

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 17

SUMMER 2013



Walking with the Community is a new project that was launched in June 2013 by the South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership. The project will see a total of five self-guide walks produced with the aim of increasing patronage on the Preston to Blackpool South Line and to encourage locals, and visitors alike, to discover the delights of the Fylde area. The walks all start at a station on the line and are either circular or take the walker to another station along the route. All the walks are short and with relatively easy going underfoot are suitable for those that have been prescribed walking for health reason. The photograph above is of Lytham Hall



RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

We are fast approaching the time of year when community rail partnerships from all over the country meet to celebrate success at the annual Community Rail Awards. So it is a good time to reflect on just how far community rail has come since the launch of the Community Rail Development Strategy (CRDS) in 2004. Community rail has been a great success story in lots of different ways.

One of the mantras of community rail is to increase revenue and consequently patronage. Well most community rail lines have succeeded in doing both and this was recognised in a report produced by Transport Regeneration in 2008 called 'The Value of Community Rail Partnerships'. The Lancashire lines have certainly seen a relentless growth in patronage; take the Clitheroe line rising from 1.5m passengers in 2006/07 to just under 2m in 2012/13 - or 33% in 6 years or the East Lancashire Line up from 600,000 in 2006/07 to 960,000 in 2012/13 or 60% in 6 years. Even the Preston to Ormskirk line has responded to the community rail treatment with an impressive 15% increase over the last 3 years. Over the years we have seen substantial investment in Lancashire's stations think Clitheroe, Carnforth, Burscough Bridge, Parbold, Blackburn, Accrington, Ormskirk etc, it is an impressive list.



Timetables have also changed although perhaps not quite as fast think earlier and later trains to Clitheroe, additional Saturday trains to Blackburn with new services on the way as charted in RBTL16. We have yet to see a step change or indeed any change in the type of trains used on our community rail lines - except for new liveries and seat coverings.

Success as ever comes at a price. Community Rail has grown the market and has consequently needed more resources such as longer trains to cope with peak or seasonal demand and better infrastructure. Lancashire is no exception. HLOS provided longer platforms on the Clitheroe line to enable longer trains to operate in the peak and a major scheme bid is being developed by Blackburn to improve the infrastructure between Blackburn and Bolton to enable an all day $\frac{1}{2}$ hourly service to operate. Elsewhere, Burnley secured Regional Growth Funding to put back the Todmorden West Curve to enable a new Manchester service to be introduced. These are not cheap investments but are justified on the basis of the growth we have already seen in the market for these lines. As the adage goes 'success breeds success'.

RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS

The CRDS gave a renewed focus on lines that had previously been identified for closure and/or rationalisation. The British Rail eye was most definitely off the ball when it came to community rail lines and for good reasons. What was the justification for lines that were viewed as a drain on railway finances? There were no brownie points to be gained by showing how good local services might be (see below). So it is heartening that the present day policy framework is considerably more positive than it was in the 1960s but there is never room for complacency.

So let's celebrate success at the Community Rail Awards and recall that many of the lines might have been closed had not fate and changing policies intervened. One of the undoubted achievements of Community Rail is in bringing people together to look again at their local line or station and to make it part of their community (in every sense). Through this simple step big developments have become possible.

A SALUTORY LESSON??

Success does not always result in a long term future for a line. Take the Bacup branch in Lancashire. The service between Bacup and Bury was significantly improved in 1956 with the introduction of brand new diesel trains, a $\frac{1}{2}$ hourly all day timetable and cheaper fares. The improved service was also faster than the previous steam service and was an immediate success with 23,000 passengers using it in the first week compared to 8,000 for the corresponding week using the steam service. Overall patronage was reported to have gone up by 135% showing that this sort of initiative could revive the fortunes of steam operated local lines.

Yet the publication of the 'Reshaping of British Railways' in 1963 did not spare the line despite its success in increasing patronage and revenue and being a show case for what could be achieved through investment!!! It was one of the many services listed for closure in the report which was finally approved by Barbara Castle in 1966, despite strong local opposition, and implemented as and from the 5th December 1966.

Why recall this? Simply to say that politics and railways are never far removed and the prevailing policy framework is important even to a small station partnership. Their endeavours might come to nothing if the eye is taking off the bigger picture.

SCHOLARS SEASON TICKETS

Northern Rail are once again going to be offering reduced rate season tickets for scholars when the new school year starts in September 2013. The tickets are available to students attending Clitheroe Royal Grammar School and Ribblesdale High School travelling from Darwen, Blackburn, Ramsgrave & Wilpshire, Langho and Whalley.

Sample fares and an application form can be downloaded by clicking the link here www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/scholars. Once the application is completed take the form and payment along with two passport sized photographs to either Clitheroe Interchange or Blackburn Booking office. The season tickets allow travel between the two stations as often as is wanted for the duration of the ticket, including evenings and weekends.

A TRIP TO NANTES

A recent visit to the Region Pays de la Loire in France, as part of the Citizens' Rail Interreg IVB project, gave me an opportunity to see firsthand how a local region has influenced the local transport development of the area.

The initial area that stands out is the rolling stock. Bright, clean & efficient units, some of which are double-deckers are streets ahead of the units we see in East Lancashire although many of the routes they serve in France see a much reduced timetable compared to ours.

I also took the opportunity to travel on the latest tram train which left me very impressed both with its performance and comfort and this looks like an initiative which will see many more of these units at work on some of the lesser used lines in the region.

The La Roche-sur-Yon to Bressuire-Saumur line has been chosen to be the subject of a study and revitalisation within the Citizens' Rail Project and a visit to the line highlighted the need for regeneration. Many former stations in the region have been reduced to bus stop facilities (similar to the UK) but in many cases old station buildings have been left to fall into disrepair.



The station at Boussay, on the Clisson to Cholet line, is one such station and we were taken to see the old building (now owned by the Mayor) to look at what potential use this fine old building could be adapted for. One possibility is to use the model we have at Accrington with ticketing, travel information and facilities for working with schools, an idea which did meet with positive response from French colleagues, and one which we will help them with, wherever possible. I also noted some wonderful green eco passenger shelters at Le Haye-Fouassirere station the design of which looked very innovative yet practical blending perfectly with the station and its environs.

The railway system in France has a very positive feel to it, a couple of hours spent at Nantes station one evening was very interesting watching the assortment of trains passing through and leaving me feeling quite jealous of the overall rolling stock in the area. Lancashire's Community Rail team often discuss 'foreign railways' and Richard has in the past been a lone voice promoting SNCF but following this visit he now has a convert - and my support!

Brian Haworth

NEW HOTEL OPENS IN ACCRINGTON

A New hotel has opened in the garden area at Accrington Eco Station to help cope with the influx of visitors to the wild flower areas and the vegetable areas maintained by the Incredible Edible Accrington group on and around the station.

The four storey eco friendly building boasts the following facilities:

1. Flight Pins - These provide resting places for butterflies, bees and other flying insects.
2. Multi Insect Dormitory and Nesting Zone - This state of the art floor provides for spiders, ladybirds, lacewings, solitary bees and beetles and has all the usual creature comforts that guests can enjoy.
3. Over Wintering Zone - as the name implies this is for long term visitors and ideal for ladybirds and lacewings. This floor is very well insulated to keep out the cold in the winter months.
4. Solitary Bee Block - a purpose built area for egg laying solitary bees such as Mason bees and leafcutter bees, giving the privacy that this type of guest requires.
5. Litter Critter Zone - guests such as ladybirds, lacewings, wood lice, earwigs and beetles will love this hibernation area with guests allowed to choose their preferred space. (Would be wise to pre-book this popular area.)
6. Patio Terrace Buffet - an ideal area to meet up with friends whilst enjoying the complimentary buffet provided all year.

It's to be hoped that many visitors will use this fine eco friendly hotel which sits well with the ethos of Accrington Eco Station. The hotel has been mounted on a recycled timber from a local building and will hopefully be for many years to come.



THE SCOTS ARE COMING

Community Rail Lancashire were recently host to the two new Community Rail Development Officers that have recently been recruited by ACoRP to work north of the border to facilitate the development of CRPs in Scotland.

Linda Ferguson, who will look after the south area, and Jim Wilkin, who will work in the north area, visited Accrington along with Brian Barnsley (ACoRP's Operations Manger) to see what the Lancashire CRPs get up to and to take away some best practice ideas.



After a briefing session in the Bunker at Accrington they visited Huncoat station to see the work that has been done by Hands on Huncoat, the station partnership over the last three years. Also on hand were a small group of children from Huncoat Primary School representing the class that carried out the 'Heart of Huncoat Project'.

Lunch back in Accrington, then off to Mill Hill to have a look at the 'My Mill Hill' project, one of CRL's big projects of 2012

SPONSORS OF BENTHAM STATION

The Friends of Bentham Station have achieved a great deal in the short time that they have been looking after the station - they have been going for under two years (their second birthday is in September 2013) and the station looks fantastic. As many station partnerships know finding funding can be quite difficult and although FoBS have had some money from the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF) and the local rail user group they still needed extra funds for the large number of planters on the platforms.

FoBS Chairman, Gerald Townson, has never been one to let the grass grow under his feet and almost single-handedly managed to get businesses (and others) in Bentham to sponsor the planters. The sponsorship has helped with compost and plants and it is hoped that the sponsors will continue into next year as well. The sponsors are recognised with labels in 'their' planter and as a thank you they were invited to join a strawberry tea party in June and to see the station in all its glory.



PUPILS SIGNAL SUCCESS

The 2013 year 6 pupils of Huncoat Primary School brought to an end their successful involvement in the Heart of Huncoat project by visiting the village signal box. The pupils have worked with CRP officer Brian Haworth and volunteer Marjorie Birch for almost two years on projects at Huncoat Station and thanks to Roy Greenhalgh of Network Rail the children were able to spend time in the signal box watching the operation of both signals and crossing gates prior to them leaving Huncoat Primary for the "big school"!!! The pupils had the workings of the Signal Box fully explained by Network Rail employee Aiden and the shift signal man.



The visit was very beneficial to the class who saw first-hand the safety issues surrounding level crossings. The children thoroughly enjoyed their visit and asked many questions and as the pupils said themselves; "it was brilliant!"

The Signal Box is due to close and be demolished later in the year so the pupils were very enthusiastic about the visit. It's not quite the end for the Heart of Huncoat project as the school have already said that they want to continue working with the CRP and the station friends group with the next year 6 pupils, giving the project sustainability and continuity.

BURNLEY BEER FESTIVAL

The East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership is pleased to once again be working with CAMRA to promote rail travel to this year's 2nd Burnley Beer Festival. The CRP is also sponsoring the festival glasses for the event.

The Festival, takes place over the weekend of 5th to 7th September 2013 in the Mechanics Theatre, Manchester Road, Burnley. The festival venue is within easy walking distance from both Burnley Central and Burnley Manchester Road stations. Details, and timetables, of the train service from both Burnley stations will be available at the venue.

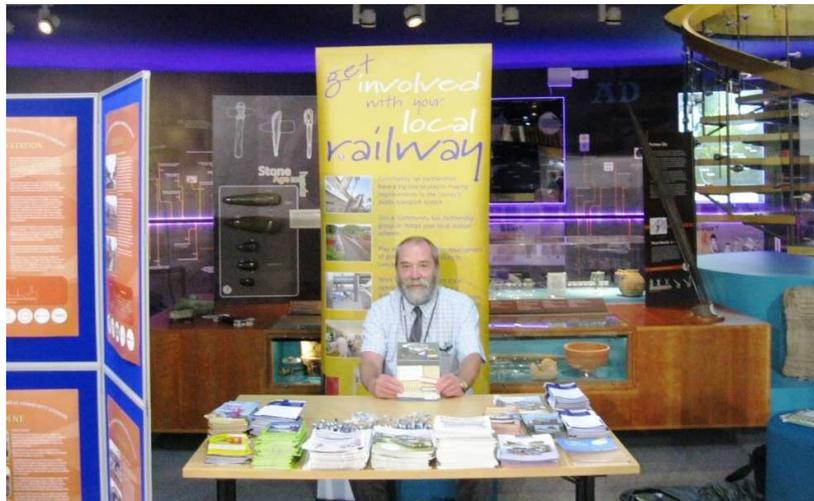
Full details of this event and other CAMRA beer festivals can be found on the CAMRA website at www.camra.org.uk/event_detail.php?id=4CODE=BF-BUR.

CHANGING TRACKS

Lancashire's railways have played an important part in the development of the county since the first line was opened to Preston in 1838.

Running from June to November 2013, **Changing Tracks** is an exciting programme of activities and events designed by Lancashire County Council's Community Heritage team to celebrate the history and heritage of Lancashire's railways since 1945.

Community Rail Lancashire has worked with the Community Heritage team on the project, and CRL's Brian Haworth manned a stall at the launch event which took place at the Museum of Lancashire on Saturday 22nd June. The packed programme of events was also unveiled and the leaflet can be downloaded by visiting www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/publicity.



Brian also led a guided walk in early July, designed to introduce people to the history of the railway in East Lancashire. The walk started at Rishton Library and followed the Leeds Liverpool Canal as far as Cunliffe Quarries and then joined the long disused North Lancashire Loop Line and walked via the old track bed into Great Harwood and to the site of the old station.



DESIGNATED COMMUNITY RAIL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Designated (Lines) Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF) is sponsored by the Department of Transport, Network Rail and the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and helps provide funding for development of community rail lines that have been designated as part of the Government's Community Rail Strategy.

The fund allows bids for a maximum of £5000 for a particular project, but requires match funding on a sliding scale up to 100% for a maximum bid. Following on from questions asked at ACoRP's Member's Seminar on 10th June 2013 in York, the partners have agreed to allow 20% of the match funding to be volunteer time.

The nationally agreed value placed on volunteer time is £15 per hour and this means that for a bid to the fund for £5000 the amount allowed for volunteer time is an impressive £1000 an amount that equates to just over 66.5 hours.

ACoRP and the CRPs across the country cannot stress enough the value of volunteers, and it is great news that designated lines are going to be able to use the huge amount of time spent by volunteers on stations and other projects to be quantified.

PRESTON TO ORMSKIRK

Passenger numbers on the Preston to Ormskirk Line saw a dramatic increase during the recent West Coast Main Line blockade. In order to protect their Liverpool traffic, Northern Rail introduced an hourly service between Blackpool North and Ormskirk for the duration of the engineering works blockade between Preston and Wigan.

Customers were able to change onto Merseyrail's frequent Northern Line service from Ormskirk to Liverpool Central rather than travelling on the replacement buses between Preston and Wigan North Western.

Another bonus for rail travellers is the new shop that has opened on the station at Ormskirk - the 'Ormskirk Express' sells newspapers, hot and cold drinks and confectionery.



BLACKBURN STATION FOYER

Works are due to start in October on work to enhance and improve the station foyer area at Blackburn Station. Funding from the rail industry (£600k of NSIP) has been allocated to the area.

The scope of works includes:

- Existing lighting to be removed and replaced with pendant lighting.
- Brick cladding to be replaced with aluminium panels
- High level timber cladding to be removed to expose original front windows
- Restore original roof lights.
- Replace flooring
- Replace ramp and stair wall with railings or glazing.
- Enclose area with dividing walls -cladding.
- New sliding external doors and internal doors
- Replace information screens
- Fit reflective cladding at high level to express roof structure.

Finally a clean and repaint will be carried out on the outside canopy



CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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

Simon Clarke, Brian Haworth, Richard Watts, Brian Barnsley, Walter Stafford and the Ken Roberts collection. Other photographs of the work of the Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships can be seen on www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk & www.dalesrail.com

NELSON SUBWAY

The Friends of Pendle Stations group, who look after Brierfield and Nelson stations, have been hard at work in the subway at Nelson station.

The subway, that runs between the new bus interchange at the station platform, had become very run down and in need of repainting. Northern Rail had this in their rolling programme of maintenance works but the group said they would paint it if Northern's contractors ISS could provide the paint. The images below show the subway in its run down condition and then the group working on the painting job.



EASY ACCESS AREAS

Easy Access Areas are starting to appear on stations in the Community Rail Lancashire area. So what is an easy access area? Better known as 'Harrington Humps' they are a modular and easy to install system by which the height of a railway platform can be raised at relatively low cost.

Originally developed as a joint initiative between Network Rail and Cumbria County Council the first one was installed at Harrington on the Cumbrian coast and EAAs will for evermore be known by their nickname - Harrington Humps!

Work has started to install humps on platforms at Burnley Barracks, Entwistle (see photo below), Farnworth, Kearsley, New Lane and Pleasington, in our immediate area but will be appearing at many stations all over the Northern Rail empire soon.



MILL HILL REVAMPED

Mill Hill station on the outskirts of Blackburn continues to be in the limelight! Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council have continued their involvement at the station working in partnership with Northern Rail to carry out some refurbishment and enhancements.

Recent work has seen an inner box, with perch seats, fitted to the shelter on the island platform along with a heavy clean of the shelter roof. The steps from the roadway have been cleaned and repaired and new poster cases have been installed on the platform.

This work compliments the earlier installation of CCTV at the station and the art work installed as part of the 'My Mill Hill' project that saw the local community, including three primary schools involved with their local station.



BURNLEY MANCHESTER ROAD

Work is due to commence on the new Burnley Manchester Road station early in August 2013. Contractors should be moving on to the site from Monday 5th August with a completion date in spring 2014.

The new station will see a staffed booking office, improved waiting facilities and a bigger car park, improved signage and lighting and a 'community space' to be used by the Northern Rail Community Ambassadors.

DALESRAIL 2013

The change to DalesRail for the 2013 season does not seem to have affected numbers, in fact generally they are up on last year but this may be weather related. So far on the one train around 1750 passengers have travelled. The numbers rambling have increased slightly but the number of non-walkers has recovered well. Of the ramblers, the number that join one of the organised guided walks rather than arrange their own varies between 50/50 and 60/40.

The number of passengers joining at Ribble Valley stations this year has seen a sharp increase against last year, with Blackburn and Clitheroe taking the lions share, whereas those joining at Settle and beyond has seen a small decrease. All in all it is so far so good!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The new winter Sunday service between Blackpool North and Hellifield has been renamed. Originally called Ribble Valley Connect the service will now be called Winter DalesRail. The website has been changed accordingly and is now at <http://winterdalesrail.wordpress.com>.

Work will be commencing on the new station at Burnley Manchester Road in August. The contractor should be moving onto site on August 5th with a ceremonially digging of the first sod shortly afterwards.

Craven District Council are working with the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP to encourage Parish Council along the scenic Bentham Line to get involved with their local station.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3rd Clitheroe Food Festival - Saturday 10th August 2013. An extravaganza of food and drink in the heart of the Ribble Valley. More details on www.clitheroefoodfestival.co.uk

The Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival - August bank holiday weekend, Colne. The East Lancashire CRP is sponsoring for the 8th consecutive year and will be running its legendary music train on the Friday to open the event - more details on www.bluesfestival.co.uk

Burnley Beer Festival - the second Burnley Beer Festival will be taking place in the Mechanics Theatre, Manchester Road, Burnley over the weekend of 5th to 7th September 2013. The East Lancs CRP is once again sponsoring the festival glasses.

Visit www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/home/forthcoming-events to see other events happening throughout the Community Rail Lancashire 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>
<http://railramblers.wordpress.com>
<http://winterdalesrail.wordpress.com>

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

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



THE GREAT BRITISH RHYTHM & BLUES FESTIVAL

23-26 AUGUST 2013

BILL WYMAN & THE RHYTHM KINGS

Ginger Baker Jazz Confusion

JOE LOUIS WALKER Dr Feelgood

NINE BELOW ZERO Wilko Johnson

Sugar Blue **BILLY BRANCH**

IAN SIEGAL Charlie Musselwhite

and many more

Festival organisers reserve the right to alter the programme at any time

Tickets: 01282 661234

www.bluesfestival.co.uk

For the 8th year, the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival and ELCRP will be providing The Music Train, leaving Preston at 6:24pm on Friday 23 August arriving into Colne at approximately 7:30pm to kick start the festival in style. With real ale and live music on board, what better way to start the weekend?

Northern Rail will once again be putting on both extra and late night train services over the Bank Holiday Weekend, please continue checking the website www.northernrail.org as timetables will be published and updated on a regular basis.



TICKETLINE www.ticketline.co.uk Tel: 0844 8884406

