

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANCASHIRE'S COMMUNITY RAILWAYS

Issue 25

JULY 2016



Virgin Trains West Coast's Sammy bear poses on platform 2 at Accrington station during the Station to Station, Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.

CRL

Community Rail Lancashire

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Well this is running a bit behind time! It just goes to show how much we all have been doing over the last 6 months in preparation for the new franchise and in setting up a brand new company.

However, the main news took place only a few weeks ago on the 23rd June, when the UK voted by a thin majority to initiate a process that will eventually take the UK (you and me) out of the EU. Whatever the pros and cons of this are, and we all have our views, the EU has been good for railways in the UK and East Lancashire in particular. Without ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) we would not have the eco station at Accrington or the iconic Burnley Manchester Road station. The former was funded through the SusStations (Sustainable Stations) project and the latter by Citizens' Rail. For me it has been a real privilege to work with rail professionals from France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

I have learnt a lot from them and have come to realise that we share many common problems and that together we can develop ways to try and solve them. In France the issue of a declining rural network is a key issue - France has seen significant rural depopulation making it hard to maintain a viable network. The 'Train des Plages' was one way to breathe new life into a dying line which has been pioneered by the Region Pays de la Loire. Their inspirational marketing has given us a mine of ideas to use in our own marketing initiatives. There have also been the two student master classes which were a real eye opener for me. I could go on but will leave it there. I had been looking at other possible EU projects to fund for example the regeneration of Burnley Central station but I am sorry to say that will have to go on hold now. But now time for a picture!



This La Meyze station on a very rural line in France. It is certainly true that the French can teach us a lot about train design but there is much they can learn from us about looking after rural stations. This is the way out from the station after a heavy rain storm (June 2016).

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

Before leaving my European theme (thank goodness I hear being said) many of our franchisees are operated by European companies. Take Northern which is operated by Arriva which just happens to be owned by DB (Deutsche Bahn).

Northern has ordered considerable rolling stock from the Spanish train builder CAF (Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles) and the final cost of the trains could be affected by the weakening pound. By the way CAF made the excellent trains that are operated by Translink, the rail and bus operator in Northern Ireland. Even trains made in the UK rely on many components supplied from the continent. The impact of the 23rd June has barely begun to be seen but without doubt the railway will need to work through the implications.

Full details of all the Citizens' Rail projects can be found by going to their website at www.citizensrail.org/ it is full of useful information and for SusStations go to www1.deutschebahn.com/ecm2-susstation/start. As you will see the website is hosted by DB!!

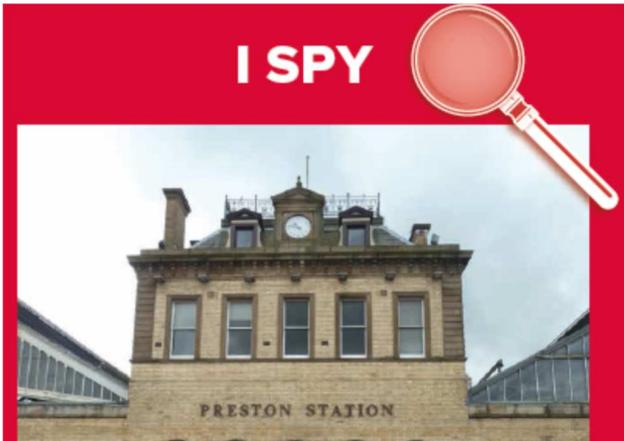
Moving on the other big news is that we have finally given **Community Rail Lancashire** some real legs and turned the name into a not for profit company! It has taken quite a bit of effort especially as it currently employs one person and from 1st September will employ two more. Creating a company, even a not for profit one, takes quite a bit of doing. We have had to look at all the issues that I would normally take for granted such as payroll, insurance, terms and conditions, job specifications, setting up a bank account etc. etc., the list is very long. However, assisted by Simon Clarke it has all been achieved and on time (and dare I say to budget?).

The objects of Community Rail Lancashire Ltd are set out in its Memorandum of Association and can be seen below and also on the CRL website.

- Act as an umbrella body for the four Lancashire Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) namely the Clitheroe Line CRP, the East Lancashire CRP, the South Fylde Line CRP and the West of Lancashire CRP or their successor bodies in name and title;
- Co-operate and/or work with adjoining CRPs and station partnerships;
- Become a delivery agent for regional and national rail projects;
- Promote the development of the Lancashire community rail lines for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors, through a partnership approach;
- Engage with a variety of organisations including, but not exclusively, Network Rail, the Train Operating Company, Rail North, (or their successor bodies in name and title), local government, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), local chambers of trade, the voluntary sector and local charitable trusts, local tourism bodies and rail user groups to promote the development of community rail in Lancashire;
- Promote the development of, and investment in, the stations and train services, including the information provided to the public, on routes covered by the Company and in particular to develop stations as community hubs;
- promote the formation and development of station partnerships;
- expand the programme of school engagement and social outreach especially with disadvantaged communities;
- encourage regeneration, sustainable development; and accessibility in the communities served by the Company;
- promote integrated transport links; and
- carry out any other activity in furtherance of, or ancillary to, the objects of the Company.

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

We are now moving into phase 2 which is to prepare the 'bunker' for the two new employees. Some of you will know that CRL has been awarded funding from ComREG (which stands for the Community Rail Executive Group) to develop and expand its educational engagement programme. We have secured £75k per annum from ComREG for at least three years which not only allows us to employ the additional staff but will enable us to really help develop the links with *'the passengers of the future'* going forward. Helped by Marjorie, Brian, James and Janet we have developed a business plan that covers the full ARN franchise period (ie 9 years plus 1). The plan has been shared with and endorsed by ComREG. So in a few weeks time Emily and Daisy will be joining the CRL team and will be based at the revamped bunker at Accrington station.



A particularly exciting development has been the evolving partnership with Virgin Trains. The new Community Champions at Preston are busy developing a community room on platform 4 and CRL plans to use this for school groups from, in particular, the West Lancashire and South Fylde areas. Already a party of school children from Ormskirk has visited the station. The project has inspired Brian to develop an 'I Spy' booklet to be used by school parties as part of an accompanied tour around the station.

I am delighted to report that this project has been supported by the Designated Line Community Rail Development Fund. At the time of writing the DfT is consulting on the next West Coast franchise. Part of the CRL response will be to ensure that the Station Champions are maintained amongst many other things.

The Bentham Line CRP is looking at the opportunities offered by Lancaster railway station with Virgin as it has large amounts of under used space. I am also informed that there is space at Wigan North Western so there may well be other developments taking place - watch this space.

CRL recently welcomed a party of Chinese primary school children to Accrington. The pupils were on an exchange visit to the UK and stayed with the families of pupils at Padiham Green Primary School.

Brian got the pupils doing some of the exercises normally reserved for English school visitors!! It all worked very well despite the lack of the official interpreter and the children even got a ride on a Pacer from Rose Grove to Accrington - I wonder what they made of this strange train?!



Pupils from the No2 Experimental School, Qingdao, NE China near the Pacific Coast.

To the left is Brian Haworth and to the right, at the rear is Janet Ennis, Deputy Head of Padiham Green.

NOTES FROM THE BUNKER

What else has taken place over the last 6 months? Well we have completed the 'All Together Now' project at Pleasington station, which was the 2015 winner of the Abellio Challenge - more of that on page 7. This has been an exciting and challenging project which has brought together a very diverse range of groups - from young to old, able to disabled to take part. We have also been busy preparing three entries for this years Community Rail Awards which is taking place in Southport.

I said quite a bit about the new franchises in the last RBTL so will hold off in this one. However, suffice to say that plans for the December 2017 timetable are not meeting with full approval. The plan to divert all services from Southport into Manchester Victoria has certainly not gone down well.

Apart from breaking the link to Manchester Airport the evidence compiled by OPSTA (Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers' Association) suggests that a greater number of passengers travel to Manchester Oxford Rd and Manchester Piccadilly. How far changes can be made to the plan is hard to say at this stage BUT it would perhaps have been useful if those charged with developing the Northern Hub timetable had taken time out to ask passengers what they require rather than optimising the movement of metal to places passengers are now saying they would rather not go to. The starting point for any new development should be the passenger and to understand the existing market.



Burscough Bridge was a purpose built rural interchange and followed in the wake of Clitheroe (2000) and Carnforth (2002). Here we see the 3A departing towards Skelmersdale.

The saddest development has been the mothballing of the Burscough Bridge Interchange (BBI). Just 10 years old and now looking for a new owner! As part of the County Councils on-going budget cuts it was inevitable that the axe would fall on BBI given it required a small subsidy to pay all the bills. Thankfully there is interest in the community to re-open it for community use. The exact details are not yet known but I have spoken to 2 potential users. More hopefully in RBTL 26 (fingers crossed).

Richard Watts, July 2016

Views expressed are mine and not necessarily those of Community Rail Lancashire Ltd.

NEW RAIL FRANCHISE

On 1st April 2016 Arriva Rail North started operating the new Northern rail franchise. The franchise will see £1bn being invested to drive improvements and transform rail travel in the north of England.

Arriva are looking to deliver a transformational change for their customers and want Northern to be the communities' local railway and most of all, to leave a lasting legacy for the north of England

What changes are we likely to see over the next few years:

- 2016 to 2018 - existing trains will be refurbished;
- 2017 to 2019 - 2000 extra services will be introduced;
- 2018 to 2019 - brand new state of the art 100 mph trains introduced;
- During 2018 - free on board WiFi on all new and refurbished trains;
- During 2019 - launch of 'Northern Connect' - 12 enhanced routes linking major cities of the north
- During 2019 - 37% increase in capacity

For more details of the new franchisee and train times and tickets visit www.northernrailway.co.uk

Arriva Rail North (ARN) are mandated, as part of the franchise agreement, to contribute £500k each year of the franchise to support the community rail partnerships across their area and Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) is getting its fair share of this funding.

ARN are also providing a Station Adoption Fund of £600k per annum and CRL are receiving £75k for three years to provide support for an expansion of their education programme. The fund will also provide seed corn funding for projects and additional funding for increased staffing at ACoRP HQ.

Arriva Rail North are also providing a Station Improvement Fund of £38m and the majority of this will be spent on stations that fall in the medium and low footfall brackets. The fund will help provide additional self-serve tickets machines, improved information, customer information screens, improved waiting areas and, where needed, CCTV.

DALESRAIL REBRANDED

For over thirty years DalesRail managed with the hand drawn Rail ramblers logo depicting a pair of walking boots until 2009 when the logo was changed slightly to reflect the DalesRail.com brand. At the beginning of 2016 it was decided that DalesRail should be dragged into the modern digital age and a new logo was needed. Designed by Source Creative of Blackburn the new log can be seen below.

DalesRail.com



ALL TOGETHER NOW

All Together Now is an award winning and innovative Community Rail Lancashire project that engaged with college students, primary school children and disadvantaged adults to rejuvenate the rural village railway station at Pleasington.



All Together Now is a community based project focusing on enhancing the waiting environment at Pleasington station, a small rural station on the East Lancashire line 3 miles west of Blackburn town centre.

Located on the Blackpool South to Colne line, and a request only stop, the station is served Monday to Saturdays by an hourly diesel service (two hourly on Sundays) serving Preston and Blackpool South to the west and Blackburn, Burnley Central and Colne to the east.

Pleasington station was in need of some TLC to help restore local pride and create a more suitable gateway to the area. It had a rather underwhelming station environment with old and dirty barrel roofed shelters on each platform, overgrown vegetation, broken fencing and limited seating.

Having secured £2000 from the Abellio Best Practice Challenge in 2015 to support diversity and equality outcomes within a community project, Community Rail Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and local artist Alastair Nicholson set about eliciting support from a variety of groups and organisations with a mix of ages and abilities to form a strong partnership between the railway and the local community that would transform the station environment.



Colourful station signs, wildlife recognition posters, artwork and new branded information boards now brighten up both platforms complimenting extensive vegetation clearance and landscaping works. Bird feeders, nest boxes and bug hotels have also been created and installed to assist wildlife habitats. Visit www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/all-together-now for the full story.

COMMUNITY RAIL EXECUTIVE GROUP (ComREG)

ComREG has been established by Arriva Rail North (ARN's) to oversee and manage its Community Rail initiatives. The group has now met three times and below is a summary of the meeting held on the 13th July, 2016. As will be seen the meeting covers quite a diverse range of topics. So apart from providing a governance framework for ARN's community rail commitments it will also be a useful tool for exchanging information and ideas.

- Karen Booth's contract as Interim Communities & Sustainability Director for Northern ends on Friday 22nd July and Carolyn Watson is taking over the post again on an interim basis.
- Richard Watts, Rail North & Community Rail Lancashire, was appointed as Vice-Chair of ComREG.
- Pete Myers, Stakeholder Manager NE, gave an update on the series of meetings that Northern has arranged with station adopters, both individual and group. The meetings had been arranged to enable Northern to outline its new station adoption policy and to see if any of the single adopters would like to become part of or organise a formal station partnership/friends of group going forward. The meetings were generally well attended. RW asked for clarification of the facilitation role envisaged for CRP's vis-à-vis station adoption groups. This is work in progress and may well depend on the level of 'maturity' of the CRP itself.
- A review of the new Northern structure was outlined. The four Stakeholder Managers will be supported by four Regional Communities & Sustainability Manager (RCSM). The station manager posts have still to be fully allocated so it was recommended that existing contacts should continue to be used for the time being.
- Northern's Community Rail Report and Community Rail Marketing Plan have been formally submitted to the Rail North/DfT partnership. Carolyn Watson asked for any final minor modifications to the CR Report to be notified to her before it goes to print.
- The Community Rail Report sets out the allocation of the 'Community Rail Amount' for the current financial year, which was paid to all CRP's by 30th April, and the next 2 financial years. RW asked how indexation would be applied to the 'CRP Amount' and how the funding to the Barton Line CRP will be reallocated following its re-mapping to EMT (East Midlands Trains).
- All CRP's will have received their Service Level Commitment from Northern. This will need to be agreed and jointly signed by the CRP and Northern.
- Rail passes will be sent out to CRP Officers and Chairs shortly and a small number of bearer passes will be sent out to each registered station group before the end of July.
- When the new RCSM's have been appointed they will be arranging to meet each CRP and to follow up all the leads that have come in for potential new station groups.
- Documents such as the Station Adoption Policy, Station Adoption Fund and Seedcorn Fund are about to be launched by Northern. There is also a commitment to publish these documents in a Members Only section of the Northern website.
- There is a commitment by Northern to hold a Community Rail Conference this year. At the moment this looks like being in October in order not to clash with the DfT's 'Community Rail Market Place' being held in London and the 'Community Rail Awards' & workshop events both of which are taking place late September.

COMMUNITY RAIL EXECUTIVE GROUP (ComREG)

- Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) submitted an update to the meeting on its school engagement work. CRL is receiving additional funding from ComREG to expand its school engagement programme. Two members of staff have been recruited to accelerate delivery and CRL plans to be in contact with all Northern CRP's to work with them to develop their own educational programmes. The funding covers an initial 3 years.
- ACoRP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships) is about to place adverts for a number of new posts some of which are being directly funded by Northern through ComREG. The posts include a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to replace the current General Manager, a Senior Commercial Manager, a Communications & Marketing Manager; an Operations Manager and an Operations Officer and a Tourism & Heritage Officer. The aim is to provide CRP Officers and station groups with much more day-to-day support and access to skills training.
- A questionnaire will come out soon to CRP's from Northern on sustainability. Your views will help shape their sustainability strategy which is a franchise commitment due later in this first year of their franchise.
- Paul Salvesson reported that the new community hub known as the "caboose" is now in place on at Llandeilo on the Heart of Wales Line (see illustration below which shows a recent open day which was attended by Paul Salvesson, Arriva's Community Rail specialist and Marcus Handley from Northern. Paul invited ComREG members to visit the hub which he sees as a low cost way of enhancing facilities at a station. The estimated cost of a 'caboose' is about £30,000. The building is intended to be versatile and can be used by local businesses as an incubator unit, community groups, marketing organisations or as a ticket office.
- The development of Community Business Units will be on the agenda for the October COMREG meeting.



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STATION TO STATION - QUEEN'S 90TH

Station to Station was a cross industry celebration to mark Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday. Community rail partnerships and train operating companies across Britain rallied together and organised events at stations across the length and breadth of the country.

Community Rail Lancashire and its five CRPs celebrated the Queen's 90th in style at Bentham on the Saturday 4th June and at Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley Manchester Road on Saturday 11th June. A number of rail user groups and friends of stations groups got involved at smaller stations which were trimmed up with bunting and members handed out leaflets, timetables and sticks of 'royal rock'.

At the bigger stations Blackburn led the way with cycle rides and guided walks converging on the station to hear a local choir and receive teas, coffees and muffins. At Accrington Virgin Trains West Coast's Sammy Bear made a special visit to the station ([see front cover](#)) to greet the local children and hand out the special rock. Last but not least there was plenty going on at Burnley Manchester Road with goody bags and a singer entertaining the passengers. On Sunday 12th June the Royal Rambler (aka DalesRail) took walkers into the Dales for a great day out in the countryside. All in all it was a great weekend with lots of fun.



Friends of Pendle Station at Nelson



Blackburn concourse in full swing



Intrepid walkers ready to leave Blackburn

NEW SCHOOLS VENTURE

Community Rail Lancashire's educational programme has been given a boost with additional funding being provided by the new Northern rail franchisees Arriva Rail North. The three year funding package has allowed CRL to employ additional staff to expand the programme and this will see CRL's educational work spreading across other areas.

A joint initiative has seen CRL working with Virgin Trains West Coast at Preston to trial visits by primary school children to Preston station. The first school to visit Preston was West End Primary School from Ormskirk.



The school agreed to take part in a trial which saw two classes of children travel by train from Ormskirk to Preston courtesy of Northern and take part in a series of activities with staff from CRL, VTWC (including Sammy Bear) and the British Transport Police at the station.

The first class visited on Friday 1st April 2016 and the day was declared "brilliant!" by the children. Following the second class visit the trial will be evaluated and hopefully moved forward to encompass more West Lancashire and South Fylde schools.

GREAT DAYS OUT BY TRAIN

Community Rail Lancashire is always keen to promote the train as the best way to have some great days out. Lancashire's community rail lines, including some that stray into Yorkshire, are host to some of the finest countryside and places to visit as anywhere else in the country.

The CRPs produce a number of promotional leaflets and recent publications include two leaflets for the West of Lancashire, and one for the Bentham Line and one promoting the new Todmorden Curve service. All the leaflets can be picked up at local rail stations and tourist outlets or can be downloaded from the CRL website using this link - <http://www.communityrailancashire.co.uk/publicity/>.

Train operator Northern has a number of rover and ranger tickets available that cover our community rail lines including the Lancashire Day Ranger and the North West Round Robin. Also available are Duo tickets that offer 'buy one, get one half price' day returns on a number of routes.

Details of these and other tickets can be found on the Northern website at www.northernrailway.co.uk/tickets and can be purchased at all booking offices, on train (where no booking office or ticket vending machine is available) or online.

HUDDERSFIELD RAILWAY CIRCLE

East Lancashire was on the agenda for The Huddersfield Railway Circle on Wednesday 15th June 2016. The group had expressed an interest in visiting the two new stations at Accrington and Burnley Manchester Road.

This was the first time they had visited the stations and they were treated to a guided tour of the hidden areas! Mike Swift who had organised the trip said about Accrington that it was; "a real eye opener" and followed up saying; "those of us involved in supporting and promoting rail in Yorkshire are envious of the support you provide". These comments were echoed by Robert Sugden, Chairman, who said Accrington was "a real revelation and I would like to think the best in the country". Community Rail Lancashire likes to welcome people to Accrington Eco Station and has had visits from many groups from across the UK and Europe and further afield (see page 4).



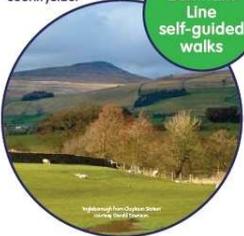
Above we can see the group, accompanied by Richard Watts and Brian Haworth, waiting at Accrington to catch the Todmorden Curve service to Burnley Manchester Rd. The sun was making a rare appearance, although heavy clouds can be seen building behind the group.

RAIL TO TRAIL REBRANDED

 northern

Rail to Trail

A collection of walks for experienced and leisure walkers through spectacular Lancashire and Yorkshire countryside.

 The Bentham Line self-guided walks

To download the featured walks visit communityrailancashire.co.uk/walks/self-guided-walks

 **LASRUG**
Leeds-Lancaster-Manchester Community Rail Partnership
Leeds-Lancaster and District Rail User Group

northernrailway.co.uk

Rail to Trail the series of 12 self-guided walks along the Bentham Line has kindly been rebranded and reprinted by Arriva Rail North.

The Bentham Line provides access to spectacular scenery, so why not combine a trip on the line with a self-guided walk in the surrounding Lancashire and Yorkshire countryside.

The programme of walks has been designed to appeal both to experienced walkers and leisure walkers alike who enjoy a varied but not too demanding walk. The easier walks may be attempted by families with children.

Rail to Trail Walk Guide

The Bentham Line

Walk 3 - Morecambe to Bare Lane



 **LASRUG**
Leeds-Lancaster-Manchester Community Rail Partnership
Leeds-Lancaster and District Rail User Group

The Stone Jetty, Morecambe

WOMEN IN COMMUNITY RAIL

Thursday 30th June saw the official launch of a new national group called 'Women in Community Rail'. 'Women in Community Rail' (WiCR) is the national group recently set up to support ALL colleagues throughout the Community Rail Sector and aims to achieve the following:

- Become recognised as a strategic player across the rail industry and an important consultee
- Share knowledge and expertise to encourage gender balance
- Create a mentoring/support network for all colleagues throughout the industry
- Increase inclusivity within the community rail world
- Encourage younger people to get involved in community rail
- Share best practice across the wider industry and business sector
- Encourage innovation and a can-do attitude.

There is no fee to join the group and signed up members will be:

- Able to access the knowledge and expertise available within the group via the mentoring/support programme
- Asked to offer their skills/specialisms to other members as part of the group's mentoring/support programme or to the group as a whole where practical and appropriate
- Entitled to participate in WiCR events/campaigns
- Helping to shape the future of diversity in Community Rail

As an inclusive group WiCR is very keen to attract a broad spectrum of members, nurturing fundamental diversity and balance in Community Rail. It is all embracing and it must be emphasised that the name 'Women in Community Rail' represents the combined female partnership driving force underpinning the group, but in its broadest sense WiCR is about ALL of us 'Achieving Change Together'.

The group is championed by Alex Hynes, MD, Northern and Kathryn O'Brien, Customer Service Director, TransPennine Express.



The launch event took place on the concourse of the newly refurbished Manchester Victoria station and the gathered crowd listened to speeches from Marion Atkinson (WiCR Chair & **pictured left**), Kathryn O'Brien (Customer Service Director, TransPennine Express), Jan Chaudry-Van der Velde (Managing Director Merseyrail) and Dr. Karen Booth (Interim Community & Sustainability Director, Arriva Rail North).

If you are interested in:

- **Becoming a member of WiCR**
- **Becoming a Champion for the group**
- **Offering your help/support to the group**
- **Finding out more or have any queries**

Please contact - via email: info.wicr@gmail.com

ORMSKIRK MOTORFEST 2016

Attention all petrol heads - on Sunday 28th August Ormskirk town centre will reverberate to the sounds of its fifth annual August bank holiday MotorFest.

A fabulous feast of sounds, smells and automotive design and technology over the last 100 years. From thundering Stock cars to the sweetest sounding Vintage and Classic Automobiles and Motorcycles - see and hear a Formula 1 car start up and run! The show starts at 11:00 with road parades 14:30 to 16.30.

With very limited car parking in Ormskirk town centre the best way to get to the event is by train and Arriva Rail North have agreed to run a special Sunday service on the Preston to Ormskirk line - see the timetable below, and Merseyrail run a 30 minute service on Sundays on their Northern Line into Ormskirk.

MOTORFEST SPECIAL - SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2016

Preston	d	10:15	11:50	13:35	14:52	16:15
Croston	d	10:28	12:03	13:48	15:05	16:28
Rufford	d	10:33	12:08	13:53	15:10	16:33
Burscough Jct	d	10:39	12:14	13:59	15:16	16:39
Ormskirk	a	10:46	12:21	14:06	15:23	16:46
Ormskirk	d	10:52	12:25	14:15	15:35	16:52
Burscough Jct	a	10:56	12:29	14:19	15:39	16:56
Rufford	a	11:02	12:35	14:25	15:45	17:02
Croston	a	11:07	12:40	14:30	15:50	17:07
Preston	a	11:23	12:59	14:46	16:06	17:23

There is a connection into the special service for anyone wanting to get to the event from East Lancashire by using the York to Blackpool North service that departs Burnley Man Rd 11:02, Accrington 11:11 & Blackburn 11:20 arriving Preston at 11:40.

The 16:52 return from Ormskirk connects into the 17:37 departure from Preston back towards east Lancashire.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

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Northern Rail & Network Rail,

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>

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FOREST OF BOWLAND GATEWAYS

A project to encourage more people to visit the Forest of Bowland by rail was unveiled recently at Clapham station in North Yorkshire.

The Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (Bentham Line CRP) working with the Forest of Bowland have branded four stations along the Bentham Line as Gateways to the Forest Of Bowland. Wennington, Bentham, Clapham and Giggleswick stations have all had information panels installed that give prospective travellers details of walks, cycle rides, accommodation and a host of things to do and places to visit.

The event on Clapham station on Tuesday 24th May saw the gateways officially unveiled. Around thirty people from the Bentham Line CRP, Friends of Stations Groups, LASRUG (the local rail user group), the Forest of Bowland and Arriva Rail North (local train operator) gathered to watch as Gerald Townson, Chair of the CRP, explained the project and County Councillor Albert Atkinson (Ribble Valley North East) and Arriva Rail North's Karen Booth unveil the information panel on the station.

A poster has also been produced to help advertise the links between the Bentham Line and the Forest of Bowland and this can be seen by visiting the Forest of Bowland website on www.forestofbowland.com/bentham-line.



Gerald in a talkative mood!

The unveiling

DALESRAIL AND OTHER GUIDED WALKS

Lancashire DalesRail, the service that takes you through the Ribble Valley and the Yorkshire Dales to the Eden valley and beyond is still going strong. There are seven trips left before the end of the season on Sunday 11th September 2016 with four or five guided walks taking place each Sunday, led by the Lancashire Rail Ramblers - visit www.communityrailandlancashire.co.uk/dalesrail-walks/ for full details of the walks programme.

The Lancashire Rail Ramblers working with Community Rail Lancashire also arrange local walks along the Clitheroe and East Lancashire lines (including the new Todmorden Curve route). All the walks start and finish at stations on the routes and are either circular or from a station on one line to another on a different line. Once again full details can be found on the CRL website under the Walks section or by contacting Simon Clarke on info@communityrailandlancashire.co.uk.

GREEN AYRE RISES

On 1st & 2nd May 2016, Lancaster Library hosted 'Green Ayre Rises', an event to mark 50 years since the closure of Lancaster Green Ayre station and the Green Ayre railway line. In 1908 the Lancaster Green Ayre to Morecambe route became the first piece of railway in the United Kingdom to have overhead electrification. The line finally closed during the Beeching era in 1966.



The centre-piece was a 40'x20' model railway of Green Ayre station, which model-maker Jamie Guest and members of the Wakefield Railway Modellers' Society have been building for the last 6 years.



There were displays of archive material relating to railways in the local area, including a series of history posters reflecting the closed stations on the route. These were researched by Gerald Townson, Chair of The Bentham Line Community Rail Partnership and donated to the exhibition by the CRP.

MARTIN MERE PERMISSIVE FOOTPATH

Thinking of things to do during the schools holidays? Interested in wildlife? Then Martin Mere Wetland Centre might be a great day out. The nearest station to Martin Mere is Burscough Bridge on the Manchester to Southport line.

Martin Mere working with West Lancashire District Council and the West of Lancashire CRP have created a new trail from Burscough Bridge Interchange. The well signposted two mile trail is along local footpaths and includes walking over agricultural land so may not be suitable for prams or wheelchairs. It is also advised to wear good walking boots. The trail begins from behind the Manchester platform at Burscough Bridge Interchange and incorporates local tea rooms and the new Martin Mere reedbed walk. The signs are made out of recycled plastic.

Full details about Martin Mere Wetlands Centre can be found on <http://bit.do/ce32J>

RECYCLED PLASTIC STORAGE BENCHES

Community Rail Lancashire, working in partnership with local recycled plastics manufacturer Ark Plastics, have created a new recycled plastic bench that incorporates secure storage. The storage benches are aimed primarily at friends of stations groups to provide additional seating and also allow for storage of tools that are difficult to transport on a regular basis such as brushes, spades, litter pickers and watering cans etc. on their station.



The new storage bench in place at Huncoat



Brian demonstrates the new bench at Langho

Installed as a trial at Huncoat on the East Lancashire Line and at Langho on the Clitheroe Line the storage benches are proving to be popular and other groups are interested in ordering for themselves. Any groups interested in finding out more about the storage benches should contact Brian Haworth on 01254 386579 or brian.haworth@lancashire.gov.uk.

NEW SHELTER FOR GIGGLESWICK

Up until February of this year if you were travelling from Giggleswick in the Lancaster direction and wanted to shelter from the prevailing wind and rain then the only refuge was the shelter on the Leeds bound platform. Passengers then had to cross over to the Lancaster platform as the train approached.

Northern Rail (as was) kindly rectified this problem and a new cantilever shelter has been installed on the Morecambe bound platform. The shelter constructed in anti-vandal materials has been made and installed by Macemain shelters.



EDEN BROWS LANDSLIP

Back in February of this year extreme weather conditions in the north of the Settle Carlisle line caused a section of gorge bank above the River Eden to give way causing ground below the railway to slip 1.5 metres below its normal level in the weeks that followed.

Since then the Settle Carlisle line has been blocked, initially between Appleby and Carlisle, until Northern services began running as far as Armathwaite in June, with buses operating between Armathwaite and Carlisle.

Early in July Network Rail announced a solution that will see repairs to the 500,000-tonne landslip and will see the Settle to Carlisle railway line fully reopen to trains by the end of March 2017,

Engineers are building an enormous concrete and steel, tunnel-like structure that will sit beneath the railway, 70 metres above the River Eden, to provide a stable base across the damaged and unstable ground. Two rows of high-strength piles - steel tubes filled with concrete - will then be driven into the sloping bedrock of the Eden gorge, north of Armathwaite. The hundreds of piles will form a corridor, set into the hillside, on which a 1.5 metre-thick, 100 metre-long concrete slab will then be placed. This slab will form a solid base for the tracks.

This £23 million engineering solution was selected by Network Rail from among six possible options.

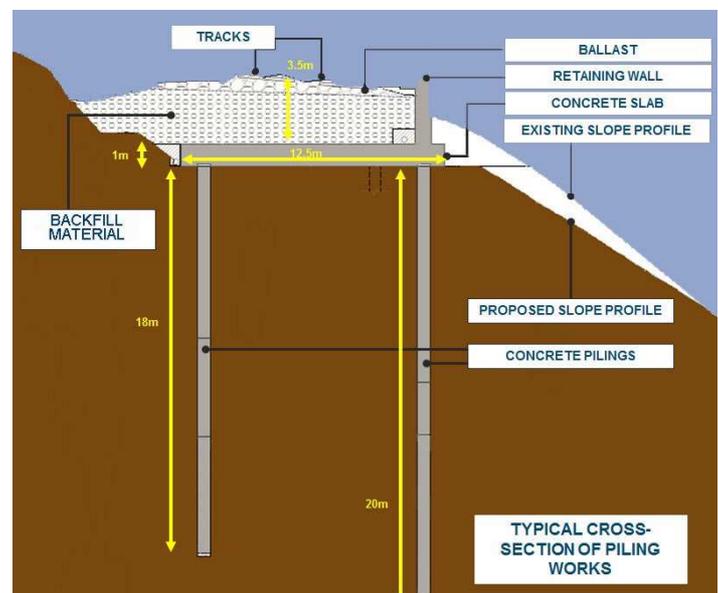
In addition to the solid structure being built beneath the railway, an extensive earthworks project, costing an estimated £5 million, is planned to protect the foot of the bank down to the river. Drainage systems and 'rock armour', which helps prevent erosion, followed by tree replanting will stabilise the land.

Martin Frobisher, Managing Director for Network Rail's London North Western route, said: "The tunnel-like structure we're building will safeguard this section of railway for generations to come. If the land gives way again, the railway will not."

"This is a complex repair job many months in the planning. We are now focused on getting this iconic and much-loved line fully reopened right the way to Carlisle as soon as possible, which according to our programme of work will be by the end of March 2017."

Martin went on to say: "We recognise the impact the closure of the line between Appleby and Carlisle has had on local communities, especially during the summer tourist season, and we're really pleased Northern now have services running as far as Armathwaite. We would remind people that the Settle-Carlisle Line remains very much open for business."

The train service on the Settle - Carlisle line is still operating. Trains are running from Leeds to Appleby and/or Armathwaite and return with connecting rail replacement buses to Carlisle (and return) calling at the intermediate stations - visit the CRL website at <http://bit.do/ccywd> to download the special timetable.



FRIENDS OF STATIONS GROUPS

Even before the community rail movement started in West Lancashire, back in 2000, groups of volunteers have been working on their local railway stations to make them more attractive to passengers.

Community Rail Lancashire has around 80 stations on the seven community rail lines covered by the five partnerships. At least 30 of these stations (37.5%) have some form of group that look after their station. This may be a small 'one man' operation such as Lostock Hall or Bescar Lane through to the much bigger groups such as Ribble Valley Rail that look after at least five stations or the Friends of Bentham and Friends of Croston, who are both at least 10 strong.

The amount of time spent by the volunteers on the stations amounts to great deal funding in kind and this can be used to as match funding in bids to ACoRP's Small Grants Fund and the Designated Community Rail Development Fund.

The three most recent groups to register with the CRP and Arriva Rail North are all on the South Fylde Line. The Friends of Lytham Station are working with Lytham in Bloom to promote the station as a gateway to the town, particularly for the Lytham Festival. The Friends of St. Anne's Stations look after Squires Gate as well as St. Anne's-on-the-Sea and The Friends of Blackpool South have made great strides in improving the station at the 'end of the line'.



Painting in progress!

Blackpool South planters



St. Anne's garden



Friends of Lytham Station

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WWW.TICKETLINE.CO.UK

August bank holiday 2016 sees Colne hosting the award winning Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival for the 27th year. This year will be the 11th year in succession that Community Rail Lancashire has been a sponsor for the event and once again we will be running our legendary blues and ale train from Blackpool South to Colne.

The train departs Blackpool South at 17:21 then at Preston at 18:00 and calls at all stations to Colne arriving in at 19:15 in time for the start of the festival at 20:00. This year's musicians are The Washboard Resonators, a Yorkshire duo of guitar, banjo and washboard who play foot-stomping blues & ragtime. The ale is once again being provided by Moorhouses Brewery based in Burnley and will be available between Blackpool and Colne - at least until it runs out!

There have been some changes to the venues at the festival this year with the British Stage moving from the Sports Centre to the Hippodrome Theatre and the Acoustic Stage moving into the main Municipal Hall. Full details on the Festival website at www.bluesfestival.co.uk.

The Lesser Muni will now become the main refreshment area with the regular bar, food being served and a mini Beer Festival which will feature 10 real ales each day over the four days of the festival.

USEFUL LINKS

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

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