

Waverley Route Takes New Director

The annual general meeting of the Campaign for Borders Rail, held at the Scottish Mining Museum in Newtongrange on Tuesday night, has elected Edinburgh native, Simon Walton, as its new chairman. The cross community group has been working for the past 13 years on the re-establishment of the railway between Edinburgh and the central Borders, the entire length of which between the Scottish capital and Carlisle closed in 1969.

The meeting coincided with the announcement earlier in the day from the Scottish transport minister Keith Brown, confirming that building of the 33 mile line between Waverley Station and the terminus at Tweedbank, a few miles east of Galashiels town centre, would go ahead, under the management of Network Rail.

Simon Walton, who now lives alongside the line in the Borders, said that it was a momentous day for the Borders and Midlothian, and now the Campaign for Borders Rail should play an increased part in promoting the line as a catalyst for even greater regeneration. "I hope that the CBR will be able to help businesses and the community get behind the new line, and see it as a starting point", said Simon. "I hold up the Borders Rail project as an example of what can be achieved by concerted effort and collaboration. There is such a vast amount of positive enthusiasm within the membership, that the Campaign could not be better placed to ride upon the momentum that Tuesday's announcement has created".

Born in a small mining village on the outskirts of Edinburgh, Simon Walton made it into the fifties by just 38 days. He is keenly aware of the ever changing face of Scotland, and saw the last coal trains pull out of the Bilston Glen branch off the Waverley Route. His very first rail journey was a short trip on that very route. Though new to the Campaign and to

the Borders, Simon is no stranger to the fate of the Waverley Route, and has followed the Borders Railway Project with keen interest for several years. A media and public relations professional, with business interests in energy supply and broadband, he counts careers with the BBC and the National Trust for Scotland within his varied portfolio. Industrial heritage and communications are Simon's keenest interests, and he can often be found searching in the most unlikely spots for traces of the past. As a former sound engineer, he's fascinated by the unattainable aspects of history. What he'd give to actually hear industrial Scotland all over again.

Meanwhile, the transport minister Keith Brown did intimate that significant changes to the specification of the Borders railway project had been adopted, not least at the behest of the CBR. These include the significant improvement of facilities at the Tweedbank terminus, which will be built with the capacity to accommodate lengthy charter trains, bringing in extra tourism revenue to the area. This builds on the adoption of a station for Stow, which was not in the original plan.

The Campaign for Borders Rail is entering into a new active phase, and is encouraging the entire community to become involved, as members and supporters. It is expected that in addition to supporting the construction efforts as far as Tweedbank, much emphasis will be put on gaining support for further extension to Melrose and Hawick.

Submitted by [Gillian Irvine](#)

