

Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership



**The Bentham Line
Annual Report 2011/12**



Contents

	Page
The Bentham Line	1
The CRP's Aims	2
Chairman's Report 2011/12	3
Account Summary	5
Station Adoption and Volunteers	6
Rail User Groups and Route Promotion	8
Walks and Recreation and Websites	9
The Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Lineup	10

Cover Photograph:

Northern Rail Class 150 DMU, with the Leeds to Heysham Port 'boat train', crossing Clapham Viaduct on 4th September 2012.

The Bentham Line



'One of the most glorious train journeys in Britain'

Michael Williams from 'On the Slow Train Again'

The CRP's Aims

The Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership aims are to:

Promote and develop the Bentham Line for the benefit of local residents, visitors and businesses.

Involve a wide range of local partners to ensure the railway plays a full part in the social and economic regeneration of the area it serves.

Work with the local Rail User Groups (Aire Valley, Lancaster and Skipton, Lancaster, Morecambe and District), Friends Groups (Bentham), neighbouring line RUGs and the Train Operating Company (Northern Rail) to improve the quality and suitability of services on the line for the benefit of existing



passengers and to increase passenger numbers.

Develop and promote integrated transport links at stations along the route (including bus, taxi, ship, cycling and walking) and good connections to adjoining local services (Settle-Carlisle Line, Furness Line and Metro Lines) and the main lines at Leeds and Lancaster.

Encourage and support station adoption groups along the line to help enhance station facilities, improve station environments and bring local community members together.

Encourage regeneration, sustainable development, accessibility and social inclusion along the corridor served by the Bentham Line.

Chairman's Report 2011/12

2011/12 has proved a very positive year for the CRP with a number of projects on which we have been working for some time coming to fruition or moving positively forward. The highlight of the year was the announcement by the Community Rail Minister Norman Baker, at a reception in the House of Commons on October 22nd, that the line has been awarded Service Designation. This not only gives us access to a further pot of DfT/ACoRP funding (which we are already making good use of) but also allows the CRP more influence in decision making regarding the rail service on the line on behalf of local communities and passenger needs. The Designation covers the Leeds-Morecambe passenger services and the stations on the Skipton - Heysham section of the line, excluding Carnforth and Lancaster, which are designated under other remits.

Improved Sunday Service

The year started well, the 2011/12 winter timetable saw the four train summer Sunday service extended throughout the winter. Our grateful thanks go to Northern Rail for the introduction of this service – the first service improvement on the line for many years. From my own observations the service seems to have been well received and well used – despite being affected by occasional engineering work. We will continue to promote the new service and must press on with marketing initiatives to ensure its success and inclusion in the current timetable commitment.

Better Connections

It also ended well after Northern Rail, following CRP requests, also adjusted train times to allow a connection from the Barrow line to the 10.34 Morecambe – Leeds train at Carnforth from the

December 2012 timetable. This has long been a desire of this and the Furness Line CRP together with all the local rail user groups. This handy mid morning connection will increase loadings on these services.

North Yorkshire Rail Officer

Further good news came with the appointment of Graham North as North Yorks CC Rail Officer. Graham replaces Andrew Easson following his retirement. Despite the continuing economic difficulties Graham has been appointed to work four days per week compared to Andrew's two. We welcome Graham and the support he is already giving to our team.



Passenger Footfall

Despite the recession footfall has continued to increase at all our stations on the Morecambe – Skipton section of the line by an average of 7.2% in 2010/11. Of particular interest are the rises of 17.9% at Gargrave and 14.7% at Wennington in 2010/11, and the 24.1% rise at Bentham during 2011/12. The potential to grow these figures by rural tourism or encouraging commuting for work and education is clear.

Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS)

Our first Station Partnership was formally established during the year at Bentham. They have registered with ACoRP as a Station Friend's Group, established good working relationships with Northern Rail and Network Rail and their Chairman Gerald Townson is now a member of the CRP executive.

Consultations

We have responded to DfT consultations on Rolling Stock, Devolving Rail to the Regions and Alternative Solutions Scoping. Thanks go to Rod Tickner for preparing the drafts for our comments.

We attended several meetings during the year with bidders for the proposed West Coast Mainline franchise. Concerns regarding stopping patterns, connections to and from the main line and paths for Northern Trains between Lancaster and Carnforth were voiced.

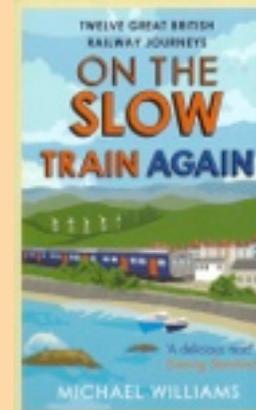
Publicity

In addition to the DfT Official Press Release regarding the Service Designation the CRP issued an augmented release which received publicity in local papers along the route.

The opening of the CRP and RUG information board and leaflet box on Lancaster Station produced a large – if inappropriate – headline in the local paper 'Join fight to stop rail cuts' but certainly drew attention to our literature.

Articles with photographs publicising the line poster, the Windowgazer guide, the artwork display at Bentham and the first anniversary of the Friends of Bentham Station have appeared in several rail magazines, local papers and on the internet.

A book by Michael Williams 'On the Slow Train Again' featured our line with the description "One of the most glorious train journeys in Britain." We have used the quotation on the poster and line literature. An extensive illustrated article about the line by Paul Salveson appeared in the March 2012 issue of 'Today's Railways' magazine.



To my delight a letter was published in the Lancaster Guardian from a resident on our line praising the excellent value of the Dales Railcard and the very popular winter-time flat fare offer for holders.

Many thanks to Rod Tickner our volunteer CRP Press Officer and to John Bearpark of LASRUG for their publicity efforts.

Morecambe Publicity Leaflets

Leaflets advertising special weekend attractions in Morecambe were distributed to Yorkshire stations at the time of the commencement of the new Sunday Winter Services. I was pleased to see that the first train from Leeds on the Sunday of the event arrived heavily loaded. Northern Area Client and Stakeholder Manager Drew Haley kindly agreed they could be put in station leaflet boxes. Lancaster City Council are prepared to issue more leaflets on a free of charge basis to continue this initiative in 2013.

Sponsorship

The CRP are one of the sponsors of the 10th anniversary of the restoration of Carnforth Station and will be involved in station events in the coming year.

Line Improvements

Network Rail are currently installing remotely operated crossing gates at Bare Lane Station replacing manually operated gates on this busy B road, and upgrading signalling and information boards. Extensive restoration work is underway at Skipton Station, with the refurbishment of the grade-II listed station canopies. Repainting has taken place at a number of our stations, in addition to regular and some more urgent maintenance work.

The Year Ahead

A detailed plan for 2012/13, based on our long term prospectus to 2017, has been drawn up and approved. 'Champions' have been appointed to be responsible for each major area of activity and specific targets for 2013 set.

A great deal of effort during the past year has been the result of the enthusiasm of volunteers; members of the Executive, Rail User Groups and Communities along the line for which I am very grateful. I am also grateful to Lancashire CC for the provision of the assistance of a part time CRO Simon Clarke based in Accrington. With Designation however, the time has come for us to increase our relationship with communities, schools, businesses and visitor attractions along the line. A priority for 2013 must be to attempt to source additional regular funding to enable us to supplement the LCC CRO's work with a part-time contracted local assistant able to develop further active relationships with local bodies, and assist with grant applications.

R. W. Rollins, Chairman

Account Summary

Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Company Limited

Trading and Profit and Loss Account for the Year Ended 30th April 2012

	£	£
Turnover		
Grants and subsidies	8,000	
Contribution to projects	<u>200</u>	
		8,200
Cost of Sales		
Projects		<u>1,718</u>
GROSS PROFIT		6,482
Other Income		
Bank interest receivable		<u>19</u>
		6,501
Expenditure		
Administration support costs	1,000	
Travel and subsistence	113	
Hire of hall	173	
Trade subscriptions	287	
Sundry expenses	44	
Accountancy	<u>402</u>	
		<u>2,019</u>
NET PROFIT		<u>4,482</u>

Station Adoption and Volunteers

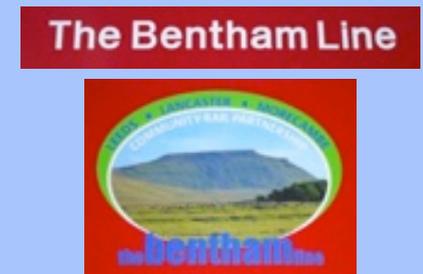
With a first class station adoption group underway at Bentham we are now working to find interested parties for our other stations. New links have been established with the Officers at Craven District Council who have been informed of the service designation and the idea of station adoption. They are proposing to help by bringing together representatives from town and parish councils with stations on the line in the new year.



The Friends of Bentham Station group was formed in September 2011 and is composed of volunteers from a number of local organisations, Bloomin' Bentham, BEST (Bentham Environmentally Sustainable Town) and the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group, as well as individuals, with a wide variety of skills and interests. They are well supported by Simon Clarke our CRO and have formed links to other local organisations and rail bodies.

FOBS are already well advanced in creating floral displays both in containers and the station gardens; have lovingly restored grade-II listed Midland Railway boundary markers, and are currently engaged in producing literature to encourage visitors to Bentham and Benthamers to take the train, as a 'green alternative', for their leisure journeys. They meet every two months throughout the year and have a long list of plans which they are in the course of implementing, including an embankment rejuvenation project in association with Network Rail.

A major achievement at Bentham has been the reinstallation of a display of local art on the main station building. The nine paintings, representing local scenes and in her own distinctive vibrant style, were painted by Bentham artist Gill Barron in the late 1990s and were originally on view in the station windows. The works were returned to the front of the main station building by FOBS, thanks to an arts grant from Craven District Council. Gill, who now lives in Devon, returned to Bentham in September for the opening ceremony performed by Drew Haley, Northern Rail Client and Stakeholder Manager and Bryan Jackson, Bentham resident and life-long railwayman.



A grant application to the Designated Community Rail Development Fund for the Bentham Community Cohesion Project at the station was approved shortly after service designation. The first trio of Community Rail information boards are now in place at the entrance to the station. The three sections will house a community noticeboard, a station history poster and details about the local rail organisations.

Recognising the vast amount of time and effort put into the station gardens by the volunteer members of Bloomin' Bentham and the many local donations of plants, a second substantial grant from the DCRDF has been awarded to add more containers, water butts and composting bins, as well as provide new compost, plants and shrubs.



Rail User Groups

The three rail user groups, the Lancaster, Morecambe and District RUG, the Lancaster and Skipton RUG and the Aire Valley RUG, actively support, and have representatives on, the CRP Management Group.

2012 saw the resolution of a long running problem at Lancaster station. One of the busiest stations on our line, but one where CRP/RUG literature handed in at the booking office rarely appeared in the station leaflet racks. After discussion with the Virgin Area and Station Managers it was agreed that a CRP/RUG made-to-measure leaflet rack/notice board could be erected in a recess on platform 3.

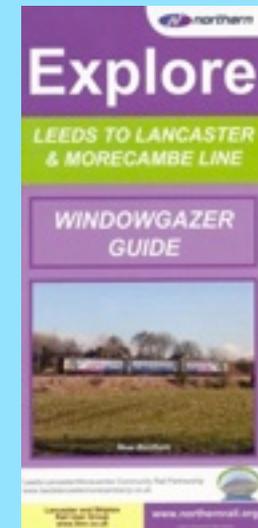


The oak board especially made by local craftsman Mike Barron has now been fitted and has proved an instant success. In the first six weeks after its installation at the beginning of September 2012, 112 Guided Walks leaflets, 154 Line Timetables and 170 Windowgazer Guides were taken from the rack. This equates to 3775 leaflets a year if this pace continues. There is every reason to assume that the publicity will generate additional line passengers from the Lancaster area, as well as new support for the rail user groups.

Route Promotion

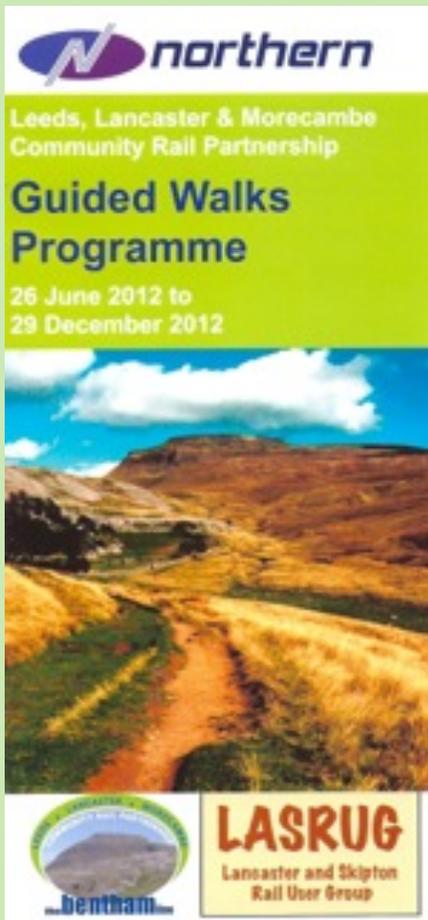
The CRP has produced a station poster inviting passengers to 'Explore the Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Line'. The posters were displayed at 50 stations across the North from Yorkshire to Cumbria until Easter 2012 coinciding with, and to encourage use of, the introduction of the additional Sunday services. Many thanks are due to Marion Armstrong of the Settle-Carlisle Development Co. who took on the difficult task of attempting to reconcile the competing design and layout requirements of all concerned.

20,000 copies of a Windowgazer Guide to the line have been printed and are now being distributed to stations throughout the North and to local authority information bureaux. The leaflet describes the views to be seen as the train travels from Leeds along the Aire and across the Ribble Valleys, past Ingleborough and through the Wenning and Lune Valleys to the sea at Morecambe. Our thanks to Gerald Townson of LASRUG and FOBS who put together the text and design.



Walks and Recreation

The Guided Walks Programme has now been produced twice a year for several years and was last year placed in a standardised local CRP format by our CRP Officer, Simon Clarke. The booklet, which is also available on our website, includes walks from the Leeds–Morecambe line guided by volunteers from the Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line and Dalesrail.



The June to December 2012 walks programme produced by LM&DRUG member Peter Brown has considerably extended the number of walks on offer and includes connecting rail service details from both ends of the line. Peter has kindly agreed to produce a further leaflet through to summer 2013.

Over the past year there has been a continued increase in the number of independent walkers using stations on the rural part of the line to access the western Yorkshire Dales. There is also interest from cyclists who set out to complete sections of the Coast to Coast Cycle Route. The route passes close by several Bentham Line stations.

Websites

The CRP website, efficiently handled by Simon Clarke, CRO has continued to attract an increased number of hits during the year. Both time on line and pages visited are recorded and the line is consistently the most visited section of the website after Dalesrail.

This November FOBS launched their own website to inform residents in the area of the advances at Bentham station and share ideas with other friends groups nationwide. It is hoped that the website will also encourage other groups along the line to adopt their local stations and promote station adoption as a means of bringing a community together to create an attractive gateway to their town.

The sites are inter-linked and contain many other links to supporting organisations including Northern Rail and local councils. QR (quick response) codes are beginning to come into use to swiftly link mobile and tablet users, to our websites.



The LLMCRP Lineup

Chairman

Richard Rollins - Joint Chairman LASRUG
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Vice Chairman with responsibility for Timetable Developments

Drew Haley - Client and Stakeholder Manager, Northern Rail
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Secretary/Treasurer with responsibility for Funding

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Development Officer

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Press Officer

Rod Tickner - AVRUG Representative
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Management Group Members with responsibility for Community Rail Development

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Richard Watts - Rail Projects Manager, Lancashire County Council
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together with Richard Rollins

Management Group Member with responsibility for Station Development

Gerald Townson - Chairman, FOBS and Secretary, LASRUG
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Management Group Members with responsibility for Marketing

Marion Armstrong - Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Co.
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and Graham North

Other Management Group Members

Jim Trotman - Furness and Lakes Lines, Rail Officer
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David Bousfield - LM&DRUG Representative
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Linda Brockbank - Craven District Council Representative
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David Whitaker - Lancaster City Council Representative
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Also invited to attend are representatives from the Network Rail's Community Rail Team, the Department for Transport's Community Rail Team, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, and the Northern Rail Station Manager for the Bentham Line.





Passing Ingleborough



Clapham's Listed Shelter



September Steam Special



Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe
Community Rail Partnership
November 2012

