

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 15

AUTUMN 2012



The 2012 National Community Rail Awards were held in Swindon on Friday 28th September. The venue was STEAM, the museum of the Great Western Railway and a great night was had by all. The Lancashire CRPs came away with a first place in the 'Photo Competition - Best Community Rail People Image' category. The photograph above of the school children involved with the 'My Mill Hill' project taken on launch day was submitted by Simon Clarke and wowed the judges.

Northern Rail fared very well with a number of wins and placings in various categories and then carried off the Overall Winner Award at the end of the evening. More details inside this issue.



RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS

Since the last ramble a lot has happened not only in the community rail world but also nationally. The debacle over the West Coast franchise will have clear repercussions especially over the timing of the new Northern Rail and possibly Trans Pennine Express franchises. Watch this space as the Brown Report into the franchising process may well come up with some interesting ideas - or there again it may not!! The West Coast problems have some clear implications as it seems that a full franchise will not be let for at least 3 years. In the meantime some of the planned service developments and station improvements will be in a state of limbo. This is not good for Preston station which as a major interchange is less than adequate.

Being in Community Rail can be very rewarding. For me one of the great highlights this year has been the first ever Lancashire Community Rail Partnership Station of the Year Competition (Simon could we have a snappier title next time please!??). With ten entries all of exceptionally high quality deciding on a winner was always going to be hard. So armed with clipboard and criteria I ventured on a full day out visiting all locations first hand. What a joy as really everyone was a winner and the stations all benefit from all those caring hands. In the end though two stood out for me and they were Huncoat and Colne. So we had a joint first prize and two entries for next year's Community Rail Awards. Well done to everyone you really do make a difference. Plan ahead for 2013 and look for something that makes your entry just that little bit special...!!!



Raised planter on Meols Cop Station, Southport

Well done to everyone you really do make a difference. Plan ahead for 2013 and look for something that makes your entry just that little bit special...!!!

Continued:

RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS

Blackburn with Darwen has undertaken in partnership with the rail industry some significant improvements at Blackburn and Darwen stations. What of it, you may ask. Well as part of the exercise they commissioned some market research to gauge passenger reaction to the changes. Interestingly whilst the station improvements were welcomed the key areas that passengers identified for future action were all train related. Key issues identified include performance, frequency (especially on the Blackburn to Manchester line), train capacity and condition of rolling stock. Which reminds me of the last Richard Ramblings where I mentioned the condition of the 150's that were passed onto Northern Rail from London Midland. I was recently in Exeter attending the Citizens' Rail partners meeting and low and behold a former LM 150 came into the station on its way to Penzance. I certainly would not relish the prospect of a three hour journey in an un-refurbished suburban unit!! These are all issues which need to be picked up with refranchising especially as no new diesel units are on the horizon.

For those who love a good read try the Network Rail 'Alternative Solutions' RUS which is available to read on their website. It is full of good ideas for introducing low cost electrification on to non main lines and there is also a good section on tram trains. Perhaps the RUS is weakest in dealing with Community Rail which is a shame given the excellent team within Network Rail. The consultation on the RUS runs until 28th November, 2012. This gives you plenty of time to read and comment on it?

2012 has been a good year for Lancashire CRPs and Brian and Simon work ever harder. However, there are limits to how far 2 people (and a willing volunteer) can spread themselves. So where should community rail in Lancashire go in the future? This was a question two Lancashire CRPs asked Paul Salveson, the Railway Doctor, to investigate. The medicine could be very interesting indeed but you will have to wait for 2013 to find out what it is. Have a good Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

WIGAN WALLGATE REFURBISHMENT



Councillor Myra Whiteside & Lee Wasnidge unveil the plaque

Wigan wallgate station has just seen a £430k project funded by the National Station Improvement Programme to improve the passenger facilities at the station.

The concourse has been transformed with a glazed ticket office area, new suspended ceiling, better lighting and floor surfaces. Downstairs there are smart refurbished toilets and waiting room, additional information screens and seating.

Outside, the forecourt has been smartened up and blends with Wigan's public realm improvements. We think Wallgate is now more than a match for our main line neighbours over the road! The refurbished station was officially 'reopened' on Tuesday by Councillor Myra Whiteside, Mayor of Wigan, ably assisted by Lee Wasnidge, Northern Rail's Area Director, West.

STATION OF THE YEAR 2012

The result of the Lancashire Community Rail 'Station of the Year 2012' competition was announced in September.

Ten stations were nominated by the various Friends of Stations groups: Brierfield, Colne, Crosston, Huncoat, Meols Cop, Nelson, Rishton, St. Annes-on-the-Sea, Squires Gate and Whalley. Originally it was the intention to short list the stations but in the end all ten stations were visited by the judge on Thursday 9th August. The judge used three criteria to make his decision:

- Added value - did the work at the station add anything that wouldn't already be there under normal circumstances?
- Something different - had the group done something innovative at the station?
- Attention to detail - had the group paid particular attention to the work carried out at the station?



Geraniums at Colne station

The judge commended all the stations and the hard work the station groups had done to get their station ready for judging. After a great deal of deliberation the judge decided to award two first prizes, and the joint winners were:

Colne (Colne in Bloom) left and Huncoat (Hands on Huncoat) below

Both station groups get certificates and will receive a prize and be entered into the 2013 National Community Rail Awards.

Hands on Huncoat asked for a new community notice board and this has been provided as part of a larger branded notice board at the station.

There will be another competition in 2013 and it is hoped that more stations will enter.



Huncoat - a refreshing drink

RAIL USER GROUP NOTICE BOARD



RUG notice board

Two local rail user groups involved in the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP have joined forces to provide a notice board on Lancaster station. The Lancaster, Morecambe & District Rail User Group and the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group approached Virgin Trains, who manage Lancaster station, and a site at the bottom of the steps to platform 3 was agreed.

Mike Barron, a local cabinet maker, was asked if he could design and make the board and the result was recently installed at the station. The board will carry information about the two RUGs and also promotional material for events etc. that can be accessed by rail on both the Bentham Line (Morecambe to Leeds) and the West Coast Main Line.

SALFORD CRESCENT IMPROVEMENTS

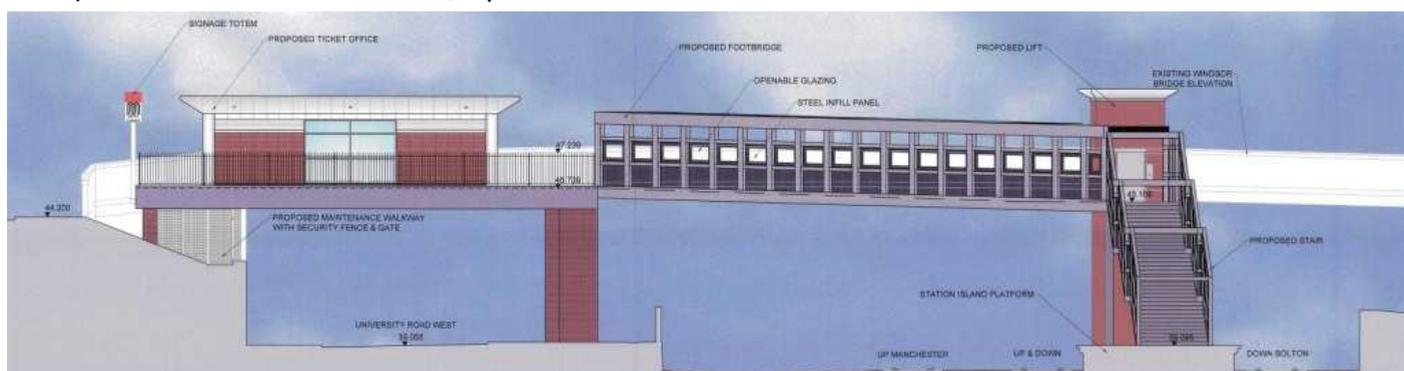
Station improvement work at Salford Crescent is due to commence in late 2012. This is a multi-million pound enhancement of the station facilities which includes

- A new ticket office at street level, adjacent to Windsor Bridge by the A6;
- Improved access with a bridge from the ticket office on the A6 to steps and a lift to platform level. This will enable removal of the existing stepped ramp;
- Better waiting facilities with the provision of a canopy the full length of the island platform to protect waiting passengers from the elements;
- Platform lengthening work to accommodate six carriage trains; and
- Customer Information Screens and Public Address will also be included in the scheme.

Some impact on train services is essential to facilitate this work and a programme of works through 2013 is planned, commencing with a 4 day blockade at Christmas 2012.

On 27 and 28 December no trains will be able to call at Salford Crescent however a limited train service will be able to operate between Manchester and Bolton. Passengers are advised to check their journey before they travel.

The relocation of the ticket office adjacent to Windsor Bridge will bring the station entrance closer to bus services on the A6 and significantly improve the integration of bus and rail services. This includes linkages with bus service 50, which operates a frequent service to Salford Quays.



A computer generated image of the proposed changes at Salford crescent

COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2012

This year's National Community Rail Awards were held at Steam Museum in Swindon at the end of September. The Lancashire CRPs had a lean night with only one win (see page 1), but Northern Rail fared much better with three 1st places, three 2nd places, two 3rd places and two highly commended. Northern Rail also took the Overall Winners trophy as the group, CRP or train operating company that in the judge's view has contributed the most to community rail in the past 12 months.

The Judges said; 'Northern Rail have been involved with community rail from the beginning. They have led the way with so many initiatives including Station Partnerships, cost effective CIS at rural stations, and their Community Ambassadors. They have more CRPs than any other train operator so all this is quite a challenge, which they rise to time and again'.

BLOOMIN' BENTHAM

Bentham station has seen some bloomin' hard work by the Friends of Bentham Station group and the Bloomin' Bentham volunteers during their first year of operations. The group have done an excellent job of tending the flower tubs on the platforms and also the beds at both sides of the station. The group also entered into the spirit over the Diamond Jubilee weekend, decorating the station to mark the celebrations.

The group also celebrated their first anniversary of their formation on Saturday September 14th 2012 and coupled the occasion with the official unveiling of artwork on the station. Gill Barron a local artist has created nine vibrant paintings on the theme 'Life in Bentham' and these are displayed on the station buildings on the Leeds bound platform.



Bentham Station



The unveiling party

The unveiling was carried out by Drew Haley, Northern Rail Client & Stakeholder Manager and Bryan Jackson a Bentham resident and railwayman who spent his career working on the track on the local line.

The unveiling was followed by a buffet lunch with guests from the CRP, LASRUG, local councils and other volunteer groups in Bentham. To round off the event the artist cut a cake, which was beautifully decorated by another Benthamer, Linda Atkinson, to reflect one of the paintings.

LYTHAM IN BLOOM

A partnership has been formed in Lytham to bring some colour to the disused platform at the railway station. Neglected since closure, the rubbish and weed strewn platform has been cleared



The Lytham disused platform partnership

by Network Rail and a the partnership between Lytham in Bloom, the local prison service at Kirkham and the South Fylde Community Rail Partnership has come together with the aim of transforming the old platform by constructing planters and filling them with colourful flower displays.

Network Rail, through their local project coordinator Alan Bibby, has donated gardening equipment to the group for the project and Alan is pictured here at the hand over meeting at the station on 26th October 2012.

We can look forward to a very colourful display next spring and summer and hope that the station will be entered into the 2013 Station of the Year competition.

FLORAL LANCASHIRE



'MY MILL HILL'

The 'My Mill Hill' project was a community art project undertaken by three primary schools and a youth group in the Mill Hill area of Blackburn. The art work, approved by a senior citizen group and guided by Blackburn artist Alastair Nicholson, was aimed at reconnecting the community with the railway station and reducing antisocial behaviour on and around the station.

A partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Northern Rail, Network Rail, the East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, the British Transport Police and Promat UK, a local business, has seen CCTV installed at the station and the children's artwork installed on the boundary fence, bridge parapet and in adjacent bus shelters.



My Mill Hill project bus shelter at Mill Hill station

The three schools involved were Meadowhead Infants, St. Luke & St. Philips Primary and Audley Primary. All three schools were visited by Brian Haworth and Marjorie Birch from the CRP and have also visited the Education Resource Centre at Accrington Eco Station to take part in activities with an ecological and recycling theme.

The youth group aged between 12 and 16 worked with Alastair in the Community Centre close to the station and produced graffiti style artwork which was approved by the senior citizen's group before being transferred to the station.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Photographs and images in this issue are by kind permission of:

Brian Haworth, Simon Clarke, Alastair Nicholson, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Ross Taylor, Gerald Townson, and Chris Barber. Other photographs of the work of the Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships can be seen on www.communityrailancashire.co.uk & www.dalesrail.com

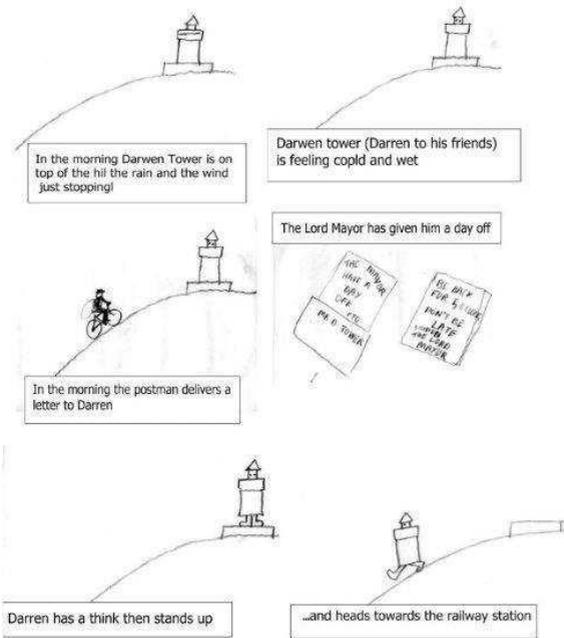
DARREN'S DAY OUT

In February 2013, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council are delivering a two week film festival which will communicate climate change issues, raise awareness and prompt local action within a cross section of the community in Blackburn with Darwen.

As part of this initiative, Brian Haworth Community Rail Development Officer is working with Marjorie Birch from The Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership, Sarah Urmson from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Alastair Nicholson, a local artist, in selected local schools to produce a short animated film called 'Darren's Day Out' which will be launched at the festival in February 2013.

Three Darwen schools; St Edward's Primary School, Lower Darwen Primary School, and Sudell Primary School are involved, along with Daisyfield Primary

School in Blackburn and St Peter's Primary School in Accrington. Two sessions will take place at each school to produce the art work from which the animation will be produced.



Part of the story board for the animation

PLATFORM GALLERY & IZZY GETS BUSY

The Clitheroe Line & East Lancs CRPs held their annual summer community rail art exhibition in the Platform Gallery, close to the railway station in Clitheroe in June. This year's theme was railway advertising posters. Children from local primary schools were asked to design a poster in the style of the classic railway posters of the 1930s & '40s to encourage people to visit the Ribble Valley by train.

The posters covered an entire wall in the gallery and were supplemented by other work carried out by primary schools involved in the Lancashire CRP's ongoing School's Project. Also on display were samples of the art work that has been installed at Mill Hill station and a very colourful banner made by the children encouraging people to get fit by walking, jogging or cycling to the train.

The posters were judged by the CRP's adopted artist, Alastair Nicholson, and he said; 'this was the hardest competition I have ever judged - they were all brilliant, I wanted them all to win!'

Eventually Alastair came to a decision and the winning poster can be seen above with budding artist Izzy who designed the poster.



Partnership Vice-Chair, Marjorie Birch with Izzy and her winning poster

HEART OF HUNCOAT

Heart of Huncoat is the name of new art project just getting under way in East Lancashire. Community Rail Development Officer Brian Haworth and volunteer Marjorie Birch will work with artist Alastair Nicholson, Huncoat Primary School and the Hands on Huncoat Friends of Station group to produce art work for display at Huncoat station

Huncoat has a rich industrial heritage and the areas close to the station were at one time home to a power station, a brickworks and a foundry. Some of the artwork will reflect this heritage as well as linking to the gardens that have been created at the station by the Hands on Huncoat Friends of Station group.

In workshops at the school the children will produce art work in the form of paintings and patterns for casting. This work will be photographed to produce a large vinyl banner to be installed at the station. A QR (quick response) code, which can be scanned by smart phones, will be printed in the corner of the artwork and will link to a website where the picture becomes animated - for example, the flowers will dance in the breeze.

In other workshops the children will produce patterns of flowers in clay. There will be certain methods and instructions associated with this process to ensure that they can easily be used to make moulds to cast metal flowers. The children will then go on a trip (by train) to a foundry in Blackburn to watch their flowers being cast in metal. This will be a unique experience for children and a memory that will stay with them. Back at the station the metal flowers will be fixed to the front beams of the shelters.

Some of the children will have older relatives that remember how the area looked when all the industries were there, and some may have worked in the power station, brickworks or foundry. The children will be encouraged to ask them about the jobs they used to do and what the area used to be like and report back to the class. This will give the children an insight to the industrial heritage and explain to them the reason for bringing the cast metal element to the project.

SOUTH FYLDE VANDALISM



The vandalised shelter at Blackpool South

The Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships are lucky to see only a very small amount of anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the stations along their lines. So it was very disappointing to find that overnight on Wednesday 19th September someone had set fire, to what we believe was a bag of clothing in the corner of the waiting shelter on Blackpool South station platform.

The train crew on the first service on Thursday 20th September discovered that the shelter had been destroyed and reported it in. The photograph was taken later on the same day just as I.S.S. were arriving to clear up the mess. The shelter has been made safe and is awaiting re-glazing.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE



Rebecca from the Devon & Cornwall CRP

One of the best things about the community rail movement is that every CRP is happy to share best practice. The Lancashire CRPs are always pleased to see visiting CRP Officers and managers from other rail operating companies at Accrington and to show them around the area and also to explain about the work we do with schools at the Eco Station.

This year so far we have had visits from East Coast and Southern Railways, the Devon & Cornwall CRP, the Kent CRP, the Penistone Line CRP and partners from the Interreg IVB SusStations and Citizens' Rail projects.

All were interested in seeing the brand new eco station at Accrington and how we manage the rain water harvesting, solar panels etc. They have been fascinated to learn about the amount of recycled materials that went into the construction of the building.

The CRP visitors were particularly interested to learn about the work we do with primary schools including art projects and the work that Northern Rail's Community Ambassadors are beginning to do with local colleges. We also take every opportunity to show visitors the world's largest flagstone just outside Colne Town Hall!



Carol from the Kent CRP outside the Bunker

The Lancashire CRP team have also been out and about to the Launch of a new Interreg IVB funded project called Citizens' Rail. The launch took place in the House of Commons at an event hosted by Torbay MP, Adrian Sanders and with a keynote speech by Transport Minister, Norman Baker.

The Citizens' Rail Project sees partners from Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands come together to focus on local and regional railways.

As well as looking to develop and improve rail services and facilities, the partners will be working together to better engage communities with their local railway, including the planning of new and improved facilities and breathing new life into rundown or disused stations.



There is a wealth of experience among the partners and they will be sharing this in developing and taking forward the schemes that will form part of the overall project.

The project began in May 2012 and runs until September 2015. The total budget is 9.03 Million Euros of which 50% is being funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVB NWE programme.

PAGE 7 PHOTOGRAPH CAPTIONS

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|---------------|--|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Top left | Poppies, Accrington Eco station | Top middle | Incredible Edible, Rishton station |
| Top right | Meols Cop station | Middle left | Colne-in-Bloom |
| Middle right | Huncoat station | Bottom left | Rhododendron, Langho station |
| Bottom middle | Tulips, Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station | Bottom right | Lupins, Bentham station |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual General Meeting of the South Fylde Line CRP in May saw Tony Ford, St. Annes Town Councillor, elected as Chair for the partnership. Richard Fulford-Brown was elected as Vice-Chair.

Following the resignation of Roger Bell, the West of Lancs CRP has a new Chair. West Lancashire Borough Council's Ian Gill was elected at the Annual General meeting in September and Roger will now act as Vice-Chair.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 28th November 2012 - Association of Community Rail Partnerships Annual General Meeting, The George Hotel, Huddersfield. 14.00. Contact Philip Jenkinson, ACoRP Company Secretary on phil@acorp.uk.com for more details.

Saturday 8th December 2012 - Ribble Valley Rail/Clitheroe Line CRP Santa Special. A **strictly limited ticket only** special service from Blackburn to Hellifield. Santa and his elves will have goody bags for children under 12 years, sherry & mince pies for the adults. Entertainment at Hellifield.

Saturdays 8th & 15th December 2012 - Clitheroe Market traders are laying on two small Christmas Food Festivals and these can be easily accessed by rail from all parts of East Lancashire. These will give a 'taste' of what's to come on **Saturday 10th August 2013** when the Third Clitheroe Food Festival takes place at venues throughout Clitheroe.

Visit www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/home/forthcoming-events to see other events happening throughout the Lancashire Community Rail area.

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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, the communityrailman blog and communityrailman's twitter pages; please visit the following websites:

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk
<http://communityrailman.wordpress.com>
<https://twitter.com/comunityrailman>
www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk

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

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