

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 14

SPRING 2012



A brand new project has started which aims to revive community interest in a local rail station. Mill Hill, on the outskirts of Blackburn, has suffered over the years from a lot of antisocial behaviour including trespass & vandalism and graffiti. 'My Mill Hill' is an art based project and will see artwork designed by primary school children and a youth group displayed on and around the station. See page 6 for the full story.



RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS

Where to start this time?? So much has taken place in so short a time. From the relative calm in the last newsletter to a flurry of consultations from the Department for Transport (DfT) and an Alternative Solutions RUS from Network Rail all with relatively short time frames for responses.

Perhaps the best place to start is with the influx of additional units to Northern Rail from London Midland. It is indeed good news that additional seats are being provided that will help alleviate some of the worst overcrowding on our services but there are times when I really feel like the poor relation. The sets arrived with their insipid green livery and worse still the original seats they had when first introduced by Regional Railways along with their attendant problems!!! I like the additional seats but not the ambience of the units - it does no credit to London Midland, rolling stock leasing companies or the DfT that the units have been allowed to get into this state. Personally I would be ashamed if I passed on my rolling stock in that condition and the DfT for thinking that passengers using Northern would be grateful for the extra seats however they are presented. Is it too much to hope that the interiors of these units will be given a full refurbishment to make them fit for people to sit in?

Whilst thinking about rolling stock Northern Rail has some gems of services and one I have become better acquainted with is the York to Blackpool inter-regional service using the express class 158 units. These are good units offering a good quality ride on track that has been vastly improved in recent years especially in East Lancashire. However, compare Northern 158's with those used by Arriva Trains Wales, South West Trains or East Midlands Trains and let me know what you think.



A question - how do we address the issue of rolling stock refurbishment for Northern Rail units as it is clearly not top of any ones agenda? The ATW units even have power points for mobile phones and lap tops as well as a refreshment trolley serving tea, which as readers may know I have a slight soft spot for!!!

The DfT has issued two quite far reaching consultations of which the most important in our context is the one on Rail Decentralisation. The paper sets out proposals for a new approach to franchise management with the possibility of local areas taking control. If adopted this could have quite important implications for CRPs and partnerships on designated lines. To discuss this further the DfT asked if I would host a meeting of Northern CRPs which I readily agreed to do and the date for this is Friday 20th April and the venue is none other than the Eco Station at Accrington! ACoRP will also be represented so it should be a useful occasion and help CRPs develop a co-ordinated response to this paper.

To quote from the DfT; will the approach and options set out in the paper encourage "innovation in the delivery of community rail and other rural services"? Now there is a real 'starter for ten' and I look forward to some interesting debate and views. In the meantime Lancashire CC is working with Transport for Greater Manchester and others on how transport authorities in the north should respond to this consultation.

Designation of lines in the north continues apace with the Furness Line (Lancaster/Carnforth to Barrow) and the Leeds Lancaster Morecambe lines both seeking formal designation as community rail services. Whilst on the subject of designated lines the DfT/ACoRP and Network Rail have launched this year's Designated Line Community Rail Development Fund so I am now on the lookout for some good ideas in order to mount funding bids. Designation has been very useful in developing the lines in East Lancashire and this is recognised in the Network Rail 'Alternative Solutions' RUS (Route Utilisation Strategy) which uses the Clitheroe Sundays as one of the examples where designation enabled a novel approach to be taken to retain the hourly all year round Sunday service. I did draft a second example looking at the approach being taken to introduce a standard pattern service on the Preston to Ormskirk line - a mix of investment, reduced costs, line speed improvements and better utilisation of rolling stock. A heady cocktail but offering the best opportunity to improve this rural line and trailed in the Lancs & Cumbria RUS. Unfortunately the draft RUS did not include this example but I will refer to it in my response!! Take a look at the RUS it has some interesting and novel ideas and is big on Community Rail.

Turning to Lancashire matters whilst I write this I am sitting with all my fingers and toes crossed which makes typing a bit challenging as I await the outcome of the Citizens Rail Interreg IVB application. The project was conditionally approved and the final application along with all conditions met had to be in by 23rd March with the outcome expected by 2nd April. We have now passed that date with no news.....!!! A key project within the bid is the refurbishment of Burnley Manchester Road station.

Richard Watts

Richard's Ramblings does not necessarily reflect either the official policy of Lancashire County Council or of any Community Rail Partnership.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - SOUTH FYLDE

The South Fylde Line sees a number of events in the near future.

Lytham has its annual Club Day on Saturday 23rd June with various events throughout the day including a procession through the town and culminating in the crowning of this year's Rose Queen visit www.lythamclubday.co.uk for more information.

On the following day, Sunday 24th June, Blackpool's New South Promenade sees Totally Transport, an event celebrating Blackpool's heritage transport. Visit www.totallytransport.info for more details about this fantastic event.

St. Annes Carnival takes place over the 7th & 8th July in the town centre and in Ashton Gardens. The South Fylde Line CRP is once sponsoring the event and helping with publicity.

The weekend of 3rd—5th August sees Lytham Proms Festival Weekend 2012. With such acts as Olly Murs, a host of stars from the 80s and Alfie Boe performing tickets will go quickly. Visit www.lythamproms.co.uk for full details and how to book your tickets.

A DALESRAIL DAY OUT

Early on Sunday mornings between Easter and mid-October you will see knots of passengers gathering on station platforms from Blackpool North through to Preston, Blackburn and Clitheroe awaiting the arrival of their train with eager anticipation. Many of them will be dressed in walking gear and carrying rucksacks containing their waterproofs, flasks, maps and packed lunches. They will be glancing up at the sky to check out if the weather forecast was accurate or in animated conversation about their day's walking. Other passengers will be dressed in more fashionable attire and may be carrying a Sunday newspaper and a bag containing items for their trip. All of them will be preparing to enjoy one of the world's most scenic rail journeys which begins right here in Lancashire.

The Lancashire DalesRail service began in 1976 and has been running ever since. It carries passengers through the rural delights of Ribblesdale before continuing up into the superb landscapes of the Yorkshire Dales and Eden Valley which lie on either side of the Settle Carlisle Railway.



Once the passengers are on board the DalesRail train the many regulars will be exchanging greetings with friends and acquaintances with whom they share the fellowship of the fells. At some point a steward from Lancashire Rail Ramblers will come down the train to find out which of the numerous guided walks they might be joining - may be an easy stroll in Dentdale or a leisurely Climb a Peak Slowly walk or a challenging yomp across the fell tops. There's usually a walk from the train to suit all abilities. On the other hand the day trippers might want to join an informative town

tour or take a connecting bus trip to Sedbergh or a coach ride down Wensleydale. Many passengers will have planned their own day out. Whether they are newcomers or regulars, all will feel part of the unique atmosphere of DalesRail - part normal rail service, part excursion - as well as enjoying the ever changing scenery along the route.

Last year Lancashire DalesRail carried almost five thousand passengers. This year's service commenced on Sunday, April 1st and continues through to Sunday, October 21st (Sunday, October 14th excepted). Train times and details of the guide walk and bus links can be found at www.dalesrail.com and printed leaflets are available from manned stations, tourist information centres and local libraries in March. If you haven't ridden on Lancashire DalesRail then why not give it a try and, if you are a regular, then we look forward to seeing you again.

Craig Ward, Lancashire Rail Ramblers

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - EAST LANCS

The spring/summer programme of guided walks from East Lancashire stations continues through until September 22nd and includes further parts of 'The Burnley Way' and walks that take in disused railway lines (the Baxenden branch) and canal towpaths. Pick up a leaflet from your local station or visit www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/publicity/walking-cycling-for-health.

SPREADING THE WORD

CRP Officer Brian Haworth and Marjorie Birch hosted a meeting at Accrington Eco Station with colleagues from the Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line towards the end of December. Paul Kampen and Joy Smith are looking for ways to engage with local children along the S & C and came to Accrington to look at the successful Brian the Bull project and to see if this style of engagement could work with schools along the S & C line of route.

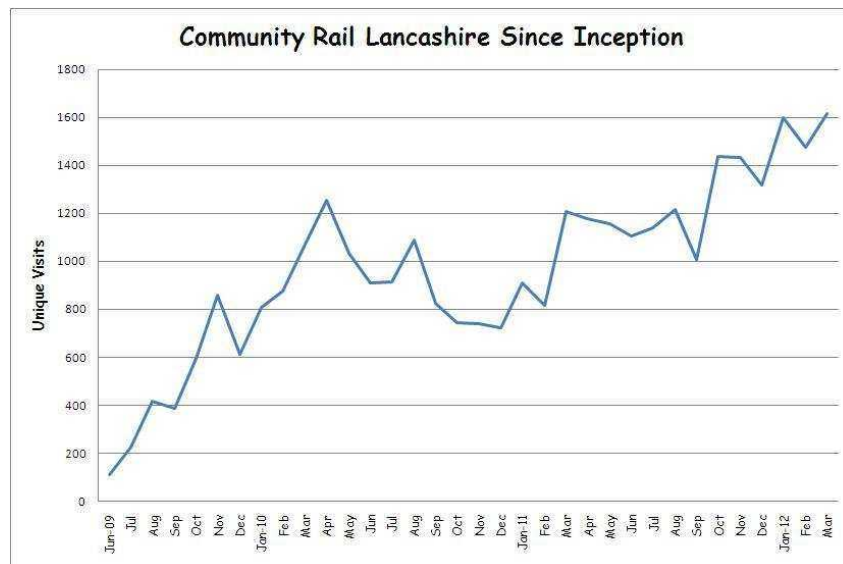
Brian and Marjorie gave a brief overview of the project and emphasised the need to have clear curriculum links in place for whatever work with local schools is to be carried out. Examples of work produced by schools in East Lancashire were viewed by Paul and Joy and several good ideas came from the ensuing discussions.

It was felt by all present that this was a really useful meeting and the Partnership has offered to help the S & C group wherever possible in their aim to further involve schools in the S & C areas. Both groups have agreed to share good practice in their work with schools and to keep in touch via a meeting perhaps twice per year.

FoSCL are also keen to meet to discuss the possibilities of extending services north of Clitheroe to connect at Hellifield and how this might be achieved.

WEBSITE NEWS

The Community Rail Lancashire website continues to go from strength to strength with visits to the site increasing steadily, as the graph below shows.



The smaller individual CRP sites, although recording lower numbers of visits, are also showing an increase. The increases can be put down to timely management of the sites and Simon Clarke, who looks after the websites, is always looking for items to include on the various sites to keep them up to date. He is particularly keen to have advance information about events that can be accessed by rail and is happy to give them extra publicity on the appropriate site. Also needed are current photographs of the community rail lines and these along with event suggestions can be emailed to Simon on simon.clarke@lancashire.gov.uk.

'MY MILL HILL'

An innovative project started in January 2012 which is hoped will bring some colour and ownership to one of the areas more neglected stations. Mill Hill station on the outskirts of Blackburn has long been a magnet for antisocial behaviour, graffiti and vandalism. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has worked with Northern Rail and the East Lancashire Line Community Rail Partnership to fund CCTV cameras at the station to make the station a safer environment for passengers. A project has been put together to try and bring the station back into the community through engagement with local schools, youth clubs and community groups. A local senior citizen group will also be engaged which gives the project a balance of community involvement



Brian Haworth has been working with local artist Alastair Nicholson to develop local links to the station from schools and local youth groups through art work. Two local primary schools are working on a safety theme to produce a piece of art work which will emphasise the dangers of trespass on the railway. Alastair has been into in both schools for eight half day sessions to facilitate the art work. Brian has also been in schools to stress the health and safety issues prevalent at the station such as vandalism and trespass. The finished art work will be in the shape of a large banner which will be fixed onto the station fence in full view of the waiting shelter.

It is also planned that Alastair will work with older children from the local youth groups who are in the age group which frequently carry out graffiti attacks. Called "Operation Erase" the idea is to steer the youngsters into creating artwork for display in public areas with the backing of the local community. The local graffiti officer, community police officers and the Community Centre have been involved with the project.

The station also has good links with other public transport with bus stops immediately outside the station entrance and the project is also looking at how these interchange facilities might be enhanced by children's artwork.

HORTICULTURE AT BURNLEY



Horticulture students from UCLAN Burnley have become station adopters at Burnley Central station. Working with Brian Harworth Community Rail Development Officer for Lancashire County Council, Eddie Fisher from Northern Rail and Sultana Jamil Northern's Community Ambassador the group have recently received their safety brief and started work to improve the ambience of the station for the travelling public. Half barrel planters provided by Northern have been filled and planted up and the group aim to turn their attention next to

the overgrown areas around the car park and disabled slope during the winter and spring months. It is hoped that a much larger project will be undertaken once approvals have been secured to take the project forward. The Partnership is looking to develop links with colleges and this type of initiative establishes firm lines of communications into the college.

PADIHAM PICASSOS

With more than a little help from ISS and Network Rail a hands on art room has been created at the bunker which stimulates children to create art work using different mediums and incorporating standard railway signage and memorabilia.

Children need to understand the significance of the different colour coded signs around the network and the implications of ignoring them. ISS AND Network Rail have donated a selection of old signs which are displayed in the art room and these provide the inspiration for the children.

Recently Padiham Green Primary school became the first class to use the room and pictured are some of the charcoal drawings they produced.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CRP officer Brian Haworth joined forces with Northern Rail's Community Ambassador Sultana Jamil at a community event at Little Harwood Community Centre in Blackburn.

As well as distributing the local rail timetables and other partnership material Brian brought along some historical pictures of the local railway and the local area.

Pictures of nearby Daisyfield Junction attracted interest as well as pictures of the now demolished Lion Brewery (demolished by Scottish & Newcastle)

About fifty local people attended the evening event which also featured a presentation on local walking initiatives, then and now pictures of community clean ups of grot spots and a very interesting slide-show of scenes of old Blackburn.

The event was also attended by the local Community Police officers. The event brought together different sections of the local community and gave us the opportunity to promote the local rail service and heritage linked to the railway in the area.

PUBLIC REALM WORKS

The South Fylde Line has seen work taking place as part of Fylde Borough Council's 2020 Vision document and preparations for the prestigious 2012 British Open Golf Tournament being held at the Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club close to Ansdell & Fairhaven station. Lancashire County Council, Fylde Borough Council and the CRP have been closely involved in discussions about the work and the CRP has raised some funding through the Community Rail Designated Fund.

At Lytham station work has been undertaken to open up the entrance of the station and also to improve the small park adjacent to Station Square. The fountain in the park has been refurbished and the tree cover has been lifted leaving an open view to the station from the approaches from the town centre. The station entrance will also see bollards installed to reduce the amount of 'fly parking' around this area.

Ansdell & Fairhaven, which is being used as an access point for visitors arriving by rail has been given a face lift with new planting and refurbished flower beds. Northern Rail will be running a strengthened half hourly shuttle service between Preston and Ansdell during the tournament and it is expected that around 800 visitors an hour will use the station at peak times.

St. Annes is also getting a facelift with works being carried out to improve pedestrian access around the car park.

All three locations will also see improved signage between the town centre and stations.

CLITHEROE BEER FESTIVAL

Following last year's successful event in May 2011, East Lancs CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) and the St Mary's Centre in Clitheroe have jointly organised the 7th Clitheroe Beer festival, which will take place on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th May. The St Mary's centre is only a five minute walk from Clitheroe rail station, so you can leave your car at home!



This year's festival theme is Flying the Flag - to commemorate some of the amazing events taking place this year; the Olympics, the European soccer championships and of course, the Diamond Jubilee. As a result, many of the beers will have a regal or sporting reference - lots of red, white and blue, as well as gold and silver (but absolutely no Double Diamond!). Many of the beers will be from East Lancs, but there will be beers from all around the UK, and will feature a selection of mild, stout and golden ales. No beer festival would be complete without cider or perry - so we'll have a superb range of those, in addition to the sixty or so beers. You will also be able to sample some of the range of continental and foreign bottled beers that are not often to be found in the UK.

All the beer festival staff are CAMRA volunteers (no-one is paid) and are always ready with advice on the beer - if you aren't sure, you can always ask for a taste before you buy. Like most CAMRA beer festivals, you pay for your beer with tokens which you can buy on your entrance in to the festival - this cuts down on the amount of money changing hands - with prices that vary, depending on the strength of the beers.

This year's beer festival has been fortunate to have the financial support of the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership, for the third year running. East Lancs CAMRA is very grateful for this support, as its members rely heavily on public transport. The additional late evening train will mean that people can stay right up to the end of the festival. **Martin Snelling, EL CAMRA**

BURNLEY MANCHESTER ROAD



Plans have now been approved for the transformation of Burnley Manchester Road station.

Burnley Council in partnership with Lancs County Council, East Lancs CRP, Northern Rail and Network Rail is redeveloping the station in advance of the implementation of the Todmorden (South) Curve railway improvements, which will see travel times to Manchester cut from 1 hour and 10 minutes to 53 minutes. These improvements are likely to see a strong increase in passenger numbers at the station, which is already Burnley's

busiest. Above is an artists impression of what the station might look like when completed. The station will have a booking office, improved waiting areas, better car parking facilities and a room to be used as a community space, similar to the one at Accrington Eco station.

ACCRINGTON VISITS

The new station at Accrington has drawn visitors from far and wide to understand both its eco credentials and also the procurement process. First to visit, and possibly from the furthest away, was Rebecca Catterall from the Devon & Cornwall CRP, who spent time in the Education Resource centre and then toured the local rail lines.

Then we had representatives from Southern and East Coast Railways who were interested the new build aspect of the station and the relationship with Network Rail and Northern Rail.

Next to visit East Lancashire were West Yorkshire Metro and last was Graham North, North Yorkshire CC's Rail Manager and new representative on the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - EAST LANCS

There are a number of events happening in East Lancashire over the next few months that are easily accessible by rail:

Friday 18th May sees the Olympianist performing music by Beethoven, Chopin Liszt and others at The Grand, Clitheroe starting at 19.30 tickets £10 - details at www.clitheroeconcerts.org.

Friday 18th May also sees the start of the 7th Clitheroe Beer Festival at the St. Mary's Centre, Clitheroe. The Clitheroe Line CRP is once again sponsoring the event and full details can be found on the East Lancs CAMRA website at www.eastlancscamra.org.uk or see poster on back page.

Whalley is celebrating The Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a weekend of music and other events in the village. Click the link here www.communityraillancashire.co.uk to see full details.

August bank holiday weekend sees Colne rocking (and rolling) to the sounds of the 23rd Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival. The East Lancs CRP is sponsoring the event again and will be running its popular music train on the Friday evening to get the event started. More details will be published in the next issue of RBTL but visit www.bluesfestival.co.uk to see the line up.

STATION VOLUNTEERS



The volunteers who commit time and effort to keep the stations on our community rail lines looking spick and span, are to be thanked and congratulated for the superb work they do.

A broad calculation of the added value that these volunteers bring to the rail industry in Lancashire alone equates to around £22,700 per quarter based on the rate suggested by Volunteer Action organisations.

To help celebrate the work the Lancashire CRPs are running a 'Station of the Year' competition and more details about the competition can be found by visiting www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news

INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS



Since the last issue of Reading Between The Lines, Network Rail have completed the work to extend the platforms on the stations on the Clitheroe Line. The project was part of the Government's HLOS (High Level Output Specification) and will allow the stations to cope with the strengthened service now running in the morning and evening peak periods.

The platforms, as shown here at Langho, are now long enough to hold a three carriage train comfortably and can, with careful driving, just about squeeze on a four carriage train allowing for future extra capacity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is with great regret that we have to announce the passing away of two community rail stalwarts.

On 11th January Peter Moore, Ribble Valley Rail Chairman, seasoned rail campaigner and member of the joint Clitheroe Line & East Lancs CRPs and on 22nd March Steve Wells of DalesRail's Rolling Riot fame.

Both will be sadly missed and our sympathies and thoughts are with their families.

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USEFUL WEBSITES

For information on Lancashire's Community Rail partnerships and for other information on community rail, walking and cycling by rail, integrated public transport and the communityrailman blog; please visit the following websites:

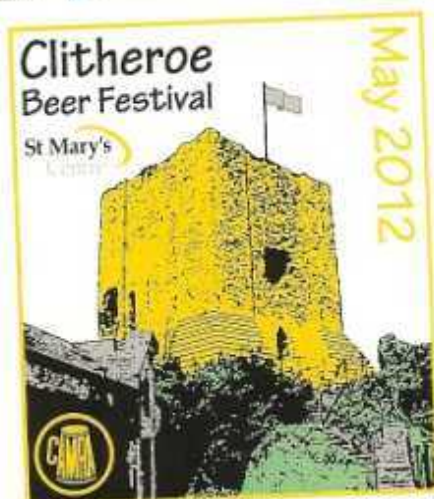
www.communityraillancashire.co.uk
<http://communityrailman.wordpress.com>
www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk
www.acorp.uk.com

www.northernrail.org
www.railramblers.com
www.merseytravel.gov.uk
www.btp.police.uk

www.nationalrail.co.uk
www.lancashirebus.co.uk
www.tfgm.com
www.dalesrail.com

Flying the Flag for Britain

East Lancs CAMRA Clitheroe Beer Festival 2012



18-19th May • St Mary's Centre, Church St

Open Friday & Saturday from 12-11pm

Admission only £2 in the afternoon; £3 after 6pm

FREE ENTRY for CAMRA members & NUS cardholders

Over 50 real ales, ciders and perries

Speciality bottled beers • Free soft drinks for drivers

Food available all sessions • Live on-stage entertainment

Times & Prices

Available at the Festival

Clitheroe Beer
Festival 2012
is kindly brought
to you by...



St Mary's
Centre

spa
SUNDERLAND PEACOCK ARCHITECTS