

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 18

AUTUMN 2013



A perfect sunflower is the heart of the floral displays at Meols Cop station on the outskirts of Southport. Meols Cop was joint winner of the Community Rail Lancashire Station of the Year 2013 along with Bentham station. The full story of the competition can be seen inside this issue of Reading Between The Lines.

Also in this issue: Notes from the Bunker, Citizens' Rail, Community Rail Awards, Ribble Valley Rambler, Community Rail Art Exhibition, Movember and much more.



NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Since RBTL 17 much has taken place in the community rail world. For a start we all went off to Llandudno for the Community Rail Awards where Gerald Townson was crowned as volunteer of the year - well done Gerald thoroughly deserved but no resting on your laurels mate there is still much to do!! Other Community Rail Lancashire projects were also recognised at the awards including 'Hands on Huncoat', 'Heart of Huncoat' and 'Darren's Day Out'. Somehow though, the buzz had drained out of the ceremony itself. Perhaps next year ACoRP will be able to generate that real fission of anticipation as you wait to see if you are the winner!!



At the same time the consultation has ended on Rail North's 'Long Term Rail Strategy' (LTRS). You will be able to read more about Rail North in the next edition of Train Times as I was asked, whilst under the influence of some good Birmingham beer after an ACoRP Board meeting, to write 2500 words on the subject. It is good to see that quite a few CRPs and user groups took the opportunity to respond to the draft along with the usual suspects like Lancashire County Council. A final version of the LTRS will be issued later this year and should be available to view on the Rail North web site www.railnorth.org. The LTRS is a landmark document for the north as it sets out in a coherent and accessible way a strategic approach to developing the north of England's rail network. At a local level Lancashire County Council is developing a series of highway and transportation master plans the latest one issued for consultation covers East Lancashire. The consultation lasts for 6 weeks ending on the 6th December, 2013. Members of the East Lancashire and Clitheroe Line CRPs have a special briefing on this on the 8th November. The full document can be viewed using the link below:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=5489&pageid=43428>

Rail North has also taken the next step in the devolution process when it submitted to government its 'Proposition and Business Case' setting out why rail franchising should be devolved. In all of this Community Rail has not been forgotten and a working party involving DfT, Rail North and ACoRP has been meeting on a regular basis. This has helped give community rail a real profile in the devolution process and hopefully this will follow through as the franchise specification itself is shaped by Rail North and the DfT - watch this space. In the meantime Stephen Clark, the interim Franchising Director for Rail North, is speaking at the meeting of Northern CRPs when they gather in York on Friday 17th January, 2014.

Richard Watts, Partnership Secretary

STATION OF THE YEAR 2013

Once again in 2013 the Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships ran a Station of the Year competition. The competition, and presentation ceremony, is to recognise the hard work and volunteer time that the Friends of Stations groups and station adopters put in each year to look after their stations. The work can be as simple as litter picking and general tidying up right the way through to planting flowers beds and designing floral displays for 'Britain in Bloom' competitions.

Volunteer time is recognised nationally as being worth £15 per hour and across the Lancashire CRP area we have around 24 stations that are actively supported by volunteers. If these volunteers spend 2 hours per week (a very conservative estimate) working on the station and its environs this means around £37,500 of added value.



Joint winners - Friends of Bentham Station



Joint winners - Friends of Meols Cop Station

This year's completion was a close run thing and the judge had a great deal of difficulty identifying a winner and the result is that, as in 2012, there were two joint winners. Friends of Meols Cop Station and Friends of Bentham Station. There were also two groups highly commended, Friends of Pendle Stations for Nelson and Hands on Huncoat (one of last year's joint winners).



Highly Commended - Nelson Station



Highly Commended - Huncoat Station

Whilst the stations shown above were the ones chosen by the judge to be winners and to be highly commended, he wishes it be put on record that the decision was very difficult and in fact in his speech at the presentation ceremony said; "all the stations deserve to be winners and I am once again in awe of the amount of work that goes into keeping the stations looking like they do, the stations are credit to those who do this work and choose to bring the station and community closer together."

COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2013

The 2013 National Community Rail Awards, ACoRP's flagship event, took place at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno on Friday 27th September. Around 270 of the great and the good from the world of community rail were treated to an excellent three course dinner followed by the awards ceremony.

The star of the evening was Gerald Townson, who carried off the 'Outstanding Volunteer of the Year' award for all his work at Bentham station. The Craven Herald & Pioneer, Bentham's local paper picked up on this and elevated Gerald to an exalted position!



Community Rail Lancashire had a total of five nominations short listed. In the event we were highly commended for Hands on Huncoat, the Friends of Station volunteers for Huncoat and Darren's Day Out, the short animated film project developed as part of Darwen Film Festival. Lancashire also carried off a third place for the Heart of Huncoat art project.

A full list of the short listed nominations and winners can be seen on the ACoRP website by visiting <http://goo.gl/zBFHzH>.

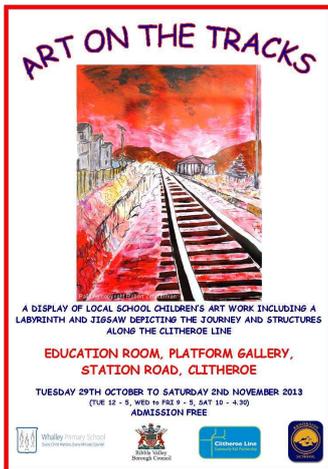
RIBBLE VALLEY RAMBLER

The new winter Sundays Ribble Valley Rambler service started on Sunday 15th September 2013 and will operate through until the start of the summer timetable in May 2014. The service has been introduced, as a trial, to promote the line between Blackburn and Hellifield and a number of events have been arranged to coincide with the service.

Numbers travelling on the service so far, are encouraging and a good number are using the service as a direct way to Preston to change into longer distance intercity services on the West Coast Main Line. It has also been used as a way of reaching Leeds, changing at Hellifield on the afternoon train from Preston.

Full details of the service and the events can be found on the Ribble Valley Rambler website at <http://ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com>

ART ON THE TRACKS



'Art on the Tracks' was the name of the 2013 Community Rail Art Exhibition that was displayed in the Platform Gallery in Clitheroe over the October half term week.

Two local schools; Brookside Primary School, Clitheroe & Whalley Primary School were involved this year and the two groups of children produced two very different themed pieces of art work for the gallery.

Funding for the 2013 project came from Ribble Valley Borough Council via the Platform Gallery.

Labyrinth to Hellifield:

A new winter rail service between Blackpool North and Hellifield via Clitheroe, called Ribble Valley Rambler, commenced operation on Sunday 15th September 2013. To highlight this new service pupils from Mrs Clark's class at Brookside Primary School in Clitheroe have produced a colourful Finger Labyrinth. Working with local artist Alastair Nicholson, Brian Haworth from Community Rail Lancashire and Marjorie Birch from Ribble Valley Rail, the children have produced colourful paintings depicting scenes which can be seen from the train window on the journey between Blackburn and Hellifield and displayed them in the form of an eye catching labyrinth.



ART ON THE TRACKS

Whalley arches through the eyes of young artists:

Pupils from Mrs Hall's class at Whalley Primary School worked with local artist Alastair Nicholson, Brian Haworth from Community Rail Lancashire and Marjorie Birch from Ribble Valley Rail to produce water colour paintings and charcoal drawings of the famous Whalley arches.

As part of the project the children learned about the history of the arches, how they were built and how they are maintained to this day. Time was spent sketching the arches on site then producing water colour paintings in the class room. The colourful paintings show each child's interpretation of what they saw through an individual arch on the day of their visit. The individual drawings were collected together to make a striking and colourful display in the Platform Gallery as part of the 'Art on the Tracks' exhibition.

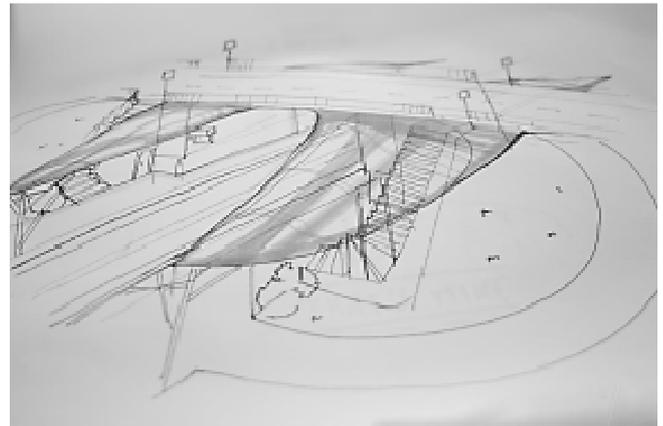
The children's work was also copied and converted into a huge jigsaw puzzle by Alastair and this was displayed in the gallery and visitors were able to try their hand at completing the puzzle!



CITIZENS' RAIL PARTNERSHIP

The Citizens' Rail Partnership recently assembled in Aachen, Germany and Heerlen, the Netherlands. An important part of the session was to take part in a master class involving design students from the 4 partner countries who put two stations under the microscope - namely Nuth and Eilendorf. It was good to hear their enthusiasm and to learn their ideas of which the few bullets below are just a sample:

- Get the local community involved at the station - in particular local schools could take part in art projects and local groups could look after station planters;
- Provide small cafe facilities although some students were more ambitious setting out plans for bars/restaurants and fair-trade outlets.
- Interpret local history at the station. Nuth was once a coal mining area which has largely disappeared. The students suggested interpretation panels at the station highlighting aspects of local history but more adventurous was the incorporation of a mining wheel head in the design for a canopy at Nuth station as shown in the illustration below left:



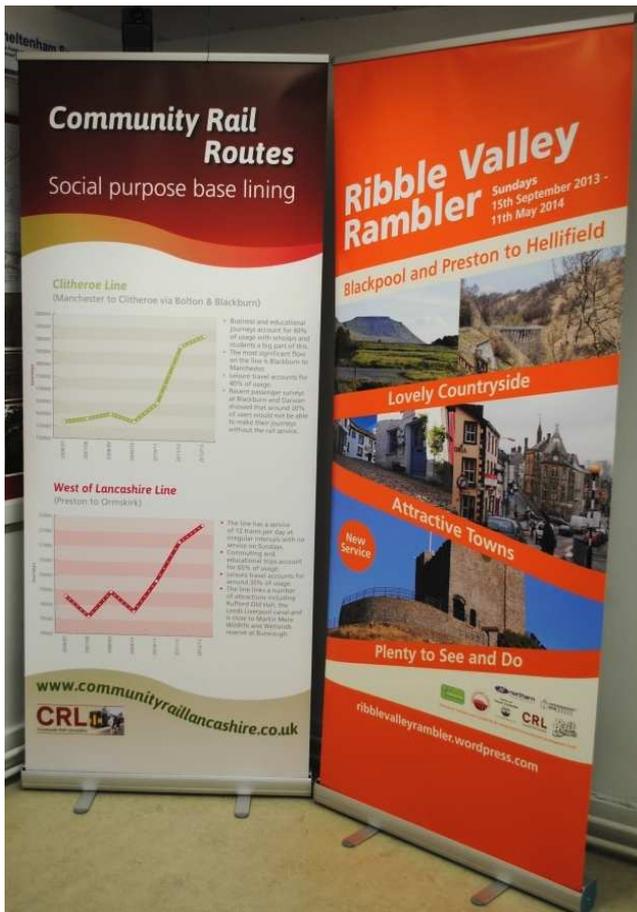
- Bring some buzz and bounce to the design as this illustration, above right, for Eilendorf showing how to make stations that people want to go to rather than just having to go to.

Citizens' Rail has developed a short video which showing the Master Class and can be viewed on www.citizensrail.org.

The lasting memory is that the students like the idea of a human presence at stations - whether it is formal railway staff, station volunteers or a cafe operator. There is a message here as we move towards internet ticket retailing and smart cards which reduce the need for the traditional booking office clerk at a window selling tickets. One of the Citizens' Rail partners, Region Pays de la Loire in France the operator of the Transport Express Régional services, is looking at how to change the role of ticket office staff. More on this in a future edition of RBTL.

It is intended that the new station at Burnley Manchester Road will have a community space for use by the Northern Rail Community Ambassadors, who are part of the Citizens' Rail group. The Ambassadors are already working with students in the town and this will develop as the new station is completed.

COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE AT THE DfT



Very soon Community Rail Lancashire will be gracing the entrance area to the exalted Great Minister House, home of the Department for Transport. The opportunity to put on this display gave us the opening to show case what has been achieved using the community rail approach in Lancashire.

Apart from a series of pop ups the display will also have a video loop of Darren's Day Out showing the train journey between Darwen and Accrington using some very futuristic (for Lancashire) trains one of which sounds distinctly French!!!

The display also features the newly introduced Ribble Valley Rambler service which has had some modest success in developing rail links to/from the Settle Carlisle line. Also on display will be publicity supported by the Designated Community Rail Development Fund

BURNLEY MANCHESTER ROAD STATION

Work started in August and is well underway on the building of the new Burnley Manchester Road station. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on 15th August 2013 to celebrate the start of the project that will see the state of the art station completed in spring 2014.

Unusually the first thing to be completed was the car park, but this was essential to support the bus replacement service that will be in place for twenty weeks during the major engineering works taking place on Holme Tunnel between Burnley and Hebden Bridge.



The first steelwork is up at Burnley Manchester Road

CYCLING INTO RAILWAY HISTORY

Once again East Lancashire CRP officer Brian Haworth has delivered a 'Cycling into Railway History' cycle ride for Burnley Council as part of their Heritage event which celebrated architecture, history and culture over four days in September.

The ride took participants along the Padiham Greenway which follows a section of the old North Lancashire Loop Line that ran between Blackburn and Rose Grove via Great Harwood and Padiham. The ride also covers a section of the Leeds Liverpool canal in the Burnley area and then back to Padiham via the River Calder Greenway.



The Padiham Greenway Team at a recent meeting

The East Lancs CRP has been involved in developing the Greenway initiative as part of the very active 'Friends of the Padiham Greenway Group' who have secured various funding allocations for additional improvements .

Recently all iron railway bridge structures have been re painted and the next major project should see a cycle Pump Track installed adjacent to the Greenway (a pump track is a continuous loop of dirt berms and rollers that you ride without pedalling - you use the 'pumping' action of your upper body to get around the track).

Tree planting is planned for areas along the Greenway this autumn and a bid for saplings has been applied for from The Woodland Trust.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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

Simon Clarke, Brian Haworth, Gerald Townson, Citizens' Rail & the Friends of Meols Cop Station.

Other photographs of the work of the Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships can be seen on www.communityraillancashire.co.uk, www.dalesrail.com & <http://ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com>

BIKE & GO

Now you can get even closer to where you want to be. Bike & Go is an ingenious new scheme that lets you hire a bike from participating railway stations and continue your journey quickly under your own steam. No walking, no waiting - just get on your Bike & Go! A number of stations in the north west have already got Bike & Go installations including Ormskirk, Southport, Wigan Wallgate and Morecambe. Other stations due to come on stream shortly are Blackburn, Blackpool North and Hebden Bridge.



Bike & Go installation Wigan Wallgate



Bike & Go installation with bikes, Morecambe

MOVEMBER 13

During November, Northern Rail is supporting men's health charity, Movember. They are helping them raise awareness of men's health issues such as prostate and testicular cancer, mental health issues as well as reinforcing the importance of men's wellbeing - such as checking blood pressure and cholesterol.

Movember raises millions of pounds every year and enlists the help of both men and women around the world. The concept is simple - Mo Bros grow a moustache throughout November and Mo Sisters support them all the way.

After starting out in Australia and making a big impression down South, Movember is marching northwards. We want to help spread the word, show Movember what real Northerners are made of and raise much needed funds for this great cause. Northern Rail and Community Rail Lancashire want to help our men take care of themselves; our passengers, our employees, our friends and our family.



Northern Rail's Depot staff are also entering into the spirit of Movember by applying moustaches to a number of the units in the fleet.

Pictured on the right are units 158795 and 150205 captured at Accrington sporting their droopy moustaches.

Also seen in the Lancashire area have been 142049, 153378, 156489 & 158753 and there have been reports of other units adorned with moustaches throughout the north - keep your eyes peeled!

ALL CHANGE AT CHERRY TREE

Following on from the successful 'My Mill Hill' project at Mill Hill station the East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership working with Blackburn with Darwen ,Northern Rail and local artist Alastair Nicholson have started on a similar project at Cherry Tree railway station known as 'All Change at Cherry Tree'

Funded by Blackburn with Darwen's Connect Scheme and from other sources, this initiative will help to regenerate the local railway station through community involvement linking local community groups, schools , Blackburn College and the Government's Community Payback scheme.

To kick off the programme, CCTV cameras backed by Northern Rail's security systems, have been installed at the station and work has commenced thinning out and clearing out the embankments on the station approach road to improve security in this area. Following clearance of these overgrown station areas initiatives will be taken to re-landscape and introduce art work and other community themes at the station.



First on the scene at Cherry Tree - The Community Payback team

Before the students from Blackburn College can work on the station at Cherry Tree they have to have a safety brief about safe working practices whilst on and around a railway station. Wayne Smith, Northern Rail's local Station Manager, carried out the brief on Thursday 7th November and can be seen (far left) in the photograph below with the students after the briefing.



NORWOOD SCHOOL TRIP

On the 18th June 2013, the Friends of Meols Cop Station together with the Station Manager Stephen Curry arranged for the School Council from Norwood Road Primary School to visit Wigan Wallgate and Hindley stations. A group travel pass was given to the children by Northern Rail.

The objectives were to experience rail travel and begin to understand what it takes to manage a safe rail service, and to see the potential of community projects and local school involvement at an exemplar station.



Norwood School at Hindley Station

They took the 12:59 pm train to Wigan where they were greeted by the British Transport Police who gave them a short talk about their work. Then the Station Manager showed them around Wigan Station including inside the control room which showed the CCTV coverage of the Station and the computer covering all the trains on the line.

They then boarded the 13:58 pm train to Hindley Station where they met the Friends of Hindley Station, they were given a tour of the Station by Sheila Davidson.

The 15:17 pm train got them safely back to Meols Cop for 'home' time.

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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>

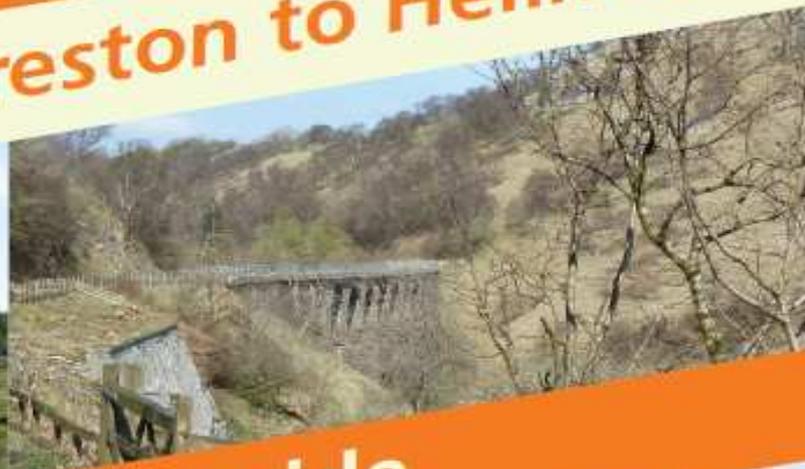
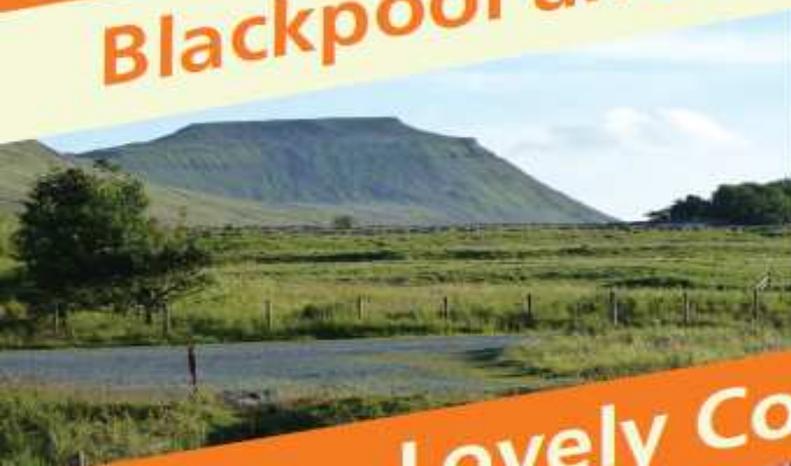
www.northernrail.org
www.acorp.uk.com
www.merseytravel.gov.uk
www.btp.police.uk
www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk

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

Ribble Valley Rambler

Sundays
15th September 2013 -
11th May 2014

Blackpool and Preston to Hellifield



Lovely Countryside



Attractive Towns

New
Service

Plenty to See and Do



This poster has been part funded by the Designated Community Rail Development Fund

ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com