

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Members of the local community in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders came together throughout March 2008 to explore the legacy of the Waverley Line. The workshop was led by David Freer and Neil Wallace of O Street Graphic Design and resulted in the publication of a leaflet focusing on memories associated with the rail line.



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The workshop group.

To set the scene, the workshop began with a talk on the history of the Waverley Line and its route. RCAHMS archive material, such as historic photographs of the railway, aerial photographs of the areas through which it passed, as well as books and pamphlets stimulated discussion and created a starting point for sharing experiences. RCAHMS staff involved in surveying the line prior to building work commencing also shared their specialist knowledge with the group.

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Participants came from communities that will soon line the re-established train route. The workshop encouraged the group to share memories of the railway line before it was closed in 1969, to discuss the significance of the rail route at that time and to reflect on the impact it made to the local area and their communities.



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Some of the sources of inspiration used in the workshop.

RCAHMS staff member >
and one of the participants
examine archive images.



THE STORY OF THE LINE

For 120 years, the Waverley Line connected isolated communities throughout the Scottish Borders. It was operated by the North British Railway and ran from Edinburgh to Carlisle. The section from Edinburgh to Hawick was built between 1847-49, with the line extended to Carlisle in 1862.

The railway linked the great woollen towns of Galashiels and Hawick to the markets in Edinburgh and to the south. The northern end of the line was heavily used by the coal industry, with several collieries located close to the route, such as Lady Victoria Colliery at Newtongrange.



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View of Galashiels station in 1969
(Reproduced courtesy of J R Hume).
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THE STORY OF THE LINE

During the 1960s, the British Government attempted to reduce the cost of running the railways. This, together with an increase in the demand for road transport, resulted in the closure of the Waverley Line in January 1969, despite much protestation. Its closure left the Borders area without an active railway station within its boundary.

There is a future for the route once again however, through the Waverley Railway Project, which began in 2002 with the aim to re-establish a rail link from Edinburgh to Tweedbank as a commuter service. The new line, which is planned to open around 2012, will have new stations at Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange, Gorebridge, Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank. It is intended that re-instating the line will provide much needed public transport links in the area.

An oblique aerial view centred on Redbridge railway viaduct, taken by RCAHMS in 2007. DP025655

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SHARING MEMORIES

As well as finding out more about the history of the Waverley Line and the survey and recording work RCAHMS is undertaking in advance of construction, much of the workshop focused on noting down the participants memories of the line. Time was dedicated during each session to writing, with memories recorded both as a group and individually.

The personal recollections revealed funny, interesting and poignant stories.

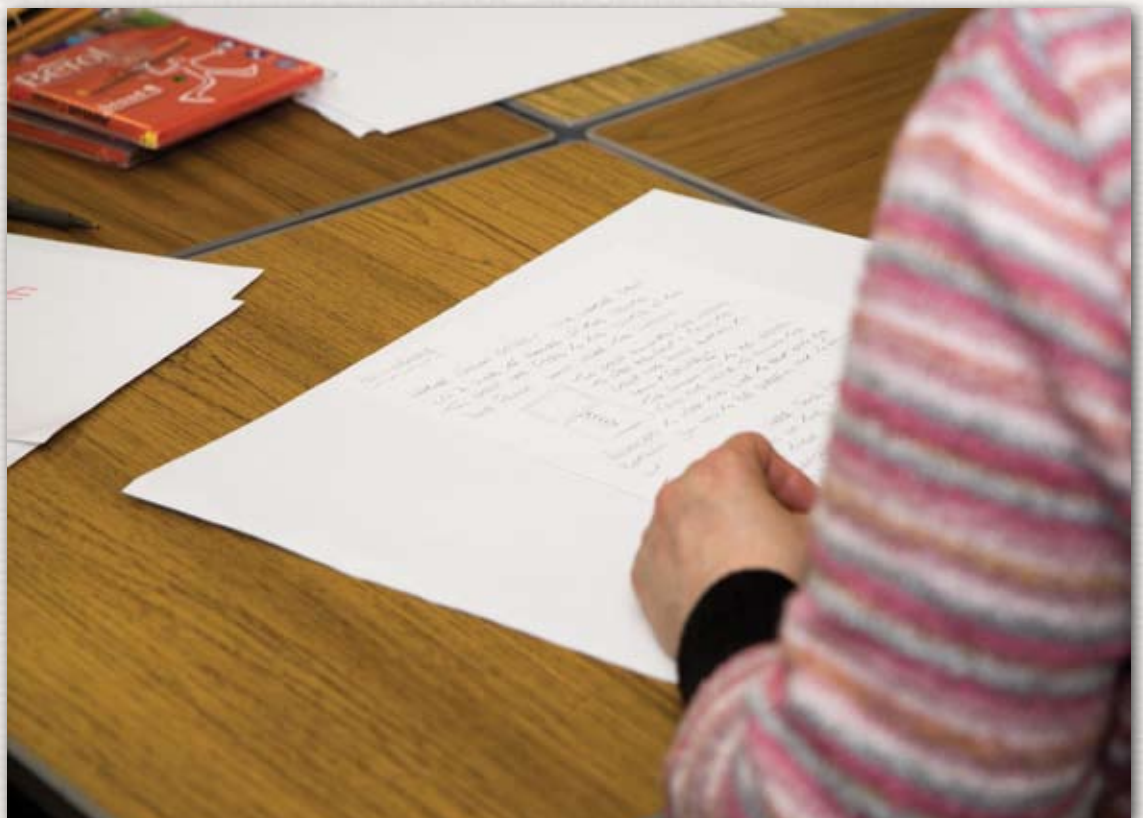
“We used to sleep in the luggage rack – get up and climb into it.”

“I also remember the sound of the trains struggling to Tynehead from Waverley, an extra engine shoved the train over Watershed, and the train clattered down Gala water to Gala.”

“The mills chartered trains for workers’ excursions in the trade holidays.”

“We took the Pullman train (to London) from Galashiels to Melrose to get home on a Saturday night (if you missed the train you walked the line home).”

Putting their
memories on paper,
ready to be included
in the leaflet. >



SHARING MEMORIES

“Guard used to climb on to the guards van to pick apples from wild apple tree at Belses.”

“There were great noises: distinctive puff of engines, blast of steam building up; clack of wheels on rails.”

“Smoke billowed past the windows, there were spouts of soot, as a result the seats were manky from the smoke!”

“The local doctor told the story that if you need to go to hospital in Edinburgh a horse drawn ambulance collected the patient from the local hospital. Hawick station was telephoned to take out two rows of seats to put the stretcher in. Doctor said if you survived the journey to the hospital you probably weren't that ill!”

A train crossing the Slitrig Viaduct at Hawick in 1969 (Reproduced courtesy of J R Hume). SC698637
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THE DESIGN PROCESS

During the workshop, the graphic designers and the group worked together to create the leaflet. The resulting 'Waverley Route Memories' leaflet captured some of the reflections and stories written by the group, creating a strong piece of graphic journalism.

No level of design experience was required by the group at the outset, just enthusiasm to take part. Over the course of the workshop, participants were provided with an easy introduction to basic graphic design, including logo, poster and map development.

To gather the content together for the leaflet, the group explored the RCAHMS archive material, as well as personal photographs brought in by one of the participants. Some of the best images were selected for inclusion, creating a collage of memories.

The participants all actively contributed to the publication's design, with everyone investigating their own ideas for the leaflet's layout. The graphic designers ensured that the final design incorporated these suggestions. The printed leaflets will be distributed around the local communities for the public to read and enjoy.



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The group in discussion.



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Members of the group work on their ideas.