

Stirling Alloa Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Project – Opening day nears

The Stirling - Alloa - Kincardine route reopening project is one of the most important railway infrastructure projects Scotland has seen for decades.

Opening Date Announced



Passenger services will be reintroduced to Alloa for the first time in nearly 40 years when the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail link opens on Monday 19 May.

Driver training started on Wednesday 2 April. The official opening ceremony will take place on Thursday 15 May with project promoter Clackmannanshire Council holding a celebratory fayre for the community on Saturday 17 May.

Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change said:

“I am delighted that the official opening of this railway will take place on 19 May. Last May, when I came into office, this project had many potential problems relating to cost and timescale. This Government vowed to deal with these issues and we have managed to ensure that this railway achieved best value for money and opened at the earliest opportunity to the benefit of commuters.

“The project is one the largest of its kind undertaken in Scotland in recent years and it will bring substantial benefits both to residents of Clackmannanshire and

businesses using the freight facilities. I would like to thank local residents for their patience and cooperation through the construction of the railway.”

The Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail link is one of the most important railway infrastructure projects Scotland has seen in decades and has reopened approximately 13 miles (21km) of existing, disused and abandoned railway line between Stirling Station and Longannet Power Station in Kincardine.

Janet Cadenhead, leader of Clackmannanshire Council welcomed the news of the opening which will bring a number of benefits to the Wee County:

“The Council has pursued its dream of bringing rail back to the county for two decades and I am delighted that our dream will become a reality within a matter of weeks. I’m excited that the day I can jump on a train at Alloa, for business and pleasure, is nearly here.

“In recent times Clackmannanshire has seen a tremendous resurgence in economic activity and this major development can only add to our regeneration, connecting people with jobs, education

and new opportunities and opening Clackmannanshire up to the world.

“The travelling public of Clackmannanshire will soon be offered a new choice on their doorstep that they’ve been denied for 40 years, which should also have a positive knock-on environmental impact.”

A new station has been built in Alloa allowing direct hourly passenger services between Alloa, Stirling and Glasgow Queen Street and onward services from Stirling to Edinburgh. Reconnecting the area to the rail network will open up education and employment opportunities for the residents with the increased accessibility encouraging inward investment and economic growth.

The line will also provide a more efficient freight route to carry coal from the west of Scotland to Longannet Power Station and potentially provide freight services to other customers along the line. On Saturday 5 April the first freight train successfully tested the route. This new route will allow freight trains to be diverted from the existing, longer route via the Forth Bridge, and thus release capacity for improved passenger services.

All the Fun of the Fayre

The reopening of the Stirling-Alloa railway is of major significance to Clackmannanshire. To give everyone a chance to participate in this historic occasion, Clackmannanshire Council is holding a fayre.

A novelty road train will lead the spectacular opening parade of the event, which will leave Kilncraigs at 11.30am. The parade will have a transport theme and many of the participants will be in fancy dress.

The parade will lead to Greenfield Park for a fun-packed afternoon of family activities starting at noon. Puppet shows, fairground rides, radio roadshow, street entertainment, pony rides, cheerleaders, pipe band and falconry are just a few of the exciting activities on offer.

Admission is free and, thanks to generous sponsors, many of the activities and attractions will also be free.

Come and join in the fun, from noon to 4pm.



Play it Safe

Safety is a priority for the SAK project team and a number of activities are underway to ensure the local community is fully informed before services begin on the railway, including the return of Network Rail's highly successful No Messin'! campaign.



No Messin'! aims to raise awareness of railway safety among young people through engaging and interesting activities. The campaign highlights the dangers of hanging around on or near the

railway to teenagers and gives them the opportunity to participate in productive alternatives.

Network Rail's Railway Crime Education team will be working with the British Transport Police to deliver a comprehensive safety programme to schools and youth organisations along the route of the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail link during the coming months.

The safety programme culminates on 23 and 24 July, with the return of No Messin' Live!, a fantastic two day event at Tulligarth Community Centre, Alloa. Over

3,000 young people attended last year's event which

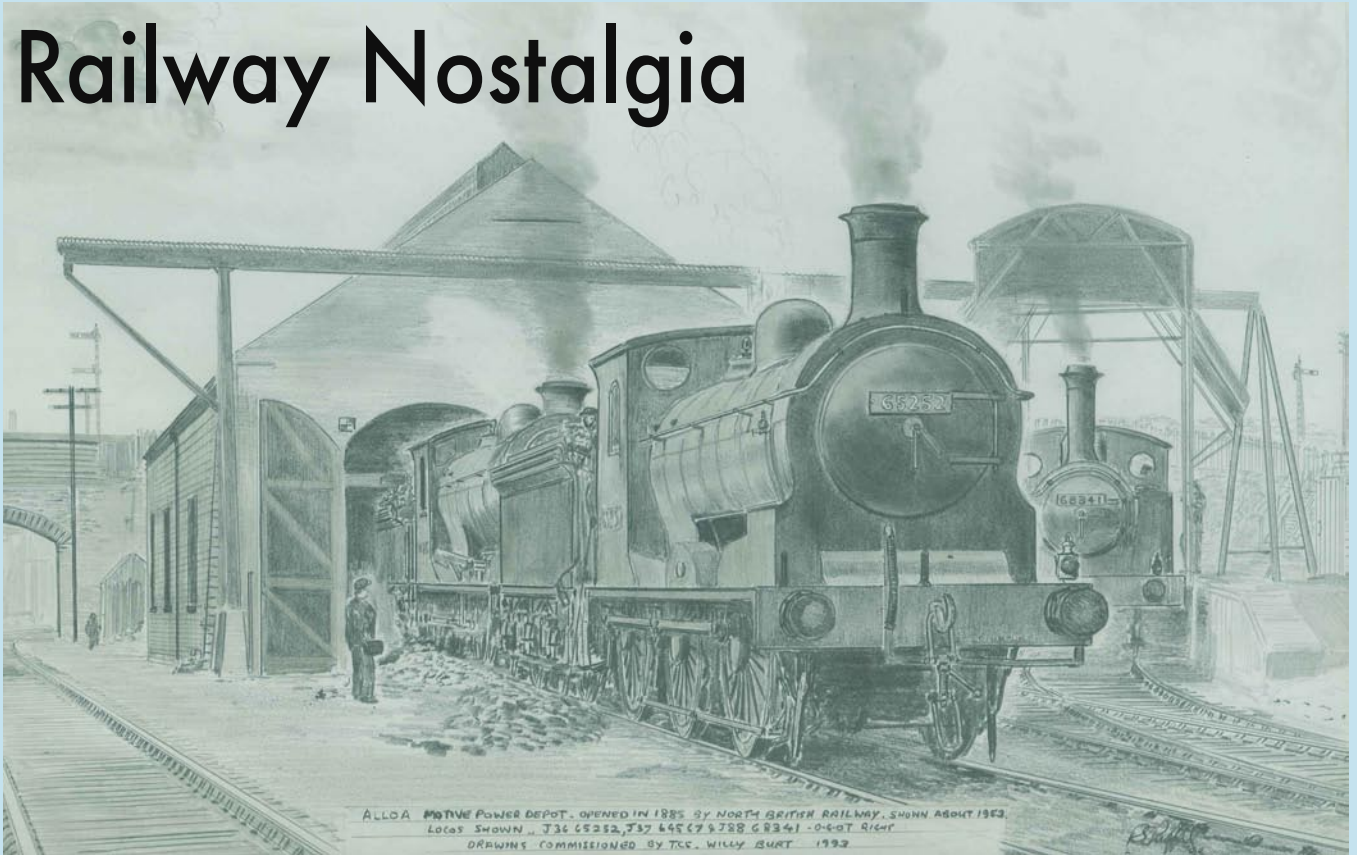
included a huge range of activities on offer from cricket and climbing to boxing and bungee running. This year's No Messin'! event promises to be bigger and better than ever.

In addition to the No Messin'! campaign the project team has been working to ensure the safe use of level crossings along the route. Safety information has been distributed to the local community and copies of these leaflets are also available to download from the website www.sakrailway.co.uk or by calling 0141 229 7648. Further community engagement will take place in conjunction with Network Rail place in advance of full operational services commencing on the line.



Amir Khan, ambassador of the No Messin'! Campaign

Railway Nostalgia



The SAK communications team has been busy behind the scenes gathering information and old stories from people who used to work on the line before it closed in 1968.

One of the ex-employees is Mr William Burt, who worked in Alloa station as a steam engine fireman and also as a driver. Mr Burt, who went to work in London as a driver in August 1965, recalls his time at Alloa station with fond memories. He said:

"I started working in Alloa station as a steam engine fireman in 1951 alongside my father who was a driver. I have great memories of my time there and was sad when I was faced with the tough decision to leave Alloa in 1965 and head to London to continue my career as a driver. At that time, there were many qualified drivers in Scotland but very few vacancies which meant that many Scottish drivers were forced to find work elsewhere."

Mr Burt is just one of many ex-employees the SAK communications team has been in contact with. Bobby Drylie, Gordon Stewart, Albert Dormer, Walter Samways, and Harry Aitken, who is still working on trains today, have all been helpful in the lead up to the railway reopening.

Mr Burt continued:

"We are all very excited about the new railway here in Alloa. It will be the hub of the recently updated town centre and will greatly improve the amenities of the area. The future is bright for the people of the Wee County who want to get to Glasgow or Edinburgh quickly, whether it is for education, business or pleasure."

The picture above shows a drawing of Alloa Steam Engine Depot in 1953 by artist Ray Ruffell. The drawing was presented to Mr William Burt when he worked as a supervisor in Strawberry Hill depot in Twickenham in 1993.

For more information on the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail link visit www.sakrailway.co.uk If you have an enquiry please call the community hotline on 0141 229 7648 or email info@s-a-k.co.uk

