

# READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 19

SPRING 2014



The work that Community Rail Lancashire carries out with local primary school children continues throughout term time and is an excellent way to introduce the children to rail travel and the eco ethos of Accrington station. With the help of British Transport Police Officer Dax Byrne-Turner, the children are also given an understanding of safety on and around the rail network. The photograph above shows children from St. Anne's & St. Joseph's RC Primary School in Accrington enjoying a post lunch view of the local train service from the station's eco garden.

Also in this issue: Notes from the Bunker, All Change at Cherry Tree, Bird Hotels, Timetable Changes, Infrastructure Updates, the Royal Visit, the Bentham Line Cohesion Project, Burnley Manchester Rod Station and much more.



## NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

A considerable amount of time has elapsed since the last RBTL which is evidence of a lot of hard work going on - hopefully!!! However it is time to emerge from the Bunker and take stock of where we are on a range of topical matters.

We recently all attended a very interesting event in Blackpool. Hosted by the DfT the annual designated community rail seminar was interesting on two counts. Firstly the first ever Abellio Challenge took place where 4 CRPs competed head to head to see who had the most innovative project!! It was a close call but in the end the 'Illuminating Information' project was the winner. The brainchild of the Derwent Valley CRP the project is all about enabling passengers to be able to read timetable posters after dark using LED lighting and solar power - a real no brainer and a very worthy winner. Alistair Morley claimed the £1k prize and managed to get quite a few CRPs to sign up to the idea including of course Community Rail Lancashire and we hope very soon to have a solar powered, LED lit information panel at Accrington Eco Station - it really fits in with our ethos and of course we will want to roll it out to other locations as funding permits. Other projects include 'Growing Creative Connectivity', 'Pop up Hubs' and 'Make Tracks for Alsager'. All very worthy projects as well and there were some good ideas that I shall look at for CRL as the year progresses and once the dust settles on refranchising.



The delegates work on one of the topics at the seminar

Secondly we had an interesting Q&A session with a range of worthy people including myself!!! **Be prepared** was the expression I used and I really meant it. As I write this the DfT and Rail North are working hard to agree the content of the *Prospectus* that will shortly be issued to franchise bidders and the *Consultation* document that will form the basis of a widespread stakeholder consultation. The latter consultation will be led by the DfT but will involve Rail North as per the recently agreed partnership arrangement. It is worth mentioning that the consultation will be on both the replacement Northern Rail and TPE franchises. Timescales will be tight and we expect the consultation document to be issued during May with formal consultation meetings taking place over the three month consultation period.

One of the meetings has already been ear marked to take place in County Hall, Preston with a room and refreshments booked!!! The consultation will cover a wide range of issues including the train service requirement, stations, fares, capacity, service quality, rolling stock (already an emotive issue up North!!), community rail etc. It is important that as CRL and individual CRPs that we get our thoughts together to ensure that we maximise the gains from the franchises. However, it will be important to recall that the government is very likely to want 'more for less' so it will be very challenging for bidders to develop and improve services to meet the expectations of the Northern Hub and electrification at the same time as subsidy reduces!!

For CRPs a good starting point is the draft Rail North 'Long Term Rail Strategy' which contains some pointers as to the way Rail North sees Community Rail developing. More of this in the next RBTL.

It is probably worth saying that my time in the bunker has been much less in recent weeks as refranchising and other work has meant I have been at County Hall a lot more and travelling on trains to the great cities of Leeds and Manchester in almost equal measure for meetings. However, Brian and Simon hold the fort and we are looking forward to the successful launch of the 'All Change at Cherry Tree' project which was successful in getting a DCRDF grant; Simon has been involved in another DCRDF project the 'Bentham Line Cohesion' project which has had its own minor challenges and of course we are planning for the opening of the new community station at Burnley Manchester Road, which is being part funded by the Interreg IVb Citizens' Rail project. Exciting and busy times. On the service front we will see train times change in May with some long held connections at Blackburn broken, a new DalesRail season will start following the successful introduction of the Ribble Valley Rambler service this autumn. The additional Saturday only Manchester to Blackburn service continues and we welcome the additional train on the Preston to Ormskirk line increasing the service to 13 per day each way. Talking of this line and the neighbouring Wigan to Southport line we hope to launch a publicity drive with the help of LSTF funding from Sefton MBC and West Lancashire Borough Council.

Richard Watts, Partnership Secretary

## TIMETABLE CHANGES 18 MAY 2004

The new summer timetables come into effect on Sunday 18 May 2014 and this sees the biggest changes to timetables in the Community Rail Lancashire area that we have seen for a number of years.

The main changes are to the York to Blackpool North and Colne to Preston & Blackpool South services which have been affected by alterations to passenger services on the Calder Valley route. Minor changes have also been made to the Manchester to Clitheroe service in the afternoon peak and to the Preston to Ormskirk service which sees slight changes and the introduction of a new service.

**You are strongly advised to check your travel plans if you making a journey by rail after the start of the new timetables, especially if you are making connections for onward travel at Blackburn, Preston or Leeds.**

## BURNLEY MANCHESTER ROAD

Work on the new station at Burnley Manchester Road is nearing completion and the building is looking great (see photos below). The station will boast a booking office, a community space, large car park with bicycle and motorbike parking along with a number of disabled spaces. The staff for the booking office have completed their training and the office should be open shortly.

The station has also seen new signage installed including running in boards, car park signs, directional signage and two CRP branded notice boards. An official opening is planned for 9th July 2014 with representatives from the Citizens' Rail Project including European partners from this Interreg IVb funded project and local partners Lancashire County Council and Burnley Borough



## DALESRAIL 2014

The 2014 DalesRail season will start on Sunday 18th May and then runs every Sunday until 7th September 2014. The Lancashire Rail Ramblers have once again developed a comprehensive guided walks programme which has over 90 walks for every level of walker. The walks are graded as below:

**Easy stroll** - suitable for those not accustomed to walking in the countryside (**F, G and H walks**)

**Easy** - a slower pace than for moderately easy walks and with short rest periods (**E walks**)

**Moderately easy** - a generally easy walk that may include steep climbs (**D walks**)

**Moderate** - no scrambling involved. These walks are suitable for experienced and energetic walkers (**C walks**)

**Strenuous** - these walks may be rough, steep, lengthy or against the clock (**A and B walks**)

The letters after each grade refer to the published walks programme that can be downloaded by visiting the DalesRail website or by clicking [www.dalesrail.com/downloads/main-graded-walks](http://www.dalesrail.com/downloads/main-graded-walks)

Don't forget that DalesRail isn't just for walkers and there is plenty to see and do on the route from Blackpool to Carlisle. If you don't want to walk, just sit back and enjoy the scenery of the Ribble & Eden Valleys and then treat yourself to some retail therapy and lunch in Carlisle!

# ALL CHANGE AT CHERRY TREE

This project is continuing to progress well with all parties working towards a June launch date. As part of the local school involvement year six at St Francis Primary School have had a session learning about viaducts and building their own viaduct using handmade clay bricks (see photo below).

Working with Alastair Nicholson and Brian Haworth the session proved very interesting for the children who were given the opportunity to visit the nearby disused viaduct on the old Blackburn/Chorley Line.

A short history of this line was given to the children who have produced a 'Spot The Difference' poster which highlights changes to the station and village by contrasting old and new images and which will be displayed at the station in new CRP branded notice boards. Also on display will be a station history poster and posters giving details of the project and showing all who have been involved, including the Designated Community Rail Development Fund which has part sponsored this project.

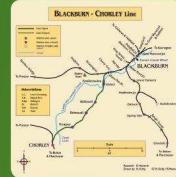


## WELCOME TO CHERRY TREE STATION

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Produced by Year 6, St. Francis C.E. School

Over the years Cherry Tree Station and village have undergone a number of refurbishments, developments and modernization.

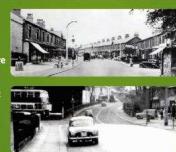


The Blackburn - Chorley line was opened in 1860 and ran for 21 miles between Blackburn, Chorley and Wigan. Cherry Tree Station was built by the Blackburn and Preston Railway Company who opened their line on 3rd June 1846. The total length of the line from Preston to Chorley was 7 miles 60 chains (a chain being 22yds or 66ft). It cost over £500,000 which was very costly for a railway of 7.25 miles in Victorian times. Cherry Tree Station has been here since 1847 and was primarily used as a means of transportation of coal to the different mills in the local area.

During the industrial revolution train lines were needed in order to transport all sorts of goods across the country.

In recent years the gradual loss of manufacturing has led to a decline in the number of railway stations and larger towns tend to have stations such as Feniscaw, Withnell, Brinscall and Heapey are no longer in existence although larger towns like Blackburn and Chorley still need their stations in order to transport people rather than goods.

As you leave the station and walk into Cherry Tree village, you will notice a few buildings have changed since the Station was officially opened in 1847. There once was a mill across from where you are stood now, which provided a lot of employment and homes for its workers. The mill is long gone, it is not here today. The Station pub was built to provide refreshments for the thirsty train passengers. It is still a busy pub today and used by the residents of Cherry Tree.



St Francis C.E Primary School was originally situated in the village. However due to an increasing demand on places it was relocated in 1959 to Cherry Tree Lane. The village still has a number of shops and residential buildings which have not changed much over the years. If you would like to walk about Cherry Tree, you might be able to identify some of the buildings original features as well as the new modern ones.

Enjoy your walk.



#### THEN



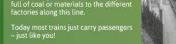
#### NOW



#### THEN



#### NOW



#### THEN



#### NOW



## SPRING COLOUR



## BENTHAM BIRD BOXES

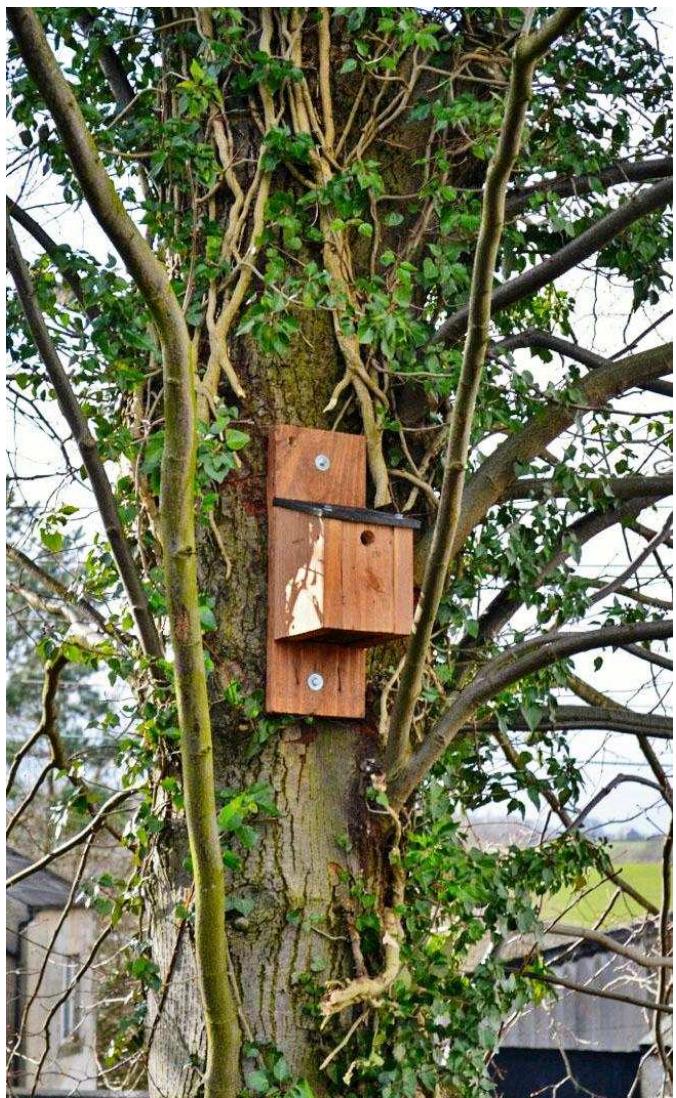
Tuesday, 25th February 2014 saw the opening of the new leisure park facilities for birds, insects and small mammals on the Bentham Station embankment. The event formed part of the Friends of Bentham Station Embankment Rejuvenation Project which started last year and is being undertaken in association with the Community Rail arm of Network Rail, SWGR and the volunteers of Bloomin' Bentham.

Seven handcrafted nest boxes, based on RSPB designs available from their website, have been installed on the north facing sides of the old lime trees, six for small birds and the seventh purpose-built for a member of the local Tawny Owl population. One of the nest boxes even has its own bathing pool in an adjacent bough. Habitat piles have been created at the bases of all of the trees built from branch cuttings, shrubs planted to attract butterflies and hundreds of bulbs planted to bring colour in spring.

The substantial nest boxes were constructed by the FOBS Treasurer, Richard Wilson, from recycled solid timber and have recycled plastic roofs along with easy-clean access. Bev Sim of FOBS took the lead in creating the habitat piles and the Bloomin' Bentham troops spent hours planting bulbs last autumn. This all followed on from the initial clearing of the embankment and trimming of the trees by SWGR on behalf of Network Rail and the repair of the boundary fencing.



Richard with the owl box



One of the nest boxes in situ

## INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

Various infrastructure projects have taken place on our CRP lines in recent times of differing magnitudes and with obvious improvements to services on completion.



Work to renew Brierfield crossing is ongoing



An unidentified 142 stands in Burnley Central

The Holme Tunnel renovation was planned with military style precision and was completed early after a scheduled twenty week blockade and we should soon see the long established speed restriction through the tunnel lifted.

Platform extensions to stations on the East Lancashire line are currently being delivered along with platform end security gates.

Track renewals have taken place on sections of the East Lancs between Gannow Junction and Colne and work to renew level crossings at Brierfield and Huncoat is well on the way. On the Preston to Ormskirk branch track work and cess clearance has taken place.



142042 approaches Ormskirk



A platform end security gate in place at Accrington

Work to reopen the Todmorden West Curve is virtually complete with just the signal commissioning to take place. It is hoped that this will be finished in time for the new timetable that starts on 18th May 2014.

Discussions are still underway in regard of the new Blackburn to Manchester Victoria service via Todmorden and it is likely to be December 2014, at the earliest, before this service can commence.

## GUIDED & SELF GUIDED WALKS

As well as the guided walks that take place each Sunday on the DalesRail service, there are two other main programmes of guided walks that run throughout the year. The **Clitheroe Line** and **East Lancashire CRPs** have walks that start from stations on the Colne to Preston line or between Clitheroe and Bolton line. These take place on either a Saturday or a Wednesday twice a month and the current programme runs through until September 2014. All the walks are led by the Lancashire Rail Ramblers.

The **Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP** has a programme of walks that start mostly from stations on the Bentham Line or the south end of the Settle to Carlisle Line. There are roughly 4 or 5 walks each month and these are led either by the Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line or Friends of DalesRail and their current programme runs until the end of June 2014.



Walkers approach the top lock at Barrowford on the Leeds Liverpool Canal

As well as the guided walks above, Community Rail Lancashire has a number of self guide walks on the various rail lines in Lancashire including two on the South Fylde Line and a series of accessible from the East Lancashire lines. There are also two leaflets available for cyclists using disused railway lines that can also be used by walkers and can be accessed from stations.

All the walks and other leaflets can be found by visiting the Community Rail Lancashire website or by clicking [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/publicity/walking-cycling-for-health](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/publicity/walking-cycling-for-health)

## CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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

Simon Clarke, Brian Haworth, Gerald Townson, Richard Watts & Source Creative.

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

**Apology:** In an oversight the editor failed to credit Matt Clarke for his assistance with a photograph on page 4 of Issue 18.

## ROYAL VISIT



The Queen alights from the train at Blackburn

Thursday 17th April 2014 saw a very special visitor to Blackburn. The Royal train carrying the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived at Blackburn station. The Queen was carrying out her traditional Maundy Money ceremony at Blackburn Cathedral.

The ceremony sees the Queen handing specially minted coins to 88 men and 88 women (a pair for each of her years) over the age of 70 in recognition of their work in the church and the community. This was the first visit by the Queen to Blackburn Cathedral and hundreds of people lined the route from the station to the Cathedral.



## PRAISE FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Department of Transport has asked ACoRP to review and update their Value of Community Rail Volunteering Report. The Clitheroe Line and East Lancashire CRPs were picked as two of the lines for the consultants to carry out their research.

In the original report issued back in 2009 it was estimated that around 4000 volunteers, in England alone, contributed at least 1.2 million hours in support of community railways and this was worth about £27m a year. It is very likely that the new report will have seen an increase in the number of volunteers and the hours they spend supporting community rail throughout the country.

Community Rail Lancashire has around 80 volunteers who regularly work on stations on the five CRP routes and we estimate that they put in a total of 182 hours a week which means that we have just about £2100 of added value for our stations.

The partnerships are very grateful for all the time the volunteers put in and for the superb (and award winning) displays of flowers art work. Hopefully some of this unpaid but much appreciated work will reap some rewards at this year's Community Rail Awards Ceremony being held in Scarborough in October.

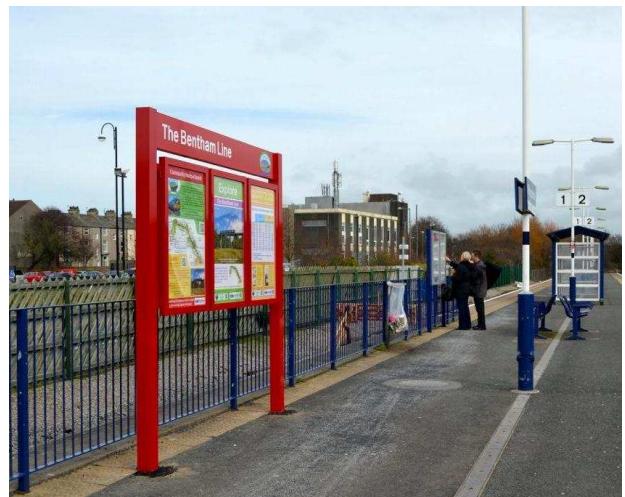
## BENTHAM LINE COHESION PROJECT

The Bentham Line Cohesion Project is the largest project that the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP has ever taken on. Part funded by the Designated Community Rail Development Fund in partnership with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and ACoRP. The project has seen a flurry of activity on the stations on this recently designated route.

The project had two objectives; firstly, to increase local awareness of the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe (Bentham Line) CRP and the work being carried out by volunteers at stations and secondly, to introduce prospective passengers to the attractions served by the route and the opportunities for walking and cycling from the line.



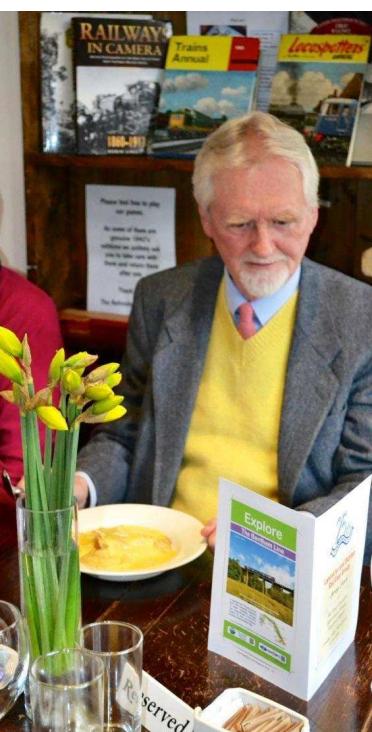
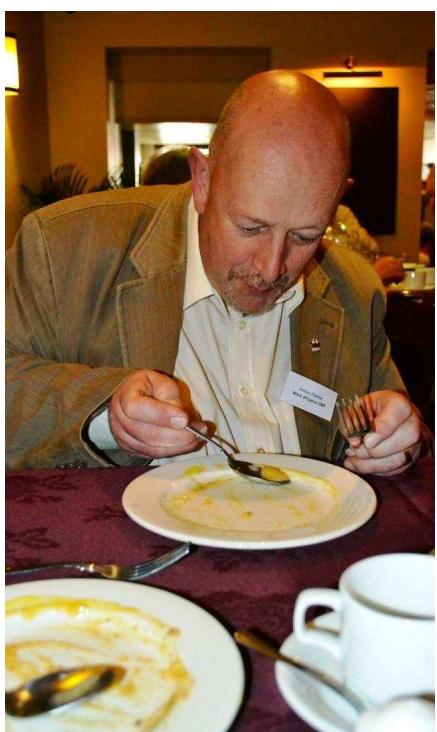
Gerald & Simon pose next the boards at Skipton



The boards in place at Morecambe

## BLOOD AND CUSTARD

There will be some of you that remember that 'Blood and Custard' used to refer to the 1950s BR crimson and cream livery for coaching stock. These days blood is mostly what overworked CRP officers and the like sweat, whereas custard is what they like drizzled over their puddings, especially apple pie or rhubarb crumble!



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**DalesRail** - the 2014 season starts on **Sunday 18th May** and runs every Sunday until 7th September 2014. Around 90 guided walks, led by the Lancashire Rail Ramblers, will be available with walks for people of all abilities. Visit [www.dalesrail.com](http://www.dalesrail.com) for full details.

**Community Rail in the City** - 21st May 2014 sees Preston station featuring on the CR in the City event calendar. Community Rail Lancashire, along with partners Northern Rail, Virgin Trains and Pendle Leisure Trust will be promoting the eight CRP lines in the Lancashire area.

**St. Anne's Carnival** - this year's carnival takes place over the weekend of 12th & 13th July 2014. The South Fylde Line CRP is once again sponsoring the publicity for this event. The theme this year is Rio carnival as the event takes place over the football World Cup finals weekend.

**St. Anne's Kite Festival** - the 2014 Kite Festival takes place on the beach near St. Anne's pier and the South Fylde Line CRP is sponsoring the publicity for this event for the second year.

**Clitheroe Food Festival** - the 2014 festival takes place on **Saturday 9th August** in the centre of Clitheroe. Northern Rail will be looking to strengthen trains on the day. Full details available on the festival website at [www.clitheroefoodfestival.com](http://www.clitheroefoodfestival.com).

**Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival** - the 25th Anniversary of this huge blues festival in Colne takes place over the **August bank holiday weekend** with the traditional Blues Train running on Friday 22nd August 2014. Full details on [www.bluesfestival.co.uk](http://www.bluesfestival.co.uk).

**Burnley Beer Festival** - the 3rd Burnley beer Festival is taking place in Burnley Mechanics over the weekend of **xx & xx September 2014**. Community Rail Lancashire is once again sponsoring the festival glasses and will be promoting rail travel to and from the event.

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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://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk)  
<http://communityrailman.wordpress.com>  
<https://twitter.com/communityrailman>  
<http://railramblers.wordpress.com>  
<http://ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com>

[www.northernrail.org](http://www.northernrail.org)  
[www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)  
[www.merseytravel.gov.uk](http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk)  
[www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk)  
[www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk)

[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)  
[www.lancashirebus.co.uk](http://www.lancashirebus.co.uk)  
[www.tfgm.com](http://www.tfgm.com)  
[www.dalesrail.com](http://www.dalesrail.com)  
[www.bwdconnect.org.uk](http://www.bwdconnect.org.uk)