

Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership



The Bentham Line
Annual Report 2013



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**Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe
Community Rail Partnership
November 2013**

All photographs © Gerald Townson and
Simon Clarke

Cover Photograph:
Northern Rail Class 150 DMU calls at
Giggleswick, with the 10.34 Morecambe
to Leeds service. © Gerald Townson

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 CRPs and 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 2013

In 2013 the CRP has built on the successes of 2012 during which the line received Service Designation. Department of Transport/Network Rail/ACORP funding, which designation opened up to us, has been used to assist with cohesion projects and station improvements.

We now become a statutory consultee during re-franchising. To enable us to play a full part during the re-franchising consultations in 2014/15, we are already establishing discussions with the current operator, Northern Rail, to understand what service changes could economically and practically be proposed for the new franchise timetable.

Whilst this is proceeding we have established contact with many of the Parish and Town Councils along the line to improve community involvement with the railway and to understand their needs in terms of the station and service improvements required to develop the local economy.

Through the good offices of Julian Smith MP, the Member of Parliament for Skipton and Ripon, the Chairman and Station Developments Director were able to meet with the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin MP, and put forward our ambitions for the Bentham Line.

Publicity has been stepped up during the year with the establishment of a Press Officer and responses to a number of public consultations. There are signs that the resultant publicity in both the rail and general press is raising awareness of the existence, benefits and needs of our rail line.

The first station adoption group on the line, the Friends of Bentham Station, has gone from strength to strength, with both the Friends and their Chairman, Gerald Townson, winning regional and national awards for excellence in the world of Community Rail. I offer them my congratulations on their successes.

Improved Connection

The connection from the mid-morning service from Barrow-in-Furness into the 11.09 Carnforth to Leeds train, established in December 2012, has proved its worth during the year with approximately 7 passengers per day making the change from our observations. This daily figure though small, when considered over the whole year, makes a useful additional contribution to revenue and loadings. The connection timing remains very tight but during the year Northern staff have become more aware of the connecting passengers and look out for them.



Passenger Footfall

Over the period April 2012 to March 2013, despite the continuing poor state of the economy in the North, passenger numbers have continued to grow on our services with a rise of 2% overall on the previous year. There have been small fluctuations in the number of passengers at each station but figures have kept pace or increased slightly on the previous year. A large number of students continue to use the line to reach universities and colleges in Lancaster, Skipton, Keighley, Bradford and Leeds.

Consultations

The CRP has responded to consultations on 'Transport Issues in Rural Communities' and the 'Rail North Strategy'. The latter will be of considerable importance if the Government decides to devolve powers to transport authorities in the North.

Our suggestions that the Bentham Line may make an ideal testing ground for any new hybrid rolling stock proposed by Network Rail, and that the Lancaster to Morecambe section of the line should be included in the electrification programme, attracted considerable publicity, including a motion in favour of the latter by Lancaster City Council and a letter of support to Rail North from the Member of Parliament for Morecambe David Morris.

Improvements Along the Bentham Line

Network Rail have improved speeds at both Morecambe South and Settle Junctions, with the relaying of track and points, and have finally lifted the speed restriction at Eldroth, thus improving timekeeping on the route.

This year has seen Northern Rail increase the number of Class 150 units used on the services, which offer a more comfortable ride when compared with the Class 142 and 144 units still used. The rarely seen Class 158 DMUs are the best suited to this 72 mile trans-pennine route, as the Train Operating Company has acknowledged.



Major repairs and refurbishment have been completed on the Grade II listed Midland Railway canopies at Skipton and Hellifield which has enhanced the environment at both stations. Several of the line's viaducts and bridges have also had major repairs.

Passenger information screens have been erected on both platforms at Bare Lane Station, following the closure of the signal box. These are accompanied by a loud speaker system and induction loops for the hard-of-hearing. The new full-barrier level crossing adjacent to the station is now controlled remotely from Preston Signal Box.

A new 'Bike & Go' hire facility has been installed adjacent to Morecambe Station, so that passengers

can continue their journey under their own steam.

Thanks to the endeavours of Gargrave Parish Council, a much needed extra car park has been completed, signposted and opened, to the south of the station, with space for ten vehicles and a bay set aside for disabled travellers.

Repainting has taken place at some of our stations, in addition to regular and some more urgent maintenance work such as the recabling for the platform lights at Bentham and the extensive replacement of rotten woodwork in the footbridge at Wennington.



Forward Planning and Establishment of Champions

A detailed plan for 2014, based on our long term prospectus to 2017, has been drawn up and approved by the CRP Management Group. At the end of 2013, 'Champions' were appointed from the group to be responsible for each major area of activity, (see page 14), and targets set for each area in 2013 and 2014. Details of the tasks and challenges ahead appear throughout this report.



A good deal of progress has been made during the past year, thanks to the combined efforts of volunteers, members of the Management Committee, Rail User Groups and local communities, Councillors, Council Officers and MPs along the line, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to express my thanks to our Community Rail Officer, Simon Clarke, for his valuable assistance with the CRP's grant applications and the development of new projects. Clear evidence of his efforts and those of our Station Development Director, Gerald Townson, are visible along the line, as the CRP cohesion programme progresses with branding and the erection of poster cases and community notice boards. My thanks also go to Rod Tickner, our volunteer CRP Press Officer, and to John Bearpark of LASRUG for their publicity efforts.

Over the last year since we received 'service designation', we have undertaken several large projects and established closer links with communities along the line. With a new franchise due in 2016, I believe our main task in the coming year will be to persuade all responsible authorities that an improved service on this line, under the new franchise, will not only serve the local communities and inter-regional passengers better but would also increase train loadings sufficiently to be a viable proposition.

R. W. Rollins
Chairman

November 2013

Account Summary

Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Company Limited Trading and Profit and Loss Account for the Year Ended 30th April 2013

	£	£		£	£
Turnover			Expenditure		
Grants and subsidies	10,383		Administration support costs	1,000	
Contribution to projects	<u>—</u>	10,383	Travel and subsistence	155	
			Hire of hall	286	
			Trade subscriptions	336	
Cost of Sales			Sundry expenses	57	
Projects	<u>4,930</u>		Accountancy	<u>402</u>	
					<u>2,236</u>
GROSS PROFIT	5,453				
Other Income			NET PROFIT		<u>3,241</u>
Bank interest receivable	<u>24</u>	5,477			

Engaging Communities

Craven District Councillor Linda Brockbank (Lead Member for Empowering Communities) and Gerald Townson, both from the CRP Management Group, have been working hard to raise awareness of the Bentham Line and the CRP in the communities served by the line, along with David Smurthwaite, Strategic Manager at Craven District Council.

Following on from an opening letter by the CRP, during May and June, the trio paid an initial visit to each of the town and parish councils in the Craven District with stations on the Bentham Line. They gave an introduction to the CRP, explained the meaning of our 'service designation' and invited them to send representatives to a conference and workshop, organised by the CRP at the Victoria Hall, Settle, in late July.



The conference successfully brought together over thirty delegates from the town and parish councils, Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council, with members of the CRP and representatives of the rail bodies associated with the line. These included the train operating company, Northern Rail, the infrastructure group, Network Rail, the British Transport Police and the Rail User Groups. The parishes of Cononley in Craven and Wennington and Tatham in Lancashire also attended.

The first half of this evening event, opened and supported by Julian Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Skipton and Ripon, was given

over to a detailed briefing about the CRP and its aims. This was complemented with a workshop, led by David Smurthwaite, encouraging the delegates to think about their individual communities and the rail services they would like to see.

The second half saw Simon Clarke give a presentation on 'Friends Groups and Station Adoption in the North West' followed by Gerald Townson offering details of the 'Bentham Station Adoption' experience. Those present were then invited to focus on their own stations and asked how they would like to see them developed and enhanced.

The meetings with the town and parish councils and the conference in Settle have given rise to the production of two extended reports, on the line and its train service and on the stations and their facilities. These will be used in the development of future action plans and the creation of detailed station audits in the coming year.

The parish councils at Clapham and Hellifield have subsequently held further 'open' meetings with members of their communities to discuss the formation of a friends groups for their stations. These meetings involved further presentations from the CRP. Both groups will be offered assistance to progress their formative ideas next year.



Initial plans to improve the services and facilities along the Bentham Line

Station Adoption and Volunteers

The Friends of Bentham Station

FOBS activities have ranged from holding a coffee morning, in order to raise funds and give details of the work they have done, to entertaining local traders, who gave £350 towards the planting of the increased number of flower tubs this year, at a summer event on the station platform.

The FOBS volunteers were delighted to receive funds of £400 from Northern Rail towards their projects this year and support from Network Rail for their Embankment Rejuvenation Project with their contractors preparing the ground and repairing the fencing.

The volunteers of Bloomin' Bentham have continued to work tirelessly to bring floral colour to the station and its surroundings and successfully delivered, along with FOBS members, a greener gardening project made possible by a £1,000 grant from the Designated Community Rail Development Fund. Water butts, compost bins, tubs and window boxes were sourced and purchased locally and window boxes were made in an adjoining workshop.



Enhancement of the station has continued at a great pace, including the introduction of a digital information monitor purchased with a precept grant from Bentham Town Council. All the hard work resulted in the station winning the Community Rail Lancashire 'Station of the Year 2013' Competition, even though Bentham is just over the border in North Yorkshire.

Their second anniversary celebrations took place in September, with the rededication of memorials to Pauline Hill, Bentham's first station adopter and community worker, and the unveiling of the new greener gardening facilities, followed by a buffet lunch with guests from local groups and rail bodies. FOBS have developed a real community approach to their work.

Other Volunteer Activities

Recently, members of the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group have been assisting with the initial phase of the Cohesion Project by adding the CRP logo to the name boards at all the designated stations.

Following the successful completion of the new car park at Gargrave, local LASRUG volunteers took on the challenge of cutting back a severely overgrown hedge between the car park and the station, to improve the walking route.

Developments in 2014

A number of volunteers are beginning to come forward in other local communities and the CRP hopes that two further Friends Groups will be formed early next year at Clapham and Hellifield.

Next year will see the Bentham Heritage Trail extended to the station and an accompanying rail leaflet produced. FOBS are also looking to develop a working relationship with Bentham Primary School and them with an area for artwork and gardening at the station. Such a relationship would also enable FOBS to help our next generation of passengers understand more about railways and enjoy safe journeys.

Following on from their successful website, www.friendsofbenthamstation.btck.co.uk, FOBS have now embarked on a 'Transport Bentham' website bringing together details of all the local public and private transport available in one place, to encourage multi-modal and 'greener' journeys. FOBS and Bentham station will be playing a leading part in the 2014 Carnival and the opening of the Passing Places Project; a sculpture trail diversion linked to the 'Way of the Roses' cycling route.

Bentham Station Building

The CRP has entered discussions with Northern Rail and Network Rail about taking over the tenancy of the building, in order to ensure it remains in long-term community use, as well as providing a base to develop the Partnership and its activities.



Community Rail Awards

The volunteers of the Friends of Bentham Station, and all who helped them, have certainly put Bentham and the Bentham Line firmly on the Community Rail map in 2013, with their unstinting efforts. FOBS entered both regional and national Community Rail competitions for the first time this year.

Community Rail Lancashire, 'Station of the Year 2013' Competition - 9th September 2013

During the presentation ceremony at the 'Eco Station' in Accrington, Richard Watts, the Lancashire Partnership Secretary praised the very high standard of all of this year's entries. The **joint winners** were the **Friends of Bentham Station** and the Friends of Meols Cop Station with two other entries highly commended.

Association of Community Rail Partnerships Awards Venue Cymru, Llandudno - 27th September 2013

Around 280 representatives from community rail partnerships, friends groups and the railway industry saw **Gerald Townson**, Chair of the Friends of Bentham Station, Secretary of the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group and a director of the CRP, win **first prize in the 'Outstanding Volunteer Contribution' category** at the celebrations.

Part of the citation reads; 'Gerald is an outstanding volunteer in every way. Within two years he has re-energised the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group; become a significant director of the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP; founded, chaired and developed the Friends of Bentham Station; and worked tirelessly to enhance awareness of the railway in the community. He has established working relationships with local community groups at county, district, town and parish levels and with rail bodies to raise the profile of and promote the Bentham Line. Whether by acting himself or by motivating others, his work in all four fields is a model of what can be achieved for a community in relation to its railway by a talented and committed volunteer in a short time.'

FOBS made three entries to the ACoRP awards, nominated by Drew Haley of Northern Rail. All three were short listed to the final five, in August, and the **Friends of Bentham Station** went on to secure **second place in the 'Small Projects Under £300' category** at the Llandudno event.

This was recognition for their 'FOBS Informs' project which included the creation of their colourful website, the use of QR (quick response) codes to direct smart phone and tablet users to appropriate rail websites and the development of display programs for the new station monitor obtained with a precept grant award from Bentham Town Council.

FOBS other two short listings were in the '**Best Station Volunteers' Small Project'** and '**Best Permanent Community Art Project**' categories.



Promotion and Publicity

Leaflet/Timetable Box and Noticeboard at Lancaster Station

This box erected last year has continued to be a great success enabling literature about the line to be constantly available at this major Virgin station. It has also proved its worth as a notice board to advertise CRP and RUG events. In addition, the enclosure of a membership application form for the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group in our popular 'Windowgazer Guide' leaflet has produced a good number of new members for the RUG.

Leeds - Lancaster - Morecambe CRP Website, www.leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk

The website, handled by Simon Clarke, has continued to attract an increased number of hits during the year. Both the time spent on line and the pages visited are recorded and the line is consistently the second most visited site, of the whole group of Community Rail Lancashire websites, after Dalesrail.

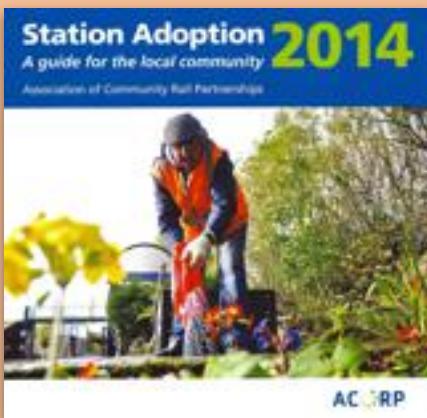
Throughout the year he has added a host of Bentham Line news items, and links to items elsewhere on the internet, to our website.

Press Articles

The CRP and RUGs produced 12 press releases during the year, many of them joint, producing at least 22 reports in community newsletters, newspapers and rail magazines, as well as numerous entries on websites. This has considerably raised the profile of the line both in the local area and nationally, and it is likely there have been as several reports again in papers and magazines we have not seen.

Press releases involving the Friends of Bentham Station are dealt with by Gerald Townson. This year frequent items have appeared in the Bentham News, in the quarterly LASRUG Newsletter and on FOBS own website. The Friends often contribute articles to the ACoRP publications 'Train On

Line' and 'Train Times' and have also appeared in the Community Rail Lancashire newsletter, 'Reading Between the Lines', Network Rail's Community Newsletter and several of Northern Rail's publications. This reflects their keenness to share ideas with other groups. Their successes in the Community Rail Awards were widely reported. Following on from this the Friends were invited to write an extensive article on the 'History of Bentham Station' for the Craven Herald newspaper and website. The article has recently been published and has received many favourable comments.



FOBS have also been included in the new ACoRP 'Station Adoption Handbook', as one of the exemplar groups.

Development of CRP Marketing Strategy in 2014

Arrangements have been made by Graham North to meet with the 'Welcome to Yorkshire' tourism organisation early next year, to look into ways of increasing the number of visitors and holiday makers, travelling by train, to the western Yorkshire Dales and the number of passengers on the route making 'scenic rail journeys'.

A diary of the main local events is being compiled for 2014, from details provided by parish clerks and secretaries of community organisations, to encourage local travel along the the Bentham Line and to help the members of the communities participate in each others events.

Bentham Line Cohesion Project

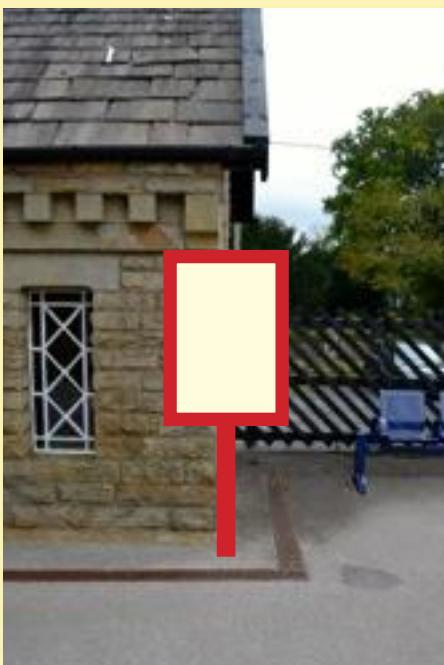
Following on from the successful individual-station cohesion project at Bentham, which was completed earlier this year, the CRP has decided to extend the cohesion Project to all designated stations along the Bentham Line. The project has been developed by Gerald Townson and Simon Clarke and will be overseen by them.

The scheme is designed to raise awareness of the CRP and RUGs in the local communities and with passengers on the line. It will also provide opportunities to display information relating to the local communities, walks, attractions and the stations.

Funding for the £9,440 project has come from a successful bid to the Designated Community Rail Development Fund. The grant of £4,720 will be matched by £4,420 from the CRP with the remaining balance of £300 being made up of volunteer time.



The initial phase of the project, the addition vinyl stickers of the Bentham Line logo to station name boards, is complete and has been undertaken by LASRUG volunteers.



The second phase will see the provision of single or triple, branded, double royal poster cases either fence/wall mounted or attached to supporting structures. The larger, triple arrangements will be placed at Skipton, Hellifield and Morecambe, whilst single cases will be used at Gargrave, Long Preston, Giggleswick, Clapham, Wennington, Bare Lane and Heysham. Positioning surveys have already taken place.

The cases on all stations will carry a poster giving details of the CRP and the appropriate RUG(s) along with a map of the line. QR codes will be included on all posters to give easy access to further information via the CRP's website, which will be reviewed and updated. Additional posters will cover the history of the stations, local walks and nearby attractions and noticeboards within cases will give communities the opportunity to display details of local events. The 'in-house' design and the production of the posters will be on-going throughout the project.

Walks and Recreation

Two editions of the joint CRP/LASRUG guided walks leaflet were again produced and distributed this year. The leaflets are written by Peter Brown, contain photographs by Wendy Smith, are prepared by Simon Clarke and distributed widely by Stephen Cross. The walks leaflets are also displayed on, and are downloadable from, our website.

The walks, which are guided by members of the Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line and Friends of Dalesrail, were originally limited to those originating on the Bentham line but have now been extended to include walks from the Settle-Carlisle Line when passengers from the Lancaster end of the line are able to change trains conveniently to take part.

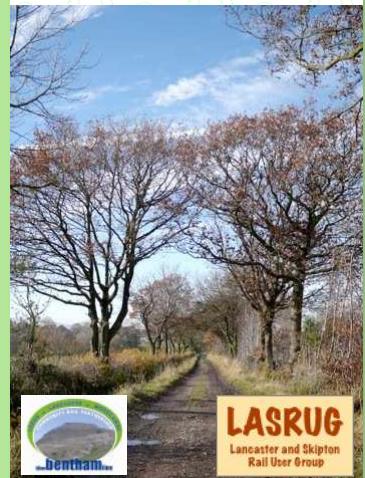
As increasing numbers of walkers are using the line, discussions are now underway with the Bentham Walking Group with a view to their creating a series of itineraries for self-guided walks from stations on the line which could be publicised on our website and by means of a new leaflet.

As the 'Way of the Roses' cycle route passes close to a number of our stations, cyclists often use the line to complete sections of the cycle route. Bentham is one of the towns participating in the Passing Places Project which is designed, through art installations, to attract the cyclists to make detours off the route and into local communities.

Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe
Community Rail Partnership

Guided Walks Programme

27 July 2013 to
28 December 2013



Rail User Groups

Our three rail user groups continue to be fully supportive of the CRP's aims. With the approaching two year franchise extension and a new franchise due to come into place in early 2016, they have been taking the opportunity to revisit their aspirations for the Bentham Line and have put their latest ideas out to their members for consultation. The RUGs have themselves responded to the various consultations associated with the proposed rail changes in the North.

The Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group has recently made preparations to survey the passengers on the Bentham Line during 2014, by creating a concise questionnaire and spreadsheet-based response grid for easy analysis of the replies. Their focus will not only be on the journeys made and tickets purchased on the line but also on the journeys connecting into and from our services, as well as the quality of the passenger's experiences.

Formed in 1989, at a time when the future of the line was in question, LASRUG is now well into its 25th year of serving and supporting the rail users of North Yorkshire's Craven District and Lancashire's Lune Valley. It continues to be a thriving rail user group with members from all over the country.

Lancaster, Morecambe
and District
Rail User Group

LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton
Rail User Group



AVRUG



The LLMCRP Lineup

Chairman

Richard Rollins - Joint Chairman LASRUG
richard.rollins3@googlemail.com 01524 61090

Vice Chairman with responsibility for Timetable Developments

Drew Haley - Client and Stakeholder Manager, Northern Rail
drew.haley@northernrail.org 01904 568713

Secretary/Treasurer with responsibility for Funding

David Alder - LASRUG Committee Member
david.alder1@btinternet.com 015242 61650

Development Officer

Simon Clarke - CRDO, Lancashire County Council
simon.clarke@lancashire.gov.uk 01254 386579

Press Officer

Rod Tickner - AVRUG Representative
rod@tickneronline.co.uk 01535 671325

Management Group Members with responsibility for Community Rail Development

Graham North - Rail Officer, North Yorkshire County Council
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Richard Watts - Rail Projects Manager, Lancashire County Council
richard.watts@lancashire.gov.uk 01254 386579

together with Richard Rollins

Management Group Member with responsibility for Station Developments

Gerald Townson - Chairman, FOBS and Secretary, LASRUG
gerald.townson@btinternet.com 015242 61885

Management Group Members with responsibility for Marketing

Marion Armstrong - Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Co.
marion@settle-carlisle.co.uk 01729 825888

together with Graham North

Management Group Member with responsibility for Communities

Linda Brockbank - Craven District Council Representative
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Other Management Group Members

Jim Trotman - Furness and Lakes Lines, Community Rail Officer
dj-trotman@hotmail.co.uk 01524 842557

David Bousfield - LM&DRUG Representative

Roger Dennison - Lancaster City Council Representative
rdennison@lancaster.gov.uk

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 the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, and the Northern Rail Station Manager for the Bentham Line.