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UPDATE NUMBER 40

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BBC POLITICS SHOW – KESWICK RAILWAY

Reopening of the Keswick to Penrith Railway featured on the BBC Politics Show on the 8th of June 2008. BBC Presenter Mark Denten covered potential railway re-openings in the Northeast and Cumbria – emphasising that to ensure these lines can re-open, the trackbeds must not be built on.

Mark Denten interviewed Cedric Martindale on the trackbed at Threlkeld, showed archive film of the last days of the line, and featured reminiscences from a local resident. Keswick Town Councillor Lorraine Taylor was also interviewed at Flusco, where development is making it difficult to trace the trackbed. An interview with one of the businesses at Flusco was also included.

The feature dealt with practical and political issues, and the reasons why people support such re-openings. The programme was available for a week afterwards on the BBC i-player, and some archive film clips are still available on the BBC Politics Show website. Update subscribers in the area who had supplied e-mail addresses received notice of the programme, even though it was filmed only three days prior to broadcasting.



Cedric Martindale with BBC Politics Show Presenter Mark Denten during filming on the trackbed at Threlkeld.



Cedric Martindale, Lorraine Taylor and Mark Denten prepare for interviews at Keswick Station.

LOW CARBON LAKE DISTRICT

In June a report published by the Lake District National Park Authority, entitled “Low-carbon Lake District”, identified tackling “limited public transport” as one of the keys to reducing the area’s carbon footprint and reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels. Transport problems were mentioned, apparently, by nearly every interviewee and a view expressed that “the sheer volume of traffic can undermine the special qualities of National Parks...”.

Specific areas of improvement listed for the development of a sustainable transport strategy included “...reintroduction of rail or light rail between Penrith, Keswick and Cockermouth”.

CKP Railways plc are delighted to see this mentioned in a report from the National Park Authority and look forward to finding policies developing to ensure that this is achieved !

RAILWAY RE-OPENINGS UNDER-VALUED ?

CKP Railways plc calculated that even for only 250,000 passengers per annum travelling by train rather than car to and from Keswick, the annual fuel saving would be in the order of 500,000 gallons – which is now worth £2.5 MILLION per annum. 250,000 passengers per annum is at the lower end of the numbers calculated in several independent studies over the last ten years.

The evaluation criteria used by the Department for Transport, when doing cost–benefit calculations for transport projects, take into account carbon emission reductions as a positive factor, but also show the loss of revenue from fuel duty to the Treasury as a very NEGATIVE factor – which tends to favour road transport solutions !

Annual environmental benefits calculated in the same way as recent studies by Network Rail, for other potential re-openings, would amount to:

Air Quality benefit	£ 2.5 million
Noise pollution benefit	£ 1.5 million
Greenhouse Gas benefit	£ 5 million

Adding the potential value of fuel saved brings the annual benefits of the Keswick to Penrith line, from these direct factors alone, to more than £10 Million per annum !

The most elaborate version of the Keswick to Penrith reinstatement (with double track, several intermediate stations and full signalling for an intensive service) was costed at £107 million – benefits to this value would be realised within the first ten years of operation.

This does not include benefits to the local economy such as increased tourist spending (of about £1 million per annum according to some estimates), connectivity, social integration, improved business opportunities, workforce mobility, access to services, etc.

A less complex reopening scheme, which would still be able to carry an hourly service, would deliver benefits equivalent to its construction cost in as little as five to seven years !

MORE REASONS TO BUILD THE RAILWAY NOW:

- The average carbon emissions from someone travelling by car are roughly double those of someone travelling by train. (House of Commons written answer on 3rd June 2008)
- Lake District holiday bookings up 40% and more visitors asking about public transport (News and Star 31st July 2008)
- 61% of people who drive or use a car are definitely or probably considering using public transport (survey published in August 2008 by National Express)

PLANNING BLIGHT ???

One of the most common arguments put forward by Government for NOT protecting railway trackbeds is that doing so would cause “planning blight”.

In fact the opposite is true, because NOT protecting trackbeds raises all the following questions each and every time a planning application affecting a railway trackbed is submitted. These questions, however, can not be answered without undertaking detailed feasibility studies which take months, require many types of professional expertise, and cost tens of thousands of pounds if done properly.

- *Is it technically feasible to reinstate the railway on its original alignment ?*
- *What would it cost to rebuild on the original alignment if there were no obstructions ?*
- *What would it cost to remove any developments that have been / may be allowed on the trackbed ?*
- *Is it technically feasible to build railway diversions round any such developments ?*
- *How far from the original alignment would such deviations be ?*
- *How much of the original trackbed would then be abandoned if a deviation route was built ?*
- *How much would it cost to deviate the railway round those developments ?*
- *Would those additional costs adversely affect the cost benefit analysis for the whole route ?*
- *Would that change to the cost benefit analysis prejudice possible funding for the reopening ?*

NOT protecting the trackbed therefore spreads long term doubt and uncertainty over a large area of land - not only on, but also some distance from, the actual railway trackbeds.

Each development that is given permission to infringe a railway trackbed also raises the level of uncertainty about the technical feasibility and business case for reopening that line.

Perhaps local authorities should be required to compensate the future railway builders for the additional costs of dealing with developments that they have authorised on the trackbeds ?

If the trackbed is protected in the Local Development Framework and Local Plans and Policies, there is only one question when a planning application is submitted:

- ◆ *Does the proposed development infringe a former railway trackbed in any way ?*

If the answer is “yes”, the proposed development must be redesigned or re-located so as not to affect the trackbed.

This does not require any feasibility studies, takes minutes, not months to answer, and the reason for insisting on the change can be clearly demonstrated and defended using maps, plans and policies.

The only land affected would be the railway trackbed itself, and it would be crystal clear to everyone that this land is not for development, except as a railway.

A railway trackbed is a clearly identifiable strip of land about 10 metres wide – surely it can not be too difficult to control development across a whole Local Authority area so that it does not obstruct such a clearly defined and relatively tiny (but irreplaceable) area of land ?

There is a precedent for straightforward protection in the UK – Norfolk County Council decided to protect all railway trackbeds several years ago, and this does not seem to be posing any problems.

Most former railway trackbeds are clearly marked on current maps, and are traceable historically for more than 100 years. Most also appear on the computerised mapping systems used by local planning authorities. Land Registry records also contain much relevant information.

The current system in many areas is based simply on planning applications “on the table” at a given time. This piecemeal and un-structured approach to planning leads to “creeping damage” to railway trackbeds – which is in no-one’s interest and further confuses the issue every time.

Railway re-openings take years to develop, and are given permission at National Government level, with consultation locally. Policies exist at all levels of Government to protect trackbeds for future railway re-openings - they just need to be properly implemented !

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WHAT TO BUY TO SUPPORT THE RAILWAY PROJECT

25% of the price of each item goes directly to the Keswick to Penrith Railway Project.

The BBC found that only 8% of the price of charity Christmas Cards goes to the named causes.

1. The report "Return to Keswick - the case for a New Railway" is available at £20 per copy direct from us (post free), or order through bookshops by quoting ISBN 9781-902543-02-4.
2. "Trains to Keswick" is a professionally produced video featuring people along the line.
SOLD OUT ! Not yet available on DVD – but we are working on this.....
3. Fine Art prints and greetings cards featuring a stunning winter view of the steam hauled "Lakes Express" near Bassenthwaite Lake station, painted by Eric Bottomley of the Guild of Railway Artists. Prints (24" x 16") are £18 each, cards (6" x 8") with envelopes - £1.40 each.

N.B. All the prices above are post free from us to addresses in the UK, but please add £2.50 per order for posting to addresses outside the UK (Posting packages to overseas destinations is not cheap !).

Cheques payable to Iceni Enterprises Ltd for any of the items above, please.

Order forms are distributed with printed Updates and can be downloaded from the website.

TRAVEL BY TRAIN – HELP RE-OPEN THE KESWICK RAILWAY

Phone and book your rail tickets through "Chester-le-Track" for any journey on the National Network, including Railovers, and with discounts for Railcard holders.

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 plc.

The total sale must be at least £25, paid for by credit card.

BUY BONDS – INVEST IN THE RAILWAY PROJECT !

CKP Railways plc Bonds, in multiples of £100, pay interest at 4% per annum gross.

Over £330,000 raised and invested so far in design and development.

These funds are used only for the Railway reconstruction project.

No unnecessary overheads !

Bonds have been sold to organisations and individual holders.

Can be bought for children, grandchildren, friends or relatives.

Fully coloured and signed Certificates are issued - designed to appeal to collectors.

Please write or e-mail with your postal address for a free copy of the Prospectus.

Cedric A. Martindale. BSc.Hons, AUS, CEng., MIMechE, CMILT. - Director

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