

EXETER & TEIGN VALLEY RAILWAY

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108
Internet:-

No longer any presence on the worldwide cesspit.

Your reference:-

Director, Property,
B.R.B. (Residuary), Ltd.,
Whittles House,
14, Pentonville Road,
London
N1 9RP

Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devonshire
EX6 7YT

Please quote this reference:- 1727
7th February, 2005

COPY

Dear Sir,

Perridge Tunnel (Exeter Railway 4 m. 8 ch. - 4 m. 46 ch.)

Mr. Holland has been kind enough to answer some of the questions I put to him with regard to Perridge Tunnel and has informed me of the plans to deal with the collapse at its centre.

As his responsibility is purely civil engineering, he felt unable to answer those of my questions which were essentially "political" and suggested that I contact your office.

Despite what Mr. Holland has told me about the possibility of a "significant" risk to life and property developing in the "medium to long term" if the collapse is not dealt with, I remain unconvinced that there is any danger at all. Engineers with specialist expertise in tunnelling, mining and railways have advised me that the existing collapse, or any further collapse at the same depth, would not affect the surface.

The fact that work is proposed nearly twenty years after the collapse began suggests that engineers now have a heightened sense of risk and will routinely recommend remedial measures even if there is only infinitesimal liability.

Is the presence of a public road the determining factor here, both in the decision to take action and the refusal to hand over the tunnel to other than a statutory body? Presumably, you would not be prevented from handing over Culver Tunnel (E.R. 4.74) today, were it still your liability, regardless of its condition, because it lies entirely within the Culver estate and "carries" no public right of way.

If work really does need doing, or if it does not at this stage but money has become available under new funding arrangements, surely it is incumbent on a responsible state company, when disposing of structures and non-commercial property, to be sensitive to the wider world, to local communities and to future possibilities.

Just because Perridge Tunnel is very much out of sight, inaccessible and largely forgotten does not necessarily justify a "fill and forget" approach. Especially not if work which effectively destroys the tunnel costs roughly the same as the substantial and long-lasting repairs which would have kept the tunnel open.

Estimated costs stated to me have varied between £500,000 and £800,000. These I take it come from your tied or regular consultants and contractors who do not have to face competition. And I doubt if your concern has to deliver the "best value" demanded of others in the public sector.

As Perridge Tunnel is public property and it is planned to spend public money on it, would you allow a specialist local engineering firm to examine the structure with a view to submitting a price for its repair?

Your brief, as I understand it, is to dispose of or extinguish all residual railway property. No public body, no private railway with Transport & Works Act authority or any other organization is a contender for ownership at present, but one may be found in the future. You are only likely to dispense with your liability completely if you keep the tunnel open; if you block it with concrete, you would be permanently saddled with the remaining liability.

Can you suggest another way forward which would allow you to go further than the final solution proposed? You have money budgeted: can it be better spent? Could there be some kind of partnership arrangement, as there was with Chelfham Viaduct?

Are you at liberty to reveal the results of the exploratory borings undertaken at Mount Boon Farm?

It is hoped that you will be able to answer my questions in full.

Yours faithfully,

 COPY

C. Burges
Owner and Operator

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr C. Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddyscombsleigh
Exeter
EX6 7YT

Room C5
Hudson House
York YO1 6HP
DX65525 YORK 12
Telephone 01904 524786
Fax 01904 523661
E-mail john.clarke@brbr.gov.uk

16 February 2005

Your Ref
Our Ref EXR/4m8ch



Dear Mr Burges,

**EXETER RAILWAY
PERRIDGE TUNNEL**

I refer to your letter dated 7th February 2005 addressed to my colleague in London.

The condition of Perridge Tunnel is poor. The lining has distorted and collapsed in the central area, and the volume of fallen material has filled the tunnel to the crown. The rate of deterioration is accelerating and unless tackled soon it will lead to further collapses within the structure. Whether or not the collapse will reach ground level is largely immaterial; the fact is that we cannot monitor the tunnel whilst it remains in this condition. This is not an 'infinitesimal' liability.

The presence of the public road is one of the factors preventing the transfer of the tunnel to a non-statutory body.

All disposals by the Board have to be approved by the Strategic Railway Authority (SRA). The SRA established a Property Advisory Group that consisted of, in the main, people drawn from external property and railway companies to consider what assets of the Board should be retained. Under the direction of the Secretary of State for Transport they were obliged to consider possible reopening of the railway over the next 20 years. They approved the disposal of Perridge Tunnel. Further as far as I am aware there have been no expressions of interest in taking over the tunnel from any statutory body at any time.

With regards to the Board's procurement of framework consultant and contractor services this is subject to competition. The procurement was the

subject of a full OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) procedure. We have no intentions of allowing additional suppliers onto the list at this stage.

We are always prepared to consider partnerships, similar to the one that we developed with Andrew Dow at Chelfham, providing the partner met the full additional cost of repair over infilling plus a sinking fund contribution to the future maintenance of that section of the tunnel. I note your opinions about the costs of infilling compared to repair, but from my experience of tunnel works – which dates back to 1978 - I would expect the cost to double. Also this funding partner would need to be found very quickly since I do not propose to delay the works.

One borehole was sunk just off the line of the tunnel. I enclose a photocopy of the log for your information.

Yours sincerely,

John Clarke

Director Structures

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr Colin Burgess
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombeleigh
Exeter EX6 7YT

Room C5
Hudson House
York YO1 6HP
DX65525 YORK 12
Telephone 01904 524786
Fax 01904 523661
E-mail john.clarke@brbr.gov.uk

1 July 2005

Your Ref
Our Ref EXR/4m 8ch

COPY

Dear Mr Burgess,

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

Thank you for your letter dated 20th June 2005.

Please be assured that you have not been forgotten. A revised report on the options for Perridge Tunnel is expected from Jacobs shortly. I have instructed them to meet with you and your advisers once the document is completed.

Yours sincerely,

John Clarke



COPY

*17/05: The above is the record: expecting report from Jacobs next week.
18/05: The above is the record: expecting report from Jacobs next week.*

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr C Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EXETER
EX6 7YT

PO Box 14
Abergavenny
NP7 5XT

Telephone 01873 855523
Fax 01873 855523
E-mail lee.holland@brbr.gov.uk

22 November 2006

Your Ref 1919
Our Ref EXR/4.08/LH



Dear Mr Burges

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

Thank you for your letter of 20 November 2006.

The radar surveys were done in September following delays in obtaining a bat licence to work in the tunnel. I am still awaiting a formal report with recommendations but have discussed the findings with our consultant.

It appears that the fall of material in the middle of the tunnel was not caused by an infilled construction shaft collapsing, as was suspected at one time. It is now believed to have been the result of a slip on a geological fault line along which part of the tunnel alignment coincides.

The invitation to meet with our consultants is still open to you. I shall ask Jacobs Babbie to contact you so that your opinion regarding the future of the tunnel can be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely


Lee Holland
Civil Engineer

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr C Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EXETER
EX6 7YT

PO Box 14
Abergavenny
NP7 5XT

Telephone 01873 855523
Fax 01873 855523
E-mail lee.holland@brbr.gov.uk

9 February 2009

Your Ref
Our Ref EXR/4.08/LH



Dear Mr Burges,

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

As you have expressed an interest in the disused Perridge Tunnel previously I thought I would inform you of our current plans.

The collapsed section of tunnel is considered to be too dangerous for any operatives to work in. Inspections in recent years have shown further falls of material at the same location thereby enlarging the hole in the crown of the tunnel. The void above the tunnel is approximately 6m high above the arch and is as wide as the full width of the tunnel.

Preparations for stabilising the collapsed area have recommenced with a view to undertaking the work in summer 2009. We propose to seal each end of the collapsed area with concrete walls then drill down from above and pump foamed concrete into the void above the tunnel. The purpose is to prevent further movement in this section of tunnel and to stop further distortion of the tunnel lining in the approaches to the collapsed section.

A planning application has been submitted to Teignbridge District Council and a bat licence will be sought from Natural England. An updated ecological survey of the tunnel is being arranged for March 2009 as this will be required for the bat licence.

My design consultants, Jacobs Engineering, are planning to undertake an updated condition survey of the tunnel in March 2009. They will be available to meet you and discuss our proposals if you so wish. I must point out though that the tunnel is considered to be a confined space and is only to be accessed by personnel with a valid confined spaces certificate and appropriate personal protective equipment and as part of a group entering under a safe system of working.

I have some photographs of the collapsed area that can be copied free of charge if these are of any interest to you.

Yours sincerely

Lee Holland
Civil Engineer

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devon
EX6 7YT

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108

Internet:-
www.teignrail.co.uk

Your reference:- EXR/4.08/LH

Please quote this reference:- 2215
9th February, 2009

Mr. L. Holland,
BRB (Residuary) Ltd.,
P.O. Box 14,
Abergavenny,
Gwent
NP7 5XT

Dear Mr. Holland,

Perridge Tunnel

Thank you for your letter, dated 9th February.

Mr. Clarke first referred to a possible meeting between Jacobs' engineers and the tunnel specialists who have advised me in a letter of 10th May, 2005. In July, 2005, he wrote, " ... I have instructed them (Jacobs) to meet with you" In a letter of 22nd November, 2006, you stated that, "The invitation to meet with our consultants is still open to you." A telephone conversation with your consultant, Ian Turnbull, on 8th February, 2007, concluded with him saying that he would recommend a meeting.

Yet now it seems that if I went to the expense of arranging a meeting at Longdown in March, it would only be so that Jacobs could present a fait accompli and explain their reasoning, not so that they could consult Mr. Daniel and Mr. Gunn on a method of repair.

Am I correct to take it that you now consider it quite impossible to repair the tunnel and will consider no other view?

The photographs you mentioned would be interesting and I should like to have some copies. Would you be kind enough to forward some extra copies for my advisers?

Yours sincerely,



C. Burges
Owner & Operator

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr C Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EXETER
EX6 7YT

PO Box 14
Abergavenny
NP7 5XT

Telephone 01873 855523
Fax 01873 855523
E-mail lee.holland@brbr.gov.uk

18 March 2009

Your Ref 2248
Our Ref EXR/4.08/LH



Dear Mr Burges,

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letters dated 9 February and 11 March 2009 and apologise for the delay in replying.

We do not consider it impossible to repair the tunnel, indeed this option was considered at the early stages of the current investigation. The high cost of repair for a tunnel with no foreseeable future use led us to develop the partial infilling option. The various surveys on the tunnel and the surrounding area have given us a better understanding of the nature of the ground and the probable cause of the collapse. It has also enabled us to develop more accurate estimates of the costs of infilling and repair.

The offer of a meeting with our consultants, Jacobs Engineering, is still open. Design and survey work is still ongoing and this can be discussed more fully at a site meeting.

The photographs are not ready yet as they have to be copied from several sources and some work is needed to improve the quality. I will forward copies to you shortly.

Yours sincerely

Lee Holland
Civil Engineer

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

Mr C Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EXETER
EX6 7YT

PO Box 14
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 5XT

Telephone 01873 855523
Fax 01873 855523
E-mail lee.holland@brbr.gov.uk

21 May 2009

Your Ref 2288
Our Ref EXR/4.08/LH

Dear Mr Burges,

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

Thank you for your letter of 20th April 2009.

Please find enclosed herewith paper copies of photographs taken inside Perridge tunnel. The quality is poor due to the limitations of the camera equipment and the environment inside the tunnel but they give some indication of the scale of the collapse.

Further survey, investigation and design work has been done recently but no firm decision has been made on the future of the tunnel. My engineering consultants, Jacobs, have updated their estimated cost of repair of the collapsed section. They have not yet contacted South Western Mining & Tunnelling but we have had a survey undertaken by Mines Rescue Service to report on the safety of working in the tunnel.

Jacobs's estimated cost of repairing only the collapsed section is circa £1.1million. This work would not make the tunnel safe for future transport or pedestrian use as there is a significant risk of further collapses throughout the tunnel.

The brickwork lining is only 3 rings thick throughout most of the tunnel with large voids between the top of the arch and the excavated rock. The mudstone strata above the arch are considered to be intensely fractured with groundwater migrating along the fractures. Complete relining of the full length of the tunnel is likely to be necessary to make it safe for future use. One solution would be to cast a secondary concrete lining that would be structurally competent to resist ground loading. This option has not been developed further as the cost would be many millions of pounds.

No major work is likely to take place in the tunnel this year as we are restricted to working between May and August due to the bat hibernation season. At the present time we are still considering all options including abandonment. I will write again when we have reached a decision on the future of the tunnel.

Yours sincerely

Lee Holland
Civil Engineer

E&TVR

East Dartmoor

*Home of the Camping Vans, TOAD & TADPOLE
Centre of the Campaign for Real Railways*

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devon
EX6 7YT

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108

Internet:-
www.teignrail.co.uk

Your reference:- EXR/4.08/LH

Please quote this reference:- 2331
8th June, 2009

Mr. L. Holland,
BRB (Residuary) Ltd.,
P.O. Box 14,
Abergavenny,
Monmouthshire
NP7 5XT

Dear Mr. Holland,

Perridge Tunnel

Thank you for your letter of 21st May, together with the photographs you had promised to send.

Robin Daniel called here last week and naturally we discussed the tunnel and its problems.

With the benefit of your photos, drawings and descriptions, and the wealth of his own underground engineering experience, Robin said he was confident that South Western Mining & Tunnelling could repair the collapsed area and its environs for a sum that would be competitive, certainly if viewed over a longer term.

They have considered using a shield cum casting profile fabricated off site and assembled within a stable area of the tunnel. The muck pile would be excavated remotely using mining techniques, and the shield moved into place and expanded. This and the building of foundation sills, placing of steel reinforcement, pumping of concrete, filling of voids and much else would of course have to be the subjects of detailed design work.

The advantages of this method are:-

- (i). No surface disturbance would be necessary.
- (ii). Ventilation and drainage would be maintained.
- (iii). The shield could be used again to repair a further collapse or as part of preventative work in successive years. It could even be used in other tunnels, which would reduce the cost attributable to Perridge.
- (iv). There would be safe zones within the tunnel.
- (v). The Board would still have a liability it could dispose of to another statutory body in future.

On the other hand, the disadvantages with blocking the tunnel in the manner that you propose are:-

- (i). A surface compound would be needed, which would disturb pasture and hedge bank.
- (ii). Through ventilation would be destroyed.
- (iii). Maintaining the 150 mm. drain through the ca. 40 m. plug (or through any further collapse) would be difficult. A blockage would cause a flood extending to the summit of the gradient, with the water 1.5 m. deep at the tunnel mouth.
- (iv). It would be difficult to undertake preventative work and the inevitable future collapses would have to be dealt with using the same method; the surface above the present collapse happens to be the most accessible on the line of the tunnel.
- (v). The Board would be burdened with a much worse liability than if repairs were to be made, one which it would be unlikely ever to divest.

The Cornishmen are willing to meet with you and your consultants so that the damage can be seen and some initial ideas conveyed. I am ready to sponsor such a meeting in the hope that you will be persuaded to let South Western Mining & Tunnelling draw up a scheme and submit a quote of costs.

There is surely no satisfaction to be derived by an engineer in destroying a structure, especially one built by hand and powder with private capital. You must prefer to work constructively, if it is possible to do so with the funds available.

Yours sincerely,

C-B-

Colin Burges

**BRB
(Residuary)
Ltd**

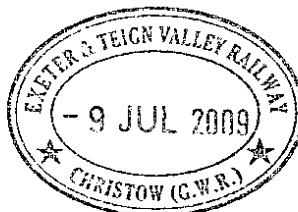
Mr C Burges
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EXETER
EX6 7YT

PO Box 14
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 5XT

Telephone: 01873 855523
Fax: 01873 855523
E-mail: lee.holland@brbr.gov.uk

7 July 2009

Your Ref 2331
Our Ref EXR/4.08/LH



Dear Mr Burges,

PERRIDGE TUNNEL

Thank you for your letter of 8th June 2009.

I have enclosed, for your information, a copy of Jacobs's recent updated options report on Perridge Tunnel. To save space and weight I have not included the appendices as these are mainly copies of earlier documents that have now been superseded by this report.

You raised some interesting points in your letter regarding the proposed repair suggested by South Western Mining & Tunnelling. This outline is a similar approach to that estimated by Jacobs as costing circa £1.1m. However, as Jacobs point out in their report, the work would not make the whole of the tunnel safe as there is a significant risk of further collapses occurring in other areas without warning.

The original reason for developing the partial infilling option was to stabilise the collapsed section of tunnel which lies very close to Perridge Lodge and the public road over the tunnel. This was a more economical solution than repair. With the benefit of ground penetrating radar surveys Jacobs used subsidence engineering principles to calculate that if the tunnel were allowed further to collapse the effect on Perridge Lodge and Mount Boon Farm would be negligible.

No decision has been taken yet on the future of the tunnel but abandonment looks like the most economical option based on the information in Jacobs's report. The presence of bats in the tunnel restricts us to working between May and August so no major works would be possible before next year. BRB(R) and Jacobs would be willing to meet South Western Mining & Tunnelling in York if they would like to

discuss their proposals. However, as the probable future of the tunnel is formal abandonment, any meeting might be academic.

Yours sincerely

Civil Engineer

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

NOTICE OF PLANNING PROPOSAL

LOCATION: DUNSFORD - Perridge Tunnel, Disused Exeter To Christow Line
PROPOSAL: Engineering works to tunnel
APPLICANT: B R B (Residuary) Ltd
APPLICATION REF NO: 09/00389/FUL
CASE OFFICER: Nicola White Direct Line 01626 - 215716

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that this planning proposal has been made to TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL. A copy of the proposal can be inspected at Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 4XX on Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.00pm (Fridays 4.30pm). You may also view planning documentation on-line at www.teignbridge.gov.uk

Comments about the proposal can be made in writing, by e-mail to the address below or via the website. Comments will not be acknowledged. Please comment by **5 March 2009** quoting the application reference. Please note that any comments cannot be treated as confidential and will be published on the internet for general viewing. Only planning matters can be considered and comments which the Council considers to be inappropriate may be removed from letters. Please see our website for advice on what constitutes a planning matter. Once determined the Decision Notice will be displayed on the website (a copy can be requested with S.A.E).

Steve Robinson
Service Lead – Planning, Design & Property

Teignbridge District Council, Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4XX
Tel: 01626 215743. Fax: 01626 215770
E-mail: planning@teignbridge.gov.uk
Website: www.teignbridge.gov.uk

12.02.2009

E&TVR

East Dartmoor

*Home of the Camping Vans, TOAD & TADPOLE
Centre of the Campaign for Real Railways*

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devon
EX6 7YT

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108

Internet:-
www.teignrail.co.uk

Your reference:- 09/00389/FUL

Please quote this reference:- 2220
17th February, 2009

Mr. S. Robinson,
Service Lead - Planning, Design & Property,
Teignbridge District Council,
Forde House,
Brunel Road,
Newton Abbot
TQ12 4XX

Dear Sir,

Perridge Tunnel, Exeter Railway
Planning Application for Engineering Work

The BRB (Residuary) proposal to infill part of the tunnel is the easiest and least considered course.

My objection to it is summarized below:-

- The Board (BRB (Residuary)) has failed adequately to explore the possibility of repair;
- Plugging the tunnel with concrete would interfere with its drainage and ventilation;
- The resultant tunnel(s) would be a worse liability;
- Infilling would make further collapses inevitable;
- The Board has ignored local opinion and foresees no future use of the tunnel;
- The Board spends public money and should have a duty to produce beneficial results.

In 2005, I offered to pay for a meeting at Longdown Station of the Board's area engineer and his consultants with experienced Cornish mining and tunnelling engineers who had given me advice and who would present a case for a method of repair. This offer was accepted by the Director, Structures, and such a meeting was referred to on several occasions by the area engineer and the consultants. No meeting has ever taken place.

Through drainage of the tunnel is essential, not just for ingress along its length, but also for the large basin formed by the approach cutting at the west end. Two water courses which would issue naturally into this basin are diverted away but storm flows can burst the banks. The tunnel descends 20 ft. from the western portal to the point of collapse at the centre. Through ventilation, though not essential, is greatly preferable.

It is the Board's remit to dispose of or extinguish its liabilities. Partly infilling the tunnel would do neither; it would leave two useless structures, the future disposal of which would be impossible.

Infilling, once started, would become the only way of dealing with inevitable future collapses, using vast quantities of concrete. Little of the surface above the tunnel is easily accessible; the area above the collapse happens to be the most convenient place of all to set up a compound.

In bringing forward its proposal, the Board has ignored local opinion. The position taken by the parish councils could not express more than general support for the maintenance of the tunnel's integrity as part of a wider view. The branch railway, despite all the incursions and destruction wreaked since withdrawal of train services, is still in engineering terms around 90% complete. Perridge Tunnel - whose construction today would be a multi-million pound project - is 20% of that total. Destroying it would effectively destroy the whole.

Not surprisingly, for the residue of an organization that was formed under Beeching, the Board takes it as an absolute that there will never be any expansion of the British railway system.

There is the impression of a connection where none in fact exists, but still it must seem strange to a passenger on the live railway that the rump of the British Railways Board can spend a fortune doing bat surveys, drilling holes, studying ground radar traces and endlessly scratching about where a disused tunnel is concerned, but nothing it seems can ever be done about the substandard platform at Starcross (and nearby at St. Thomas and Newton St. Cyres).

The very least the Board should be required to do after all its expenditure is produce some demonstrable benefit to the public. The Board has never quoted an accurate figure for the cost of infilling and has given no opportunity to my advisers to quote for a programme of repairs.

If, as looks likely, no replacement for cheap oil is found which allows the continuation of today's transport structure, with all its frivolous and wasteful movement of people and goods, there must surely be a return to shared systems which serve reasonable needs, use much less energy and operate in an organized way. Central to a new order of public transport must be a general purpose electrified railway which reclaims its former territories and functions, and to which traffic of all kinds gravitates.

This is not a view that has many adherents, principally because the majority is enraptured by the motor car and because the massive, almost exclusive, provision that has been made for private transport has been in existence long enough for everyone to think of it as indestructible while the energy which makes it all work is seen as inexhaustible.

The authorities that have done so much to unleash an extravagant mode of transport and all the chaotic development that it has made possible are just as fixated. Thus, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council can say with every confidence that there will never again be a railway along the Teign Valley route.

They claim to know what the future holds. I hope that the wiser authority of Teignbridge will stand apart and admit that it does not know what is in store and that the best course would be to provide for any eventuality.

Please use what power you have to persuade the Board to act constructively.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'CB' with a period at the end.

C. Burges
Owner & Operator

Encl.



*Home of the Camping Vans, TOAD & TADPOLE
Centre of the Campaign for Real Railways*

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devon
EX6 7YT

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108

Internet:-
www.teignrail.co.uk

Your reference:- 09/00389/FUL

Please quote this reference:- 2295
27th April, 2009

Mr. S. Robinson,
Service Lead - Planning, Design & Property,
Teignbridge District Council,
Forde House,
Brunel Road,
Newton Abbot
TQ12 4XX

Dear Mr. Robinson,

Perridge Tunnel, Exeter Railway
Planning Application for Engineering Work

Councillor Stephen Purser has advised me that the application by BRB (Residuary) was passed under delegated powers, despite his written request for it to be determined by the planning committee. In conversation, he admitted that, even if the application had gone before the committee, it was his opinion that the members would have been unlikely to have refused permission. The manner in which the case officer handled the application, then, is rather academic and it hardly seems worth making much of her mistake.

Since beginning my campaign to stop the destruction of Perridge Tunnel in 2003, I have done a lot to draw attention to this hidden structure and try to convince the BRB to repair it; none of which effort will ever bring me reward or advantage. I am driven by an unshakeable belief in the need to expand the British railway system, both territorially and functionally, and by the knowledge that, in the case of this line, all of what has befallen it since closure pales beside the severance that would be caused by the BRB effecting its current plans.

In objecting to the application, I knew very well that in strictly planning terms there were no grounds to refuse consent, which is why I appealed to Councillor Purser. If the case went before the committee, I conjectured, there was a possibility that a perverse decision could be made and that BRB's plans could at least be stalled, enabling me to press from a better position for my consulting engineers to be heard.

Instead, I have had to crawl back to the BRB engineer without any support from the district council, whose low-ranking officer it seems nodded through the planning application without reading a word that

was said in objection and, after procedure was muddled, without even the courtesy of an explanation being extended.

All along, BRB have said that they would meet with my people from South Western Mining & Tunnelling. But I would have to put up around £1,000 for such a meeting and I am loath to spend such a sum unless I have a strong indication from the Board that they are prepared to alter plans and consider using specialist contractors. What I could not afford would be my people turning up at Longdown merely to be told in detail the methods that were going to be employed on a course that was set upon. The necessary signal has never been received and the Board is equally cagey about costs. My firm has given an estimate based on the incomplete information available and it would appear that they can repair the tunnel for less than the state's "fill and forget" solution.

While I am contemptuous of government entreaties to listen to what Al Gore has to say delivered almost in the same breath as how essential is the need for expansion of air travel, and local authorities harping on about recycling rates even as they promote wholeheartedly 1960s major road construction, I do accept the difficulty of changing an established structure, however decrepit, without the stimulus of a catastrophe; going to war for oil is clearly not catastrophic enough. What I do not understand or excuse is that when small avenues of escape from this fix are presented and when real provision can be made for the future, the advocates are so often dismissed or derided. Thus, the idea of a fully-electrified, expanded railway - powered by fuel from any source, insulated from price and supply shocks - taking over much of what road transport does today is laughed out of court and opportunities to step towards new or revived systems are routinely ignored.

Unlike so many calls upon the local authority, Perridge is one that would have involved it having to do and contribute nothing. Teignbridge could have put the weight of its name behind the maintenance of one of the largest and most expensive engineering works in the whole district, as an option for the future, while all the trouble and expense of bringing it about had been carried by a public-spirited individual.

Is there, I wonder, even with the absence of any policy, a measure of support that Teignbridge could render my cause, even if only a vague statement of preference?

Yours sincerely,

C_B

Colin Burges

Copy to Councillor S. Purser

"Half the British railway system lies in ruins."

Teignbridge District passenger route mileage: 52½
Open: 25½ (48%) Closed: 27¼

Please Ask For: Steve Robinson
Tel: Direct Line 01626 215701
Email: planning@teignbridge.gov.uk



My Ref: SWR/TSS275974

Your Ref: 2295

Mr Colin Burgess
Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
EX6 7YT

8th May 2009



Dear Mr Burgess

Perridge Tunnel

Thank you for your letter dated 27th April 2009 which we received on 1st May 2009 and apologies for the delay in responding to you.

Due to this being a transport issue I have forwarded your correspondence to Mike Deaton at Devon County Council, and asked him to reply to you direct.

I note your comments and concerns in your letter and I am sorry that this Council is unable to help further to support your campaign.

Yours sincerely

Steve Robinson
Service Lead – Planning, Design & Property

Teignbridge District Council, Forde House, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4XX
Minicom: 01626 363690 DX121075 Newton Abbot 5

We're working to
increase prosperity improve well-being be well managed promote communities
protect and enhance the environment
www.teignbridge.gov.uk

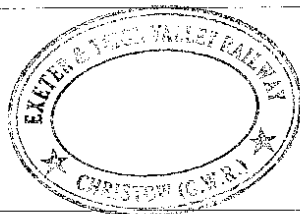




DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Edward Chorlton
County Environment Director

Mr C Burges
Christow Station
Doddiscombsleigh
Exeter
Devon
EX6 7YT



Newton Abbot Local Service Group
Devon House
Brunel Road
Newton Abbot
Devon
TQ12 4PB

Your ref:

Date: 28 May 2003

Phone:

Direct Line
Enquiries:

Newton Abbot (01626) 206377
Newton Abbot (01626) 353652

My ref:

GSH/T/18

Please ask for: Mr Heath

Fax No:

Newton Abbot (01626) 361252

e-mail address

Nalsg@devon.gov.uk

Dear Mr Burges,

RE: PERRIDGE TUNNEL, LONGDOWN

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2003, which was addressed to Mr Chorlton.

I appreciate the concerns you have raised regarding the Perridge Tunnel, however, as you are of course aware, the future of this structure rests with the Rail Authorities and it will be for them to determine any final plans for this tunnel. As far as the County Council's transport interests are concerned, it is clear that there is no prospect of the Teign Valley line being re-opened.

Although I am sure you will be disappointed with this response, it would not be appropriate for the County Council to oppose the works described in your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Heath
Local Service Officer

55 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON SW1H 0EU
SWITCH 020 7654 6000
FAX 020 7654 6010
www.sra.gov.uk

Richard Younger-Ross Esq MP
House Of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

JAMES McARTHUR WATSON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECT 020 7654 6248
SECRETARY 020 7654 6332

12 December 2003

Your ref: GW/BURGES.030731
Our ref: DC03/1428

Dear Mr Younger-Ross,

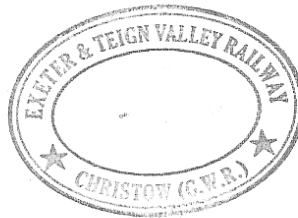
Thank you for your letters of 23 October and 20 November to Robert Plampin enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr Colin Burges, owner and operator of the Exeter and Teign Valley Railway, about the partially collapsed Perridge Tunnel. I am sorry for the delay in replying. We cannot trace having received your letter of 5 August. For information, the Chairman and Chief Executive of this Authority is Richard Bowker.

Rail Property Ltd has looked into the comparative costs of both repairing the tunnel and infilling the collapsed section. The costs of partial infilling are estimated to be in the order of £800k while repair work would be at least £1m. I understand that the tunnel has suffered from ground movements since the 1930s and has only a thin lining. Rail Property consulted Devon County Council about the proposal for infilling and received no objection from them. Subject to the availability of funding, works for this project are planned for 2006/07.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely
James Watson

JAMES WATSON



E&TVR

East Dartmoor

*Home of the Camping Vans, TOAD & TADROLL
Centre of the Campaign for Real Railways*

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station,
Doddiscombsleigh,
EXETER,
Devon
EX6 7YT

Telephone:-
Christow (01647) 253108

Internet:-
www.teignrail.co.uk

Your reference:- GW/BURGES.030731

Please quote this reference:- 2303
18th May, 2009

R. Younger-Ross, Esq., M.P.,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London
SW1A 0AA

COPY

Dear Mr. Younger-Ross,

Perridge Tunnel, Exeter Railway

You were good enough to take up this issue in 2003, since when nothing much happened until February this year and B.R.B. applied for planning permission to proceed with work partly to infill the tunnel.

My mobilization of the growing support came to nought because Teignbridge ignored the district councillor's calling-in of the application and it was instead rubber-stamped by a junior case officer under delegated powers.

To be diplomatic, in a letter to the chief planning officer I made little of the procedural error but appealed for the authority not to be dismissive. The answer was a six-line dismissal which made no mention of the mistake.

None of what emanates from think-tanks and hothouses has any hope of being implemented as long as this blinkered attitude prevails among decision makers. I am not asking that men who have given their lives to furthering the high-energy, expansive systems that underpin the developed world suddenly grasp new ideas, for that would be too shocking for sticks-in-the-mud. All I ask at this stage is that they take a precautionary approach and accept that a whole range of things **may** happen which could be greatly facilitated by early ground-laying. But I fear that many will so fail to receive alternative ideas that they will be the ones carrying on building the *Maginot Line* while the Germans are going round it, so to speak.

Can you imagine the on-train announcement at St. David's?

"Because of severe weather conditions affecting the main line, this train is to be diverted and will run twenty minutes later than advertised from Newton Abbot. A special train service is operating between Exeter and Dawlish Warren and between Newton Abbot and Teignmouth."

Just beyond St. Thomas your train would slow for the junction that is still there and then weave its way through the hills to the Teign Valley, whence to follow the river home to the sea.

There is not a soul in Teignbridge District Council - or Exeter City, or Devon County - who can envisage the kind of railway resurgence that would again make possible the diversion of main line trains along a now derelict branch. Thus it is just as if any language I may use to describe such a vision is, à la 1984, dropped from the lexicon. Yet what are they all doing except continuing to provide exclusively for more and more petro-transport - and all that its frivolous use makes possible - ignoring the writing on the wall?

In my view of the future, the only way we can have most of the freedom of movement we have now is by using highly co-ordinated public transport systems, engineered as much to minimise energy use as to give good service. At the heart of this must be an electrified, expanded railway network run by a unified, bullish organization, able to fight for its place and purpose. As a start in this direction, we could stop trashing disused lines and their structures.

A firm of Cornish mining and tunnelling engineers has advised me that it is capable of repairing the collapsed area of Perridge Tunnel and stabilizing part of the remainder for a sum which could be less than the immovable state proposes to spend on the tunnel's destruction.

British Railways keeps saying that it will consult with my people, yet work continues on a course which seems set. If I put up money to sponsor the Cornishmen, I want to know that B.R. will consider a scheme that saves taxpayers' money and delivers a beneficial result.

If you agree that my engineers should be heard and given the opportunity to quote for a programme of repairs, I wonder if you could influence B.R.B.'s bosses at the Department for Transport. I and future rail users will thank you.

Yours sincerely,

C_B_

Colin Burges

Owner & Operator

Encl.

Richard Younger-Ross MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr C Burgess
Director, Exeter and Teign Valley Railway
Christow Station
Doddiscomsleigh
Exeter
EX6 7YT

Ref: MJ/BURGESS.030731
Please quote reference when replying.
Date: 21 July 2009



Further to my previous correspondence please find attached a response that I have received from the Department for Transport.

I hope that the response answers the queries that you have. I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that infilling is only one of the options that is being looked at to secure the tunnel.

If I can be of any further assistance to you, regarding this or any other matter, please don't hesitate to get in touch with my office.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Younger-Ross MP

Constituency Office: 26 Queen Street, Newton Abbot. TQ12 2EF
Tel: 01626 202626

Whilst Richard Younger-Ross MP will treat as confidential any personal information which you pass on, he will normally allow staff and authorised volunteers to see it if this is needed to help and advise you. The Member of Parliament may pass on all or some of the information at agencies such as Government Departments, HM Revenue & Customs or Local Council if this is necessary to help with your case. Richard Younger-Ross MP may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let him know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.



From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Richard Younger-Ross MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Department for Transport

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3084
Fax: 020 7944 4521
E-Mail: chris.mole@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk
Our Ref: AA/CM/017398/09
Your Ref: MJ/BURGES.030731

RECEIVED 20 JUL 2009

17 JUL 2009

Dear Richard

Thank you for your letter of 23 June to the Secretary of State enclosing correspondence from Mr Colin Burges of Exeter and Teign Valley Railway, Christow Station, Doddiscombsleigh, about the Perridge Tunnel. I am responding as the Minister responsible for rail.

I cannot comment on the issues that Mr Burgess has raised with regard to the planning application and approval process as this is a matter for the local planning authority rather than central Government. However, I understand that a 20 metre section of the tunnel lining has collapsed and that a further 20 metres of lining on either side of the collapse has become unstable. Investigations so far by BRB (Residuary) Ltd (BRBR) suggest that the collapse has been triggered by ground water causing pressure to build up against the tunnel lining. BRBR's primary objective is to keep the tunnel safe and secure as any further problems in the tunnel could represent a danger to the public.

Investigations are continuing as to how best to secure the tunnel and infilling is only one option that is being looked at. BRBR will take a view on how best to do this once those investigations have been completed. I also understand that BRBR are in touch with Mr Burges about the tunnel and will let him know the result of their investigations.

Best wishes

CHRIS MOLE