiply the benefits available. Building in extra facilities such as double track, extra platforms and faster alignments from the start is a lot cheaper and less disruptive than trying to add them on at a later date. There are a number of organisations which could be partners or beneficiaries and their contributions will be important in shaping the new line. CKP needs to hear from them now.**

**The drawings and other information will be considered by CKP then, after any amendments, the Project Executive Team will consider the options and decide which elements to take forward to Environmental Impact Assessment and the application for the Transport and Works Order.**

**This means that the first of the three major stages of development work is just about complete !**

**The drawings for eighteen miles of new railway have been produced much more quickly and cheaply than would have been possible only a few years ago thanks to the innovative technology employed, such as the laser scanning helicopter operated by OiS. This has produced data to a greater accuracy than was available from the Ordnance Survey in some places !**

**A few inspections have taken place on the ground to confirm details, but the bulk of the information was compiled without any physical intrusion on farms or other land. Traditional surveys would have taken many months to gather just a fraction of this information.**

**Construction techniques developed on the Sunderland Metro extension (opened at Easter) provide a method to deal with the A66 embankment at Threlkeld much more effectively.**

**As more illustrative material is produced it will be incorporated into exhibitions and distributed more widely to ensure that as many people as possible understand what is being created.**

## **THANKS TO THE BONDHOLDERS !**

**Hundreds of people have already backed this project with their own money. The proceeds of the Bond Issue in 2000 - 2001 were approximately £155,000, which have funded the design work to date and will continue to support the process.**

**The current design stage will cost approximately £86,000, reaching a conclusion this summer.**

**The Bonds so far issued pay annual interest at 4% gross, but several holders have asked not to receive the interest payments, preferring to see the money re-invested in the project.**

**There seems to be renewed interest in the Bond scheme and this could be re-opened. CKP has authority to raise up to £2.5 million by this method, but each offer can only be held open for a maximum of six months. Strong support and quick responses are essential.**

**Engineering and Construction firms have shown an interest in the Keswick Railway Project and have begun to make enquiries about possible sources of private funding.**

**Discussions continue to find ways to involve more of the organisations and businesses which could benefit from operation of the line. The North Lakes economy needs the reassuring permanence of a rail link to improve its perceived status for employers and educational institutions.**

**Even Information Technology links could be improved with the railway reinstated.**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP THE RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

*We have chosen these co-operative ventures as they mean you can support the railway through normal everyday activities, at no extra cost to yourself. They also reduce waste.*

1. IcenI Enterprises Ltd sells re-chargeable phonecards which allow discounted calls to be made from any land line phone, not just payphones, in the UK and 48 other countries. BT callboxes charge 20p minimum - with our card it is just 3p and no coins needed ! Cards cost £10 each, post free, and are supplied charged with £10 worth of calls. 15% Commission is earned for the project on the sale and every re-charge of these cards.
2. Book your rail tickets through "Chester-le-Track".  
Phone Chester-le-Track on 0191-387-1387, quote "CKP Offer" and they will pay 3% of the total sale as commission to CKP Railways to help fund the reconstruction project. You pay nothing extra for your ticket, but help the Keswick project as well !  
Tickets between any stations on the national network can be bought over the phone and paid for by any major credit card. Tickets are normally posted first class on the same day. Phone 0191-387-1387 with any questions, or see their website at [www.nationalrail.com](http://www.nationalrail.com)  
Office hours 0730 - 1800 Monday to Friday, 0730 - 1300 Saturday.
3. We have facilities to sell used printer and fax ink-jet cartridges to a recycling company. Collection points are - Cyber Cafe (upstairs in the Post Office), Main Street, Keswick,  
- KTD Office Supplies in Lowther Street, Carlisle,  
- Lakeland Lawnmowers, Aynam Road, Kendal,  
- West Coast Recycling, 31 Curzon Street, Maryport.  
Please contact the address below if you are interested in collecting in your area.  
There are no costs and no money to handle - postage is free and packaging is supplied.

*Or simply by following the project itself:*

4. Read the report "Return to Keswick - the case for a New Railway" for £20 POST FREE from the address below, or order through bookshops by quoting ISBN 1-902543-02-5.
5. Buy an annual subscription to "Updates", for yourself, a friend or colleague. Only £10 for a calendar year covering at least four issues from the address below.

*All of these generate commissions or profits which support the project.*

*More than £2000 handed over last year and all these schemes are growing in popularity !*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RAILWAY PROJECT:

- ◆ Meet the Engineer ! An information stand will be at:

Carlisle Model Railway Exhibition, 10th and 11th August 2002.

*A video from the OIS survey helicopter in June 2001 is shown at these events.*

*Don't believe rumours - come and see for yourself how much of the line is still complete !*

- ◆ Talks and slide presentations have been arranged for Business Associations, Rotary Clubs, Parish and Town Councils, Railway Societies, Schools, Professional Institutions, National Trust members and the University of the Third Age.

Invitations to other local events always welcomed. To make a booking, please contact:

***Cedric A. Martindale.*** BSc.Hons, AUS, CEng., MIMechE, MCIT, MILT. - Director

No. 20, April 2002.

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