

Scottish presenter, Dave Marshall, returns to Alstom's Glasgow Traincare Centre 64 years later

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Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has welcomed back a visitor to its Glasgow Traincare Centre 64 years after his first tour. Former Radio Clyde presenter, Dave Marshall, originally came to the Polmadie depot with his father as a 14 year old in 1960. Flashforward to 15 March 2024 and the DJ was this time accompanied by his daughter Nicola and his 13-year-old grandson, Calum.

Dave and his family joined a special tour of the Alstom facility organised by the **Rail Riders** enthusiasts group, where he came carrying proof of his earlier visit; a confirmation letter his father wrote to a British Railways employee more than six decades prior. The letter was dated 15 March 1960 – 64 years to the day of his return visit to Polmadie.

“I spotted the date coincidence when my daughter called me to confirm our Rail Riders booking. As my first visit to Polmadie was so special, I had kept the original copy of the letter my father wrote to British

Railways all those years ago. I was really happy to find it again among my personal items at home and was pleased I could bring it with me to show the team at Alstom,” said 78-year-old David Marshall from Eaglesham.

Historic railway site

Originally opened as Polmadie Shed in 1875 by the Caledonian Railway company, it was subsequently rebuilt and extended for the maintenance of steam engines and rolling stock.

Located around two miles south-east of Glasgow Central, the Alstom depot is currently the main base of the iconic Caledonian Sleeper service, where it is maintained and cleaned by over 100 staff who provide a round-the-clock service. Polmadie typically welcomes 17 trains per day, including Avanti West Coast’s fleet of Class 390 Pendolinos, which were built by Alstom.

Dave added: “It’s fantastic to see how Alstom have cared for the site’s original red brick building – which formed the steam engine shed – and ensure it remains integral to their very modern complex. Although it’s now full of high tech equipment, I did notice some glass roof panels which remain stained by the smoke from the old steam locomotives back in the 1950s and 1960s, and there’s something comfortingly nostalgic about that.”

Born in Edinburgh and raised in Glasgow, Dave is best known as one of the team of presenters who helped launch Radio Clyde at Hogmanay in 1973. Presenting the station’s Breakfast Show until 2001, he was also heard on Saga FM and Smooth Radio, as well as working as an announcer on STV.

“I loved seeing the fast-passing trains on the West Coast Main Line; what a cracking view you get from the depot! My trainspotting pals and I could stand there all day watching them, and it just made me want to work on the railways even more. There’s so much work that is involved at Polmadie to keep our trains running and it was great to learn all about that, as well as spend the day with my Papa,” said 14-year-old Calum MacKenzie.

The teenager also visited with a friend – again like his grandfather 64 years prior.

“My grandpa was a truly lovely man, and my dad mirrors his qualities with equal warmth. Dad finds immense joy in bonding with Calum, who absolutely adores his Papa. Witnessing their shared hobby is delightful; despite the 65-year age gap, they’re like the of best pals. Maybe in years to come Calum will come to Polmadie with his own grandson – I wouldn’t rule it out!” said Nicola MacKenzie.

Rail Riders

Dave Marshall and his family were among 30 visitors to the Alstom site who had applied as part of their membership of Rail Riders. Originally operating as a club for young rail enthusiasts, it was run by British Rail between 1981 and 1991 before being relaunched almost 30 years later, and aimed at a wider demographic.

Club events support good causes championed by the locations members gain access to and, as part of

their Polmadie visit, Rail Riders raised £600 for the Railway Children's [Safeguarding on Transport](#) Glasgow project – an initiative that is funded by Alstom and Avanti West Coast.

“Rail Riders was launched back in 2020 and has grown from strength to strength with our depot visits forming an integral part of the benefits of being a club member. Last year we arranged 11 visits and raised a fantastic £6,300 for various charities,” said Simon Buxton, Director at Rail Riders.

He added: “Our visit to Polmadie was the first depot tour in Scotland and it didn't disappoint – in fact we sold out within 45 seconds of the event being listed! All our members thoroughly enjoyed the visit to this strategic West Coast Main Line depot.”

Behind-the-scenes

The behind-the-scenes tour of Polmadie was conducted by Tony Isherwood, Traincare Centre Manager; Scott Turner, Senior Production Manager; and Siobhan Lennie, Project Manager at Alstom. Alongside the depot's large maintenance facility, the trio also showcased the site's overhaul and examination capabilities.

“As the UK and Ireland's leading provider of new trains and train services, it was fantastic to be able to show members of Rail Riders the important work we do at Polmadie to help keep trains running across Scotland – just like we proudly did all those years ago when Dave first visited,” said Tony Isherwood, Traincare Centre Manager at Alstom.

He added: “What was really humbling was the number of young people – like Calum and his friend Max – who joined our tour, keen to learn more about the intricacies of railway operations. We hope that special events like this one inspire the next generation and encourage more people to consider rewarding and long-lasting careers on Scotland's railway.

“We are also extremely grateful to Rail Riders for their donation to Railway Children, which is one of several local programmes we support as a Traincare Centre team.”