

# READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 21

AUTUMN 2014

## COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2014



Brian Haworth and Marjorie Birch show off the 'Working with Young People' category winners certificate and trophy to Clare Moriarty from the Department for Transport

**CRL**  
Community Rail Lancashire



**Citizens' Rail** 

Our train      Our station      Our citizens

## NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Well refranchising is picking up and Community Rail Lancashire (minus yours truly) is already busy meeting or arranging to meet the various bidding groups for the Northern franchise. CRL has developed a forward looking, bespoke presentation which it is showing to all bidding groups. This sets out the issues and ideas CRL has covering the next 10 years. The meetings are attended by the chairs of the four CRPs and also by the 2 CRDOs and Marjorie Birch, Vice Chair of the Clitheroe and East Lancashire CRPs to explain about the school work carried out by CRL. Bidding teams are in listening mode but have sharp antennae and will certainly pick up our messages and where they can weave them into their bids hoping that the edge they get is the bit that wins them the 8 (or 10) year franchise!! You may ask why minus yours truly? Well fortunately/unfortunately I have been too closely involved in work with Rail North and the DfT on the new franchises which means my head is full of restricted information which alert bidders might just prise out of me in an unguarded moment. So having signed a FLPA (a what you ask???) I am unable to meet or engage with bidders which is a shame but having a hand in the development of the franchise has been interesting and has its own rewards.

Community Rail is certainly high on the DfT's agenda as can be seen by the commitments in the new ScotRail franchise recently awarded to Abellio and in the draft Franchise Agreement for the Inter City East Coast franchise. Incidentally anyone interested in the ScotRail franchise can find out more by going to <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/rail/scotrail-franchise/scotrail-franchise-renewal-programme>. The colour brochure is very interesting and has plenty of good news for Community Rail especially the section headed 'Good for Communities and Tourism' - I love the bit about scenic trains to support Scotland's tourism market. I also look with envy at the level of investment in new (Hitachi) electric trains and the refurbishment of existing rolling stock. I gather there are also plans to lease some HSTs once the new (Hitachi built) IEP's are introduced on the East Coast Main Line.

### Stations:

I thought I would continue my stations theme from last time. As a great station enthusiast I want to see them thrive over the next franchise. Paul Salveson has enthusiastically promoted the idea of stations as '*community hubs*' to anyone who will listen and that includes the DfT. It is an excellent idea but what exactly does it mean? More to the point how do **you** translate it into something tangible that bidders can get stuck into? This is a moot point but Paul is setting the mood music for us to follow with those good ideas Community Rail Partnerships are so good at. But let's go beyond floral displays and think about what else passengers require in addition to an attractive (and possibly award winning) flower garden? Well some ideas for redundant station buildings used here and in Europe include creating crèches for commuters (well perhaps not strictly for them!!), shops, libraries, cafes and/or restaurants, museums, youth centres, taxi offices, information points and so on. So some of these create facilities for local people and in others they make the station into a destination people want to come to. In all cases they bring life to the station at most times of the day and night. So don't be afraid to *think out of the box*. If your station has been stripped bare of everything except a shelter and the flower tubs but you know there is a need for something better then wish for it but more importantly articulate it to bidders. In Lancashire we had to recreate a booking and information office at Clitheroe, Burscough Bridge and other stations to go beyond the basic shelter and floral displays. If we don't ask we won't get!

## NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Looking at new and innovative ideas I came upon the most dynamic of all shelters at Norchard High Level station on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. The station is on the volunteer run Forest of Dean Railway and certainly is the most novel I have ever come across.

As you can see it is certainly simple, it can be erected and taken down at will, it can be made bigger or smaller as demand dictates, it has no windows or sides (an optional extra!!) and is kept in place in case of high winds by redundant sleeper chairs of which there are plenty all over the network. Could it catch on, or is it too basic for our lines?



Perhaps a better option for a dynamic shelter is illustrated by this example at La Haye Fouassiere developed by SNCF and TER Pays de la Loire in France.

The shelter is simple, open and versatile. It can be used for bus/rail passengers, it provides a comfortable (warm) seating area and can have a ticket machine as well as information screens. On top of that it could also be provided with Wi-Fi which more and more passengers are asking for as well as providing a vending machine and/or space for a 'coffee cart' if a suitable

local provider wanted to take on the challenge!! It can also be supplied with 'green' power generated by the PVs that have, in this example, been placed on the roof of the covered passenger walkway. What do you think? Do either have a future on our lines?

### Services:

The train service is what our passengers use the railway for because the timetables on offer fit their needs (or closely enough perhaps allowing a little time for a relaxing tea, coffee or beer). If it doesn't meet their needs then they won't use it no matter how many leaflets we push through their letter boxes. So how do we assess current and future requirements? Who do we speak to - users, non users or no one? Well CRL uses a number of ways but probably needs more. The West of Lancashire CRP has just carried out a comprehensive passenger survey on the Preston - Ormskirk and Wigan - Southport lines. The data will help us assess the impact of recent service changes and also future requirements. In East Lancashire both CRPs in conjunction with Blackburn Borough Council and Lancashire CC carry out before and after surveys as part of station projects. The data helps inform future developments. The before survey has been done at Burnley Manchester Rd and the after survey will be carried out once the new station building is opened. Previous surveys have covered Clitheroe, Accrington, Blackburn and Darwen.

I am sure the Editor in Chief will tell me I have more than exhausted my allotted space so I will stop here. There is a lot going on and Community Rail has many challenges ahead of it but for once I think we are actually going with the flow with much to gain from the current re-franchising programme.

## 2014 COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS

Community Rail Lancashire had a very successful evening at the 10th Annual Community Rail Awards in Scarborough on Thursday 2nd October. The various partnerships submitted five entries and had four shortlisted:

**Category 1 - Involving Young People - Young Person's Passport to Safe Travel (Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire CRPs)**

**Category 5 - Small Projects Award (Under £500) - Annual Planters Sponsorship Scheme (Friends of Bentham Station & Bloomin' Bentham)**

**Category 7 - Photograph Competition - Gerald Townson (LLMCRP) and Brian Haworth (CRL)**

On the evening the Young Person's passport to safe Travel shared **Joint First** with the Sussex CRP's 150th Anniversary of the Barnham to Bognor Regis Line Project (see photo right).

**Outright winner** in its category was the Annual Planter Sponsorship Scheme and this was followed by a **second place** for Gerald Townson's photograph Bentham Carnival.



Five other nominations entered by community rail partnerships and friends groups supported by Northern Rail were also successful. Friends of Hindley Station won Best Station Garden and shared a joint third with a community art scheme in the Renewable and Smaller Projects category.

Also commended were Friends of Heaton Chapel, who took a joint third place for their 'The Bridge to Nowhere', the Penistone Line Partnership who took a third place for the 'Penistone Puzzle Project' and the Esk Valley Railway Development Company who took a second place for their project 'Improving Rail Replacement on the Esk Valley'.

To see a full list of the winners and runners up, visit the [ACoRP website](#) and download the 2014 Winners Brochure.

## BURNLEY MANCHESTER ROAD STATION - OPEN

After a final handover meeting on Friday 14th November 2014 the brand new station at Burnley Manchester Road opened to the public on Monday 17th November. The station owned by Lancashire County Council and leased to local rail operator Northern Rail is the new flagship station in the north west.

The new station has a booking office offering a full range of national rail tickets and travel information. There is a heated waiting area, brand new shelters and additional seating on the platforms. The station also benefits from CCTV, a ticket vending machine and is one of the first in the East Lancashire area to have customer information screens installed.



The former station building, used for many years as a dairy after the station closed in the 1960s, was purchased by Burnley Borough Council in 2011 and with additional funding from the Interreg IVB Citizens' Rail project and Lancashire County Council has enabled it to be replaced by the new building. The station has been designed to provide an attractive and iconic gateway to the town.

The final piece of the jigsaw sees the introduction of a direct rail service from Burnley to Manchester via the recently reinstated Todmorden Curve, which is due to commence in May 2015.



## BENTHAM CELEBRATES

The red carpet was out as around 30 people gathered at Bentham station on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014 to celebrate not one, but four events! September 12<sup>th</sup> was the third anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Bentham Station (FoBS), a group of volunteers that have been working on the station since 2011. Guests were treated to light refreshments and a buffet lunch courtesy of the volunteers.

Two unveilings also took place, the first to mark the official launch of the newly extended Bentham Heritage Trail, which now starts at the station. Pete Myers, Northern Rail's Client & Stakeholder Manager and local resident Jim Mundy were on hand to unveil the colourful board at the entrance to the Morecambe bound platform (below left).



The party then moved back over the footbridge to the Leeds bound platform where Brian Barnsley, ACoRP's Operations Manager, unveiled a plaque to mark the sixtieth birthday of the current station building (above right). The building, completed in September 1954, holds the record for a station being built. The time of fifteen weeks to demolish the old buildings and complete the new is outstanding, allowing for how long it takes these days!



Brian Barnsley, Brian Haworth & Simon Clarke along with some 'Friends of Bentham Station' try out Northern Rail's latest maglev unit on Bentham platform.

The final celebration of the day was to mark the birthday of Gerald Townson, Chair of both FoBS and the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP. A cake with a battery operated model railway running round it was the order of the day and Gerald managed to blow out the candles in one go!

## PADIHAM GREEN AACHEN TRIP

Community Rail Lancashire's Education Team is visiting Aachen in Germany and Heerlen in Holland with a class of pupils from Padiham Green Primary School. Following the class's presentation to European partners a couple of months ago at Burnley Manchester Road Station, which was very well received, Uwe from Aachen said "The children's work and enthusiasm was really outstanding. I was very impressed by what they had learned and presented about Aachen. I hope that one day we might be able to arrange for the children to visit our city in person".

Well Uwe's hope has now become a reality! The visit is sponsored through the Interreg IVB Citizens' Rail project with additional funding provided by the Designated Community Rail Development Fund and Abellio. The children have also been busy raising funds through various events at school.



The visit lasting five days will see the children travel by coach, ferry and rail. Colleagues from the Citizens' Rail project in both Holland and Germany have arranged educational visits in their respective countries to ensure that the visiting children have an interesting and fulfilling time.

The highlight for the children is to spend time in a German school with children of their own age group. During this time the children will work together to produce artwork which can be displayed at railway stations in both Germany and England.

It is hoped that more permanent links will be forged between the two schools after this ground breaking visit. The class has set up a Blog for their trip to Aachen and you can follow their adventures on <http://aachen2014.blogspot.co.uk>

## COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE WEBSITES

Community Rail Lancashire has been hard at work over the last couple of months along with design company Source Creative to develop a new website for the family of Lancashire community rail partnerships and service such as DalesRail and Ribble Valley Rambler.

Hopefully by the time you are reading this it will have gone live - so please give it a try and let us know what you think!

## CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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Simon Clarke, Richard Watts, Gerald Townson, Brian Haworth, Tony Ford, Neil Sheridan,  
Alan Fantom and Padiham Green Primary School

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

## ALL CHANGE AT CHERRY TREE - LAUNCHED

The final pieces of this project have now come to fruition and the provision of new waiting shelters (a much needed improvement) took place towards the end of October. Two new shelters have been installed complete with seating and LED lighting which gives off a much brighter light within the shelters.

The new shelters enhance the earlier work of the project which has included the installation of CCTV, clearance of overgrown embankments, planting of spring bulbs and artwork including a decorative entrance to a disused 'song mine', which all helps to brighten the general feel of the station.

An official opening of the project was carried out by Cllr Maureen Bateson from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council on Thursday 13th November 2014. James Syson, Transport Strategy Team Leader with the Council and Chair of the Joint Clitheroe Line and East Lancashire CRPs, welcomed the guests to a chilly Cherry Tree and thanked all those that had been involved with the project.



Following James' welcome Cllr Maureen Bateson, with the help of some of the young people involved in the project, unveiled the 'Song Mine' entrance. The guests then walked up to the local Greenfield Community Centre where a slide show of the various stages of the project was being shown. The guests heard short speeches from some of those involved the project and James and Cllr Bateson thanked everyone for their involvement.



A full briefing document about this project can be downloaded by visiting the Community Rail Lancashire website on [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk)

# SOUTH FYLDE CONNECTIVITY STUDY

Lancashire County Council have funded a study of the South Fylde Line in order to establish the data needed to support options around using trams from Blackpool South to St. Anne's. This would link in with Blackpool's existing tramway which is to be extended to Blackpool North station in the near future. An extension from North Pier to Blackpool North railway station will improve access to the UK rail network from Blackpool, Fleetwood and Cleveleys and if a next phase is considered then this would benefit St. Anne's as well.

The key issues arising from the current study will be how schemes can aid economic development, what they will deliver in terms of regeneration, jobs, etc. The South Fylde Line is described as having low use, but with the considerable potential due to the areas it serves, including residential areas, enterprise zone, etc. There are a significant number of new homes planned in Fylde (with 2000 plus in St Anne's alone) and several of these are close to the existing route.

The study is looking at:

- Understanding the current markets and drivers of demand;
- Line opportunities and constraints;
- Travel patterns, committed schemes & regeneration and social analysis/ patterns;
- Unlocking development;
- Enhancing connectivity; and
- Increasing productivity

At a meeting with stakeholders and consultants the focus was on the data related to travel on the line and other modes of travel along the rail corridor. It was surprising to learn that 35,000 people live within 800 metres of the line! This is a clientele that needs tapping into from a marketing point of view. It transpires that more people live closer to the South Fylde Line than the line from Blackpool North to Kirkham so the potential is there but just how do 'we' tap into it?

Whilst considered the data I was able to put it into context for the consultants regarding poor timings, hourly service, rolling stock deficiencies, all of which impact on the current levels of usage. None of this is new but these are key issues which inhibit the line's potential.

It's very early days yet but if:

- Trams terminated at St Anne's;
- The South Fylde Line terminated at St Anne's;
- Remaining track speed restrictions were lifted; and
- Faster more modern trains were introduced

Then we could end up with a more frequent service with better connectivity but I suspect it will be a long-time coming!

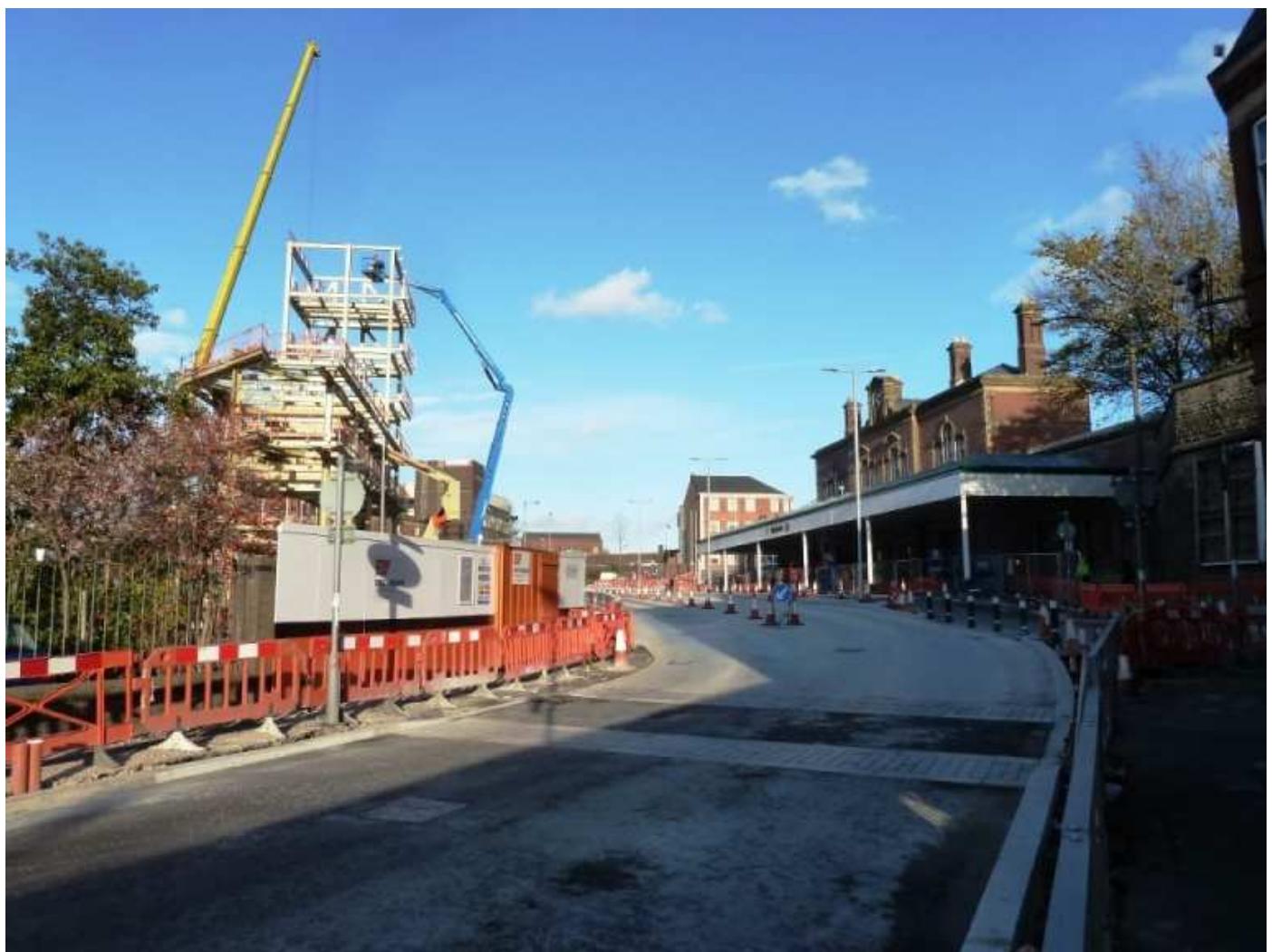
**Cllr. Tony Ford**  
**Chairman South Fylde Line CRP**



## BLACKBURN STATION WORKS

With work progressing well on the exterior of Blackburn Station approach, work has now started on a major project to improve the station foyer area. Intending passengers have now to walk through a boarded-off area to allow works to be carried out without affecting station passenger flows. Overhead work is on-going, revealing long-hidden steelwork ready for repainting. Part of the redevelopment will see a Subway food outlet open.

Work is also being carried out on the lift on platform four which has been out of service for a number of weeks. A new roof is being put in place above the lift shaft to rectify water ingress which has rendered the lift inoperable.



## NORTHERN & TPE FRANCHISE CONSULTATION

The consultation period for the Northern & TPE franchises ended on 18th August 2014 and the Department for Transport (DfT) announced that the preferred bidders are:

**Northern** - Abellio Northern Ltd., Arriva Rail North Ltd. and Govia Northern Ltd.

**Trans Pennine** - First Trans Pennine Express Ltd., Keolis Go-Ahead Ltd. and Stagecoach Trans Pennine Express Trains Ltd.

The DfT are expected to issue the Invitation To Tender documents on Friday 19th December 2014 just in time to spoil the bidding teams' Christmas holidays.

## RIBBLE VALLEY RAMBLER



158445 arrives at Hellifield with a group of walkers led by John Barnes from the Lancashire Rail Ramblers. The second season of the new Ribble Valley Rambler service started on Sunday 14th September 2014. The service runs from Blackpool North & Preston to Hellifield via the Ribble Valley and connects into the first north bound Carlisle train. Some Sundays see guided walks led by either the Lancashire Rail Ramblers or the Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line and include circular walks from Settle and heritage walks around Ribblehead Viaduct.

## PASSPORT SPREADS ITS WINGS

Community Rail Lancashire's award winning 'Passport to Safe Rail Travel' (see page 4) is generating interest both at home and abroad.

The passport is given to children who have attended a day in 'the bunker' at Accrington learning all about rail safety. The passport allows them 3 months of free travel on the Clitheroe to Manchester Victoria and Colne to Blackpool South lines, as long as they are accompanied by an adult.

At a recent meeting of the Citizens' Rail project in Devon representatives were given information on the project and partners from France (SNCF), Holland and Germany expressed interest in, not only the passport project, but in the wider work of Community Rail Lancashire's educational programme.

The Devon and Cornwall CRP are also looking to use the passport idea in their area to complement work they already carry out with schools.

## PASSPORT



TO SAFE RAIL TRAVEL



## MEOLS COP - THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS

Less a railway and more a roller-coaster at Meols Cop this last year, at least that is how it felt, but we finish on a high having received an 'Outstanding Award' at the NorthWest In Bloom presentation at the Southport Convention Centre on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

The Friends Group attended safety briefings held by Northern Rail for adopters of stations just over a year ago. Important and included a very useful training and guidance presentation from the Samaritans (more on this later), and we can now cascade this safety briefing down to new members. It was also a great opportunity to meet other Friends of Station Groups.

Talking of which we continue to meet many on a regular basis, namely Hindley, Walkden, Westhoughton further down the line and more locally Croston, Burscough (x2) and New Lane, to exchange ideas and concerns, and to be a joint voice to Northern Rail. Something we also do through the Community Rail Partnership and we were pleased to contribute to the new Line Guides.

We always meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, to help maintain the Station, and work there many other times endeavouring to maintain a presence. It's good to converse with passengers, some of whom now phone for train information and to feedback issues. Unfortunately we have suffered repeated acts of vandalism over a number of months but various agencies have been supportive and thanks to British Transport Police we had temporary CCTV which seems to have been a successful deterrent. Recently removed ...

One particularly bad occasion we arrived at the station to see the latest devastation and observe new notices put up by Network Rail explaining how to contact the Samaritans (for our benefit?).



What picks you up is the sympathy and encouragement, and in the case of two young sisters and their father, finding them on the station putting the plants back in the troughs and sweeping up.

The family's home overlooks the station and when the elder one woke one Sunday morning and saw the mess made the previous night, she demanded they fix it. She is one of the pupils from Norwood Road Primary School who have been very keen and active.

We went into school to be told their plans, shown their plants and see their project about the station and its history. They go with their Teacher to do their own planting. School groups now take the train when going into Southport on trips.

In the Summer, the 60<sup>th</sup> Girl Guides Group returned to maintain the wooden planters, weed the platform and much needed watering.

Alan Fantom - Friends of Meols Cop

## WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM



Community Rail Lancashire has paid its own tribute to all those involved in the Great War by working with local artist Alastair Nicholson and St. Francis Primary School to create a poppy tribute using an old building supply bag

The innovative use of old building supply bags was noted on a Citizens' Rail visit to Nantes in France where the bags were seen planted with flowers and decorated with art work. Not an organisation to pass up a good idea Community Rail Lancashire have brought the concept back to Cherry Tree station.



Sunday 2nd November saw the traditional remembrance service at Accrington station to commemorate the Accrington Pals.

The service was led by railway chaplain Rev Dr. Richard Cook and attended by Hyndburn Mayor Cllr Munsif Dad. Also on hand to pay their respects were representatives from the Royal British Legion and family members from soldiers who fought with the Accrington Pals.

The photograph on the left shows the lowering of the colours during the service in the booking hall at Accrington.

## BLOOMING SUCCESS

Friends of Nelson station have played a big part in Nelson's first ever North West in Bloom awards. Nelson in Bloom won a Silver Gilt award in the Best Large Town category. The station is one of the areas inspected by the judges as a gateway to the town and as any passenger will confirm, the group's work and planting at the station has transformed the area for intending travellers.

The team led by Walter Stafford have regular working parties at the station and as well as looking after Nelson station the group also tend to Brierfield station further down the line.

**Congratulations on your success!**



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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)