

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

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THERE'S LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



STOP PRESS

Wednesday 9th December was a milestone day for me. After three years of hard work the new franchises for Northern and Trans Pennine were finally announced. The former was awarded to Arriva and the latter to First Group. Having been fairly closely involved in the process from start to finish there are some important points that have emerged for me:

- Both franchises will bring substantial investment to our local rail services. For Northern this is the first time any real investment has been attached to the franchise since privatisation.
- No one should underestimate the power of 29 local authorities and PTE's (now combined authorities) working together as **Rail North** has had on the shape of these franchises.
- The impact of the 'Northern Powerhouse' as a counterbalance to the ever growing stranglehold of London has also played its part. The importance of good inter-national, national, regional and local rail links has been recognised and this can only be achieved through sustained investment in track, stations and rolling stock.
- The explicit use of the 'residual value mechanism' will ensure that investment continues right up to the end of the franchises.
- It is clear that the DfT, had it procured these franchises without Rail North, would have been less ambitious for them.
- Community Rail and Stations are clear winners in the new Northern franchise and I am proud to have been part of the teams that helped secure these benefits - the stations one was particularly challenging as the Rail North ambition was for greater investment. Yet the original DfT stance was not to mandate funding for stations so to end up with £30m was some turn around. The final outcome is even better than that!!

Other sections of RBTL set out some of the specific benefits for CRL. However, although the announcements have been made the ink has yet to dry on the Franchise Agreements and negotiations completed with Network Rail so there may yet be some changes to the improvements that are finally taken forward.

Full details can be found below and by clicking the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/news/massive-boost-to-rail-services-brings-northern-powerhouse-to-life



First  TransPennine Express

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Monday 7th December, 2015

Winter hit with a vengeance in the shape of Storm Desmond over the weekend. The rain fell in truly abnormal amounts. Some say a months' worth of rain fell in parts of Lancashire and Cumbria in less than a day. Well if the Ribble that passes by my house is a test of this statement then the amount of water in it was truly enormous. As an ardent river watcher it always amazes me just how fast it can travel after heavy rain and also the amount of debris in it including whole trees. Over the years I think a forest must have passed my house!

The railway has taken a severe battering in places with significant disruptions to services and many lines in north Lancashire and Cumbria closed. The pictures of Appleby, Carlisle and Kendal show exactly the sort of impact many people were/are facing across the region. In Lancashire the City of Lancaster including Morecambe was without power (and as I write this still is). Amongst all this are the heroic efforts of the rescue services, the armed forces, local authorities, Network Rail, etc. etc. to try and ensure that every one is safe. My grateful thanks go to Pete Myers who circulated regular updates on the developing problems.



Many reasons can be found to describe one off weather events (when did this term start to be used?) but as they are happening at regular intervals across the globe the one that comes to my mind is climate change or global warming. It is therefore prescient that as I write this the world's leaders are meeting in Paris to agree a strategy to deal with this crises. It is imperative that agreement is reached to reduce emissions of greenhouses gases BUT as ever I always recall what I used to teach: *'Think Global - act Local'*.

In other words it is not just what governments do (or don't do) it is also what each of us does as well. Well done Network Rail and Northern Rail for all your efforts to ensure the safety of the railway in the face of the extreme weather.

Three consecutive Mondays (16th, 23rd and 30th November)

'Acts of God' are one thing but the failures of man are another. On three consecutive Monday's East Lancashire rail users have faced severe disruption to their journeys due to overrunning engineering works. It really brings into focus for me the urgent need for CRPs to be more closely involved in the planning of these works and the contingencies for when things go wrong. The on-going Farnworth Tunnel works haven't helped but by the time you read this we should be celebrating its completion and the restoration of the full Clitheroe/Blackburn to Manchester service. I have my fingers crossed as we have had a reduced service on this key route for far too long - falling passengers numbers are testimony to this.

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

These sorts of failures can be dealt with as one offs but not three times in succession. It must be understood that many rail users in East Lancashire do not have access to alternative transport and really do rely on the train to get to work, school, college, job interviews, hospital appointments, connecting train services and other time sensitive appointments. So when things go wrong it has real and often hidden consequences.

CRL is doing something about this and Simon is working with Craig Harrop, Northern Rail's far sighted Client & Stakeholder Manager to develop a presentation that will inform industry people about community rail - what it is, what it does and what it achieves. From this it is to be hoped that everyone will get a better appreciation of how to make the railway work better for the customer. Well done Simon and Craig I look forward to the road show and the feedback.

Todmorden Curve and Citizens' Rail

In RBTL 23 we celebrated the introduction of the new Blackburn to Manchester via Todmorden service. This has now been operating for around 7 months and is beginning to become an established part of the local rail scene. The staff at Accrington and Burnley Manchester Road have really noticed the difference. It is certainly heartening to travel through Burnley Manchester Rd in the evening to see a busy waiting room and a queue at the booking office window. This transformation would not have been possible without the funding that came through Citizens' Rail, an EU funded project. I was privileged to be asked to present a paper on 'Innovation at Stations' to the final Citizens' Rail conference held on the 1st October in Torquay - the same day as Community Rail Awards. The presentation and details about the conference can be seen by going to www.citizensrail.org/conference.

I shall always carry with me the memory of the two student masterclasses organised by Citizens' Rail. They were hosted in Aachen and here in Lancashire. The first looked at stations and students were asked to develop ideas for a number of run down stations. The one I really liked were their ideas for Nuth in the Netherlands, see below. This provided a modern functional, multi modal station but the design also linked the station to the community and its history. If you look carefully you will quickly realise the industry that built this town. Like the cotton industry in Lancashire it is now history and many of the citizens now commute to nearby large towns such as Aachen and Heerlen for employment. The railway that once carried large quantities of coal now carries equally large numbers of commuters.



NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

The 1st October was a long day as the all-day conference was followed by the all night Community Rail Awards - well at least for those who have more stamina and drinking power than I have. The Awards held few surprises for CRL as we had entered very little and had even less short listed! There were, however, two surprises for me. The first was that our brand new community station at Burnley Manchester Road was not even shortlisted and the second that in the outstanding teamwork category Citizens' Rail was placed third. Well in any estimation this was a great surprise. Just take a look at the roll call on the stage consisting of an international gathering from the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and France (can you spot Brian?).

More important than the show are the achievements of Citizens' Rail and top of the list has to be the trans national exchange of ideas leading to the development of the tool kit which is brim full of new and good ideas. Whilst we have a lot to teach Europe about Community Rail there is much they can teach us about train design, station developments and community engagement. The toolkit can be viewed at www.citizensrail.org/toolkit/ - take a look.



The completion of Citizens' Rail also marks the end of my involvement in European projects and I shall miss my trips to Lille, a lovely city in Northern France, to meet the JTS (who you may well ask) and Utrecht the equally lovely city in the Netherlands to name but two places that I visited frequently. SusStations (Sustainable Stations) part funded the brilliant facility we have at Accrington and of course the bunker from where these notes originate! Accrington has become the home of CRL and my team spend considerable time looking after it. Then there was Citizens' Rail which part funded the new station at Burnley Manchester Road, the Northern Community Ambassador scheme and has made a small contribution towards the new Todmorden Curve service. I have not as yet identified any future European projects to join but maybe there is one out there...!!

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Rose Grove Revived

Since RBTL 23 we have completed the community project at Rose Grove and the phase 1 refurbishment of the station. A lovely ceremony involving 2 schools took place at the station on the 25th September. Along with Lowerhouse and Padiham Green primary schools, we were also joined by County Councillor John Fillis, Chris Ingham, Northern's Station Manager for the area and Alistair Nicholson, CRL's Artist in Residence. As can be clearly seen from the special running in board there is something fishy about Rose Grove!! The tale of 'Small Fry' the stickleback is well told in a special; book produced with the imagination of Padiham Green pupils; the inventiveness of Alistair Nicholson, the patience of Brian and the talent of Janet Ennis, the gifted Deputy Head at Padiham Green. Small Fry is also the star of an Oscar winning movie so just click below, sit back, relax and watch the movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpjarGyG7Do&sns=em>. As the other picture below shows 'Small Fry' also turned up at Manchester Victoria on a special day out over the Todmorden Curve along with Padiham Green pupils who were 'Trying the Curve'.



Funding for Rose Grove Revived has come through the Burnley Pendle Growth Corridor for the station refurbishment and the Designated Line Community Rail Development Fund for the art work at the station.



NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

The rest of the universe!

With great apologies to the rest of the universe for omitting you in what has turned into an East Lancashire biased 'Notes from the Bunker'. There are some exciting generic projects that we are developing. Whilst '**All Together Now**' takes as its focus Pleasington station the lessons that will come from this are applicable to all CRPs. Some of you reading this far will remember that this project won the 2015 'Abellio Challenge' which then gave CRL the challenge of implementing it. The developments have been well chronicled in ACoRP's 'Train on Line' and on CRL's own web site. Then there is '**Down the Line**' which is a brand new educational initiative which Brian and Marjorie are developing with the help of pupils from a school in Whalley. Very soon this ground breaking project will be launched onto an unsuspecting educational world along with its dedicated website called, you guessed it, 'Down the Line'!!

The recent meeting of the East Lancashire and Clitheroe Line Joint Management group received presentations from Barbara Russell of Friends of Huncoat and Derek Jennings, Friends of Pendle. Barbara gave a very good update on their activities and some of the challenges faced by the group. Top of the list was where to store the tools they use to prevent the need to cart them to and from the station. Well CRL has taken up this challenge and we are discussing an innovative design with ARK who deal in recycled plastic and have manufactured many of the flower tubs and seats which adorn lots of stations across Lancashire. Watch this space for an off the wall solution to this age old problem. Second on the list was water or more to the point how to access it during periods of drought. Now that is not quite so easy to resolve but we are working on it.

That's more than enough from me wishing all my tolerant readers a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in 2016.

EUROPEAN LINKS CONTINUE



Community Rail Lancashire's links with Europe continued when Tim Rohbock from Aachen visited the Bunker at Accrington. Tim was given a guided tour of the facility and an insight into Community Rail Lancashire's educational work.

Tim is pictured with Brian Hawthorn against a backdrop displaying Community Rail Lancashire and Padiham Green's visit to Aachen and Heerlen in November of 2014 (see RBTL issues 21 & 22).

NEW RAIL FRANCHISES

What benefits will the new franchises bring to the community rail lines in Lancashire & Cumbria?

- There will be more frequent services from Windermere (8 trains per day on brand new electric trains) and Barrow-in-Furness (4 trains per day on brand new diesel trains) to Manchester Airport as part of the Northern Connect network.
- Direct Sunday services from Windermere to Manchester Airport.

There will be a slight increase in frequency on weekday and Saturday Northern services between Barrow-in-Furness and Lancaster, and significantly increased frequencies on Sundays to both Lancaster and Manchester Airport.

Benefits for passengers at Preston will be:

- One extra semi-fast train per hour to Manchester, as the existing two TransPennine Express services are replaced by 1 TransPennine Express and 2 Northern Connect, all operating with brand new trains.
- New electric trains on stopping services to Manchester.
- New diesel trains on Northern Connect services between Blackpool and York via Preston and Leeds.
- More frequent, hourly service to Ormskirk.
- More frequent, hourly Sunday service to Colne.

One extra train will depart from Leeds for Carlisle between 1600 and 1900, and two extra Settle and Carlisle line services on Sundays.

Up to six extra services will be provided per day to stations on the Cumbrian Coast route between Barrow-in-Furness and Carlisle, Sunday services from Carlisle to Whitehaven will be extended to Barrow-in-Furness and the frequency enhanced.

There will be an extra off-peak service every hour from Blackburn to central Manchester via Bolton.

There will be an increase to 7 trains per day from Lancaster to Leeds via Skipton, with times better suited to commuters. There will be one extra train on Sundays.

There will also be more frequent Sunday services from Lancaster to Morecambe.

Stations

Accrington, Barrow, Blackburn, Blackpool North, Burnley Manchester Road, Chorley, Grange-over-Sands, Poulton le Fylde, Ulverston and Windermere will all become Northern Connect stations, to be staffed 0600 to 2200 daily, with catering outlets and free Wi-Fi.

There will also be extra car park spaces at Chorley and Blackburn stations.

The currently unstaffed stations at Darwen will have staff available to assist passengers from 0700 to 1100. Millom station will be staffed 0700 to 1500.

Whilst the announcement made on the 9th December has been made in good faith it is still 'subject to contract'. The Franchise Agreements have not yet been signed, the committed obligations have not yet been finalised and negotiations with Network Rail over track access have yet to be fully completed. In other words there may be some minor changes made to some of the schemes listed in the announcements especially those not mandated in the ITT. These are most likely to relate to the trains service aspirations. It is worth noting that the TSR does become a committed obligation.

PADIHAM GREEN AWARDS SUCCESS



Pupils from Padiham Green primary School are pictured above with Brian Haworth showing off their third place certificate that they were awarded at the Community Rail Awards held in Torquay in October 2015. The award was in the 'Involving Young People' category and was for their involvement in the Aachen Project which saw the whole class visiting Aachen and Heerlen on mainland Europe.

RISHTON PROSPECTS



Rishton Prospects, part of the prospects Foundation, were formed back in 1996 and were formed to try and do something to improve their local environment and this included the railway station. The group were one of the first friends of Stations groups to be formed on the East Lancashire Line and have continued to look after the station ever since.

They were the first group to install recycled plastic planters on a station platform and these came from Prosperity Recycling, a not for profit social enterprise company, based in Accrington.

Prosperity no longer exist but ARK Plastics have taken over the business and still provide planters today.

Pictured left is Colin Cooper, leader of the group, along with his faithful dog on the Colne bound platform.

NEW OFFICER FOR THE BENTHAM LINE

The Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP (The Bentham Line) has recently appointed its first staff member, a Community Rail Partnership Officer. Catherine Huddleston, a Lancaster & Morecambe College Business Alumni and frequent rail user, started work week commencing Monday 26th October. Catherine's role is part time with 20 hours spread over the week.

Gerald Townson, CRP chair, explains "Catherine's appointment is great news for the future of the Bentham Line and the next generation of Community Rail, especially as we are about to embark on the new Northern Rail franchise next spring. We are looking forward to her developing the community aspects of the whole line."

Catherine describes herself as a self-proclaimer 'chatterbox' who enjoys striking up conversation with everyone. She says "Coming from the small town of Settle, I love the feel and benefits of a close community. I look forward to working with all the communities along the line to keep service provision and quality on track!"

This post has been made possible because of funding made available to Community Rail from Virgin East Coast as part of their new franchise deal. The CRP qualifies because its service links Leeds on the East Coast mainline to Lancaster which is on the West Coast mainline and then the coast.



FARNWORTH TUNNEL

Network Rail have announced that Farnworth Tunnel will reopen to normal traffic from Monday 14th December 2015. The work to widen the tunnel as a part of the electrification programme has affected service between Bolton and Manchester and has meant a reduced service between Clitheroe/Blackburn and Manchester Victoria.

There will be a total block over the weekend of 12th & 13th December to allow the final works to bring the new tracks into use. Some further work will be required in January 2016 to remove crossovers installed during the tunnel boring works and also to lift speed restrictions imposed over the new alignments.

A photograph of the new tunnel portal can be seen on the front page of this issue of RBTL.

BLACKPOOL SOUTH PLANTERS

The Friends of Blackpool South Station got a boost on Friday 27th November when the station saw the installation of some recycled plastic planters.

Brian Haworth and Simon Clarke from Community Rail Lancashire along with Cllr David O'Hara and Malcolm Richardson, from the friends group, were on hand to assist with James from ARK Plastics with the installation of four recycled plastic planters. Each pair of planters is connected by a bench seat. The planters were filled with 'ballast' kindly donated and delivered by Blackpool Council and were due to be topped off with compost provided by the friends group and then planted with spring bulbs.

The friends group have recently cleared the platform area of weeds and are hopeful to get to work on the car park side of the fence line. With the installation of the new planters, cycle storage with CCTV and work to be done to improve the shelter the station is beginning to see a step forward in being more inviting and welcoming to passengers.



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

www.northernrail.org

www.nationalrail.co.uk

<http://communityrailman.wordpress.com>

www.acorp.uk.com

www.lancashirebus.co.uk

<https://twitter.com/comunityrailman>

www.merseytravel.gov.uk

www.tfgm.com

<http://railramblers.wordpress.com>

www.btp.police.uk

www.dalesrail.com

<http://ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com>

www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk

www.bwdconnect.org.uk

ALL TOGETHER NOW

The 'All Together Now' project at Pleasington station was the winner of the 2015 Abellio Challenge at the Department for Transport's Designated Lines Seminar in Nottingham in March of this year. Part of the ongoing project has seen the transfer of recycled plastic planters from Mill Hill station to Pleasington to enhance the platforms.

Students from Mysercough College worked with young adults with learning difficulties from Stanley Grange to fill the planters. The Mysercough students had earlier had a session with tutors to understand how to work with people with learning difficulties.



The multi-faceted project involving a range of people including the Young Weaver's Cycling Club, Stanley Grange, the Stansfield Centre, Witton Female Nightsafe, Feniscowles Primary School and THOMAS ('those on the margins of society') will see the station transformed into an area to encourage wildlife.

To help with this a team of volunteers from various Network Rail offices across the country lent a hand at Pleasington on 11th November. The group working with CRDO Brian Haworth tackled the jungle behind the Blackburn bound waiting shelter clearing the way for the next stage of the project.



BURSCOUGH JUNCTION



A group of students working with the Ormskirk Branch of The Princes Trust have agreed to carry out a clean-up of the disused platform at Burscough Junction. The group working with the support of Network Rail, Northern Rail and Community Rail Lancashire are pictured at the station with Brian Bailey of The Friends of Burscough Stations

MEOLS COP



Meols Cop Station, near Southport, has just taken delivery of three recycled plastic planters. The planters, designed and built by ARK Plastics of Accrington, were delivered to the station on Wednesday 16th December and a small contingent of the Friends of Meols Cop Station (see above) were on hand along with Simon Clarke from Community Rail Lancashire to help with the installation.

Funding for the planters came via a grant from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) Small Grants Fund. Match funding was provided by Sefton Council along with the West of Lancs CRP.

It is hoped that a local primary school will help with the planting and ongoing maintenance of the planters.

FRIENDS OF MORECAMBE STATION

The Friends of Morecambe Station group was formed recently of parties interested in enhancing the facilities and improving the environment at the station. The Friends Group is facilitated by Morecambe Town Council and comprises volunteers come from the local community.

Whilst the members of Friends Group have diverse backgrounds and interests, they share the common belief that the station is part of the heart of the town, a vital resource for the residents and a gateway to our friendly and welcoming community. Hence, the station which is used by over 200,000 people per annum should reflect the good community spirit and play its part in offering a warm welcome to our town and the surrounding area.

The Group's first project has been the provision of two raised planting beds and pictured below are members of the Group including the Chairman of the Friends Group, Michael Moorhouse, a representative from Bay View Landscapes (one of the sponsors of this project) together with Station Manager, Joan Nickson unveiling the new planting beds. The planting will be changed each season to provide a colourful welcome to Morecambe, and supported by local sponsors and Friends who will maintain the planting beds. The two beds pictured have been made possible through the hard work of the current Friends (pictured) and generous sponsorship from Bay View Landscapes and the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP together with funding from Morecambe Town Council.



CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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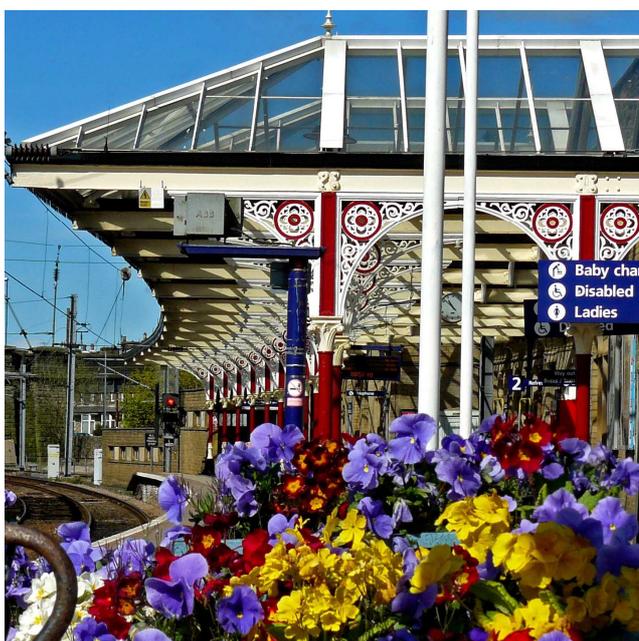
Other photographs of the work of the Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships can be seen on
www.communityraillancashire.co.uk, www.dalesrail.com & <http://ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com>

BENTHAM LINE PHOTO COMPETITION

The winners of a recent photographic competition held in partnership between The Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP and Northern Rail have been announced.

The competition was designed to get photographers to capture 'the spirit of the line' between Leeds and Morecambe (and Heysham Port). The competition was broken into three sections; Leeds to Skipton, Gargrave to Wennington and Carnforth to Morecambe (Heysham Port).

Photographs were submitted to Northern Rail and then displayed on a Facebook page. Winners have been announced in the first two sections but in the third most of the photographs were submitted by photographers who have direct connections with the CRP and so this section is remaining open for the rest of the year.



Joy Nightingale's 'Skipton in full bloom' winner of the Leeds to Skipton section.



Above 'A wintery scene' by Michael Coupar, winner of the Gargrave to Wennington section.

To see the runners up visit www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/news/ or have a look at Northern Rail's Facebook page. Although the competition has finished the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP & Northern Rail would still like to see your photographs of the line.

CLITHEROE CONCERTS SOCIETY

A regular feature on the events pages on the Community Rail Lancashire website are the concerts laid on by the Clitheroe Concerts Society. These take place in Clitheroe Royal Grammar School's Sixth Form Centre on York Street which is only a 5 or 10 min walk from the station.

A number of the musicians arrive by train, many coming up from the London area. The next concert is on Wednesday 10th February 2016 and will feature a 'flagship' group from the Royal Northern College of Music. String Trio will be playing excerpts from Beethoven, Mozart & Gideon Klein. All concerts start at 19:30 and are usually finished by 21:30 so the train is an ideal way to get to and from the concerts.

ANDELL & FAIRHAVEN



The Friends of Ansdell & Fairhaven Station have recently benefitted from the installation of a three panel community rail branded notice board. The group have done a superb job of maintaining the flower beds on the station and are in the process of creating rock garden in the green area to the rear of the platform.

FAREWELL TOUR



A recent visitor to the Bunker here in Accrington was Andrew Nock, a senior member of the Rail Executive at the Department for Transport. Andrew is visiting various parts of the country on a farewell tour as he is take retirement early in 2016.

Andrew was the first to try the Community Rail Lancashire memorabilia quiz which has now been circulated as 'CRL's Cracking Christmas Conundrum'.

FRIENDS OF LYTHAM STATION

A new friends group has formed at Lytham station with the intention of looking after the public side of the station rather than the disused area that is looked after by the 'In Bloom' group.

The group includes a local councillor and the landlady of the Station Tavern. The group have already installed small wooden planters on the station and have ambitious plans for planting on the spring and summer of 2016. The group are pictured here with Simon Clarke during their safety briefing.



WHALLEY IN BLOOM



Carol Hyde from Whalley in Bloom has written:

We have very recently heard the results of everyone's hard work on behalf of Whalley in Bloom 2015 and I am delighted to tell you that we won Silver Gilt in the National UK Finals and Gold in the Regional Finals!

These results are a tremendous achievement as we were up against the whole of Britain in the Nationals - won by a small town in Northern Ireland - and some very keen opposition in the Regionals. There were only two Regional gold medals awarded in our category (small town, which is a wide category) and we were fortunate to secure one!

So well done everyone and a special thanks to Ribble Valley Rail and Friends of Whalley Railway Station for all your help and support. The judges were most impressed! I haven't seen their reports as yet but will come back to you once we have feedback.

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