

# 'CLIFF RAILWAY TIMES'

FBCR Aims To Preserve , Protect, and Promote The Babbacombe Cliff Railway



Friends of Babbacombe Cliff Railway FBCR Newsletter October 2005 Issue No 2

Apologies for delayed newsletter publication due to insufficient copy material. If you have travelled on any other funicular railway around the country, or have a story to tell about our own railway or pictures please let us know so that we can include them in the newsletter and on the website.

Contact:

## FBCR Newsletter

[fbc.cliffrailwaytimes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:fbc.cliffrailwaytimes@hotmail.co.uk)  
[jml@stmarychurchdag.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:jml@stmarychurchdag.wanadoo.co.uk)

Or

[fbcsecretary@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:fbcsecretary@hotmail.co.uk)

Please ask if you require additional copies to pass on to other interested parties.

## Railway Renovation

A recent Torbay Council press statement announced the council's commitment to spend £571,000 on renovation work perceived by members as the first step rather than a conclusion to their work.

## John Ayres (Chairman)

It is very good news that Torbay Council has decided to use the money from the sale of the St Marychurch Town Hall to carry out the repairs on the cliff railway. I believe that the pressure brought by this society has had a major influence on this decision.

The first phase, the relaying of the track and new cars will be carried out this winter. Following this announcement I have been asked why continue with this society as the main objective has been achieved. I believe that there is every reason for continuing to recruit new members and carry on the fight to ensure the future of this valuable asset.

The money is not as yet

'ring fenced' so that in future years it could be used to finance some other project that was considered to have greater priority.

Remember also that in October there will be a vote to elect a mayor. Once this person is in position they will set their own agenda which, may be contrary that pursued at by the present councillors. It is therefore important that we maintain our pressure and vigilance to ensure that the money is used for the railway.

We also need to look forward and your committee is gathering information so that the membership can decide what form of role that we want to play in the future.

Do we want to become responsible for the day to day running of the railway or do we wish to enter into a partnership with the council and participate in the operation in some way?

Once all of the information as been collected and available we will bring it to a public meeting for a discussion.

## A unique Attraction

The cliff railway is unique both in design and operation one of only sixteen funicular railways in the country still operational.

Located at the end of Babbacombe Downs a relatively inexpensive transport for visitors to and from Oddicombe and Babbacombe beaches.

An ideal alternative for those who are unable to undertake the challenging walk via the steep cliff pathway.

Wheelchairs and small mobility vehicles are catered for

with concessions on the fare so all are able to use this railway.



Opening times  
9.30 am—6.00 pm  
during the high  
season. Last up  
ride signalled by  
a ships bell rung  
30 minutes before  
closing.

The railway is run and regularly tested for safety by Torbay Council to ensure visitors enjoy the ride and views.

Information contact the manager:  
01803328750

## Beaches

Facilities on these family beaches include:

Beach hut hire daily,  
weekly or seasonal, toilets, first aid,  
public telephones, cafes, beach bars,  
ice cream vendors and the  
Corinthian Yacht Club.

Water sports diving and  
banana rides.

*Note: Dogs not allowed on certain  
beaches May to September*

## Local History

Book one of the guided tours organised by the Babbacombe and St Marychurch Local History Society. The guides are all well versed in the areas stories and legends.

The guided walks last for approximately 90 minutes comfortable footwear and clothing advisable.

Guide dog only permitted and adults must accompany children.

Guided tours and/or history society contact:

John or Judy Phone: 01803391415.

## Calendar of Events 2005.

(Notes for your dairy)



### 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Committee Meeting.

### 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November.

Volunteer clean up and maintenance sessions.

### 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Committee Meeting.

### 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> December.

Volunteer clean up and maintenance sessions.

### 13<sup>th</sup> December.

General Meeting mid-day onwards with a site visit to look at progress on the renovation and hot seasonal food and drinks.

### Jim's Films.

Approximately 30 members were present at the general meeting in Furrough Cross Church Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> September. Jim Gill local amateur filmmaker presented two archive films.



'Time for Restoration' the last renovation of the BCR in the early 1990s and 'Over the Rails' a practise exercises by the emergency services. Jim was thanked for the two excellent presentations.

FBCR chairman John Ayres said at the general meeting "The job of our association is far from finished just because the council have made this firm financial commitment in fact our work is only just starting.

We must continue to recruit new members, lobby the council and work in cooperation with the officers there to take the BCR and its operations forward".

### Late Opening

Ten volunteers from the FBCR in conjunction with Torbay Council assisted in a trial period for six days in August whereby the railway remained open until 8.00 pm.

FBCR are grateful for the help and assistance given by Peter Aunger from Torbay Council Cultural Services who gave up his evenings to supervise and train the volunteers and appreciation to the BCR staff for their co-operation.

The exercise was conducted

without any pre-advertising or organised special events to determine whether it might be financially viable extending the railway opening hours.

A statistical record was kept each evening during this six days period. The final figures concluded over 650 people had used the railway bringing in additional revenue amounting to £350.

The FBCR believe there is the potential for the railway to remain open until 8 pm most evenings next summer based on the statistic gathered and are the requesting the council to implement extended late opening next year.

### Time for a Change



A small number of members gathered at the top station on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

An opportunity for one final trip to the beach in these familiar yellow and turquoise cars and to say goodbye.

Work will soon begin to replace the cars and rails as the first stage of the refurbishment of the railway. Unfortunately the weather was unkind which discouraged more members from joining us.

It is hoped to get regular progress reports on the work so that we are aware of what is happening. We are also hoping to have a video record of renovation progress Jim Gill started the filming with this goodbye visit.

We look forward to seeing the new cars resplendent in maroon and cream put in place ready for the 80<sup>th</sup> celebrations on 1st April 2005.

### Aberystwyth

The funicular railway in Aberystwyth is at the north end of the promenade. It lay derelict for many years but has been taken over by a group that now operated it using volunteers. Originally a water powered railway it now uses electricity. Entry to the cars is from



a flight of steps alongside the track and as the floor inside the cars rises in the same profile as the steps all passengers are treated to amazing views as the car ascends. This arrangement has given rise to the nickname 'Toastracks' for the cars.

The train moves at 4 mph and half way up the track levels out for a distance to assist in maintaining this speed. The ride takes the passengers to a hilltop, which provides wonderful views across the town and up to Anglesey in the north and opens up an area for walkers.

Also at the top is a camera that provides a more detailed view of the town and a new café and gift shop. The latter has been built using money from objective 1 (supporting development in less prosperous regions) and funds from the Lottery. If you are in this area a ride on the vehicle is highly recommended.

### St Marychurch & District Action Group.

A voluntary non-political partnership community group we work with and for the community. Our aims are to help to improve all aspects of our surroundings.

Why not join us, for more information on projects we have undertaken during the past seven years please log on to our website:

[www.stmarychurchdag.co.uk](http://www.stmarychurchdag.co.uk)

### Celebration

The 80th Anniversary of the railway is on 1st April 2006 **Were You There** for the inaugural run in 1926 please contact the FBCR if you have any information.

### FBR Website & Contacts

<http://beehive.thisissouthdevon.co.uk/fbr/>

**John Ayres:** Chairman 01803 391415  
jayres@blueyonder.co.uk

**Arthur Christian:** Secretary 07989536450  
fbrsecretary@hotmail.co.uk

**Adele Farrell:** Events 01803 324799  
adele@oddicombebeach.wanadoo.co.uk

FBCR Newsletter designed and compiled by  
J. Lawrence of St Marychurch & District Action Group.

All copy for Issue 3 in by November 15<sup>th</sup>  
No Later Please.

C.I.M.L. M.M.V.