



Newsletter - December 2016



Complete with its new 'We Are Northern' promotional livery Class 158 № 790 visited the Bentham Line on 29th July 2016 at the beginning of Northern's biggest advertising campaign.

© Gerald Townson

In this enlarged issue we learn something of Northern's vision of its renewed rolling stock, we learn of rail community groups and their successes, of a charity initiative on the line, of a bicentenary, of ghost trains, both real and imaginary, and we look back to the service on the line in the 70s and 80s. We visit the Department for Transport. And we have a specially invited article on the importance of railways and other public transport in the development of sport in this country.

The committee of LASRUG wishes all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

BENTHAM LINE SUCCESSES AT THE COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS

Over 400 guests from the world of Community Rail gathered at the Floral Hall in Southport, on 29th September, for the 11th annual ACoRP Community Rail Awards dinner. Amongst them were representative from LASRUG and the Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS), there as guests of the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership.

Following an excellent Lancashire-themed dinner came the awards ceremony and a trio of successes for the Bentham Line. The CRP in association with Stuart Ballard, LASRUG and Northern came 3rd in the Best Marketing Event Category for the original Rail to Trail - 12 Station-to-Station Walks. The walks were developed by Stuart, trialled by LASRUG committee members, and the scheme designed by the CRP and printed by Northern Rail.

FOBS were delighted to come away with two top awards. In the 'It's Your Station' category FOBS were awarded Gold Status for their extensive voluntary work at Bentham station and within the local community. They were one of only eleven groups at community rail stations nationwide to receive the honour. FOBS also came first in the Best Community Engagement Event category for their 'A Day in the Life of Bentham' photographic competition and associated activities. Well done to all concerned!

LASRUG AGM

Our AGM was held on Friday 16th September in Bentham and attended by 20 members. This was fewer than last year; a pity, because members who did not attend missed the opportunity to hear a truly enthusiastic and committed speaker. Sally Buttifant is the community rail partnership officer for the Mid-Cheshire line, which links Chester and Manchester. This is a scenic line with strong similarities to the Bentham Line. Its CRP's aim was, she said, to stimulate tourism and encourage use of the line by schools.

Sally, it was quite evident, was full of enthusiasm for her work, summing up her attitude in the motto 'People, passion and railways'. She is a fervent advocate of women getting involved in community rail through the organisation WiCR.

Turning to the business of the evening, co-chairman Hugh Turner read his annual report (copies enclosed with this newsletter) and the Treasurer reported that the finances were in good health. The existing officers and committee were all re-elected unopposed.

Question time was much taken up with members' speculations about train timings and connectivity when the new timetable comes in in December 2017. The meeting concluded optimistically.



Left to right: Catherine Huddleston, Partnership Officer, John Bearpark, LASRUG President, Gerald Townson, LMCRP Chairman, Simon Clarke, Development Officer, Pete Myers, Regional Stakeholder Manager at Northern, and Stuart Ballard having received their marketing award from Alex Hynes, Managing Director of Northern (right).

OUR MAN AT THE MINISTRY

The Friends of Bentham Station and the Community Rail Partnership were delighted to be invited by Kulvinder Bassi, Community Rail Team Leader at the Department for Transport, to attend this year's Community Rail Market Place event at Great Minster House in the heart of Westminster on 27th September. The theme chosen for the stall was community involvement, which provided an ideal opportunity to present two of our most successful projects from the past two years namely, the 'A Day in the Life of Bentham' photographic competition and the Rail to Trail walking and cycling scheme.



Cleveleys. He, like Kulvinder, is a very keen supporter and promoter of Community Rail initiatives.

Above: Gerald Townson, Chairman LMCRP, in discussion about community involvement on rural lines with the Rail Minister, Paul Maynard MP and DfT Community Rail Team Leader, Kulvinder Bassi.

Right: Part of the Bentham Line Stall at the Community Rail Market Place event with Vicky Cropper from the Great Western Railway community team looking on.



The stall certainly gave 'city dwellers' a real opportunity for a breath of country air and a good sense of community life on a rural railway. Whilst a few of the attendees had visited our line and attractions close by, many more now have a very good idea of what our area and our communities have to offer, as well as the considerable added value Community Rail brings to the railway industry.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT

When Tom Brown's last cricket match at Rugby school finishes prematurely to allow the members of the MCC team to catch their last train back to London, the author, Thomas Hughes, was acknowledging the importance of the innovation of the railways in the 1830s and 40s. From this time onwards, it is possible to see the growing influence of public transport on many aspects of life in Britain, including the development of popular sports. As Lord Grenville remarked on his way to the Liverpool races in 1837, the railways had rendered "all other travelling irksome and tedious by comparison".

There is no doubt the railways allowed the upper classes to follow racing all over the country as well as to widen their involvement in the more prestigious hunts. Horses could be transported across the country, making the sport of racing a national one by the later 19th century. The grouse moors and salmon rivers of Scotland and Northern England became much more accessible to the wealthy field sportsmen of Southern England. The railways were not greeted with undiluted joy by the hunting set. Some of the greater landowners successfully opposed plans to put a line through their land because it was feared the trains would interfere with the hunting. R.E. Surtees, the editor of *The Field* magazine, suggested directors of railway companies should give instructions to engine drivers to slacken speed when they became aware of a hunt in progress in the vicinity. There are examples of drivers stopping their trains to avoid any possible accident such as when a stag was chased across the line near Brentford.

Apart from racing and hunting, the other sport to benefit from the railways in the early years was cricket. The 1840s and 50s witnessed the popularity of the touring professional teams, beginning with William Clarke's all-star team that played up and down the country in front of large crowds; doing much to spread the popularity of the game and prepare the way for the eventual introduction of county cricket. Clarke's successor in promoting such matches around the country was George Parr and he brought his all-star team to Kendal three times in the 1860s. In 1864, the London and North-Western railway advertised cheap trains to the match from Burton and Holme, Milnthorpe, Oxenholme, Staveley, Burneside and Windermere. Similarly in the 1890s, the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway company issued advertisements that drew attention to the special trains being arranged for the football fans. For Saturday, February 17th 1894, the following advertisement appeared:

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway
In Connection With Football Matches, Excursion Tickets Will Be Issued As Follows:
*From Colne, Nelson, Brierfield, Burnley (Bank Top) and Burnley Barracks to Liverpool,
Bolton to Darwen,
Blackburn and Mill Hill to Blackpool.*

The development of the railways did not immediately lead to the involvement of thousands of spectators travelling to watch their favourite performers. For much of the 19th century, the working classes were very limited in their ability to pay to travel, even at 3rd class rates, and it was generally the upper and middle classes that were able to take advantage of the ease of travel afforded by the railways. In 1879, when Darwen was drawn away against the Old Etonians, who played at Crystal Palace in London, in the Fourth Round of the FA cup, they needed a local appeal to raise money for expenses, notably the cost of the rail fares; even their opponents, the Old Etonians, offered £5 to help meet their costs.

By the late 19th century many of the more popular sports were being organised and administered on a national basis. Without the railways it is difficult to see how the Football League could have been successful before the post-war development of motor transport. It certainly took some time for the mass participation of the working classes as spectators but it ensured teams could travel the hundreds of miles required to fulfil their fixtures. By the 1880s the FA cup final had become established as an event to be attended in London for football fans, and special trains with cheap return fares ensured even the ordinary fan could travel on this special occasion. The establishment of the Crystal Palace as the venue for the final in 1895 meant many thousands of fans were able to attend the final (in 1901, 110,000 spectators attended). The relative dominance of Northern and Midlands clubs until the 20th century meant dozens of special trains being laid on to transport the hordes of fans overnight before the final. In 1909 it cost 10s 9d to travel from Oldham to London to watch Manchester United beat Bristol City in the FA cup final. Although this was a lot for many working class men, it could be saved, often in supporters' club schemes, and clearly the cup-final was an annual treat for the fans. There is little doubt the annual visits of the northern football fans were greeted with many reservations by those resident in and around the capital. With more than a hint of "sour grapes", a newspaper reporter covering the 1883 FA cup final victory of the mill workers of Blackburn Olympic against the mighty Old Etonians, described the Blackburn fans as a "northern horde of uncouth garb and strong oaths".

Many football clubs were only too conscious of the importance of good rail connections and established their grounds as close as possible to railway stations. Manchester United took advantage of the nearby station at the Lancashire county cricket ground when establishing their Old Trafford ground. When Arsenal moved its ground to Islington in 1913, the chosen site, Highbury, was close to the main stations at Euston and Kings

Cross, thus widening the base of support. An important reason for the newly formed Chelsea FC (1905) to choose Stamford Bridge as the home ground was the railway station next to the main entrance to the ground. As railway companies came to see the logic of providing "soccer specials", possibly at reduced rates, on a Saturday afternoon and both pay and leisure time improved for the working classes, more spectators began to use the railways to travel to away matches. Even so, reports of the early years of rail travel to sporting events are full of complaints. The opening day of the new Football League season in 1888, saw Accrington Stanley arrive over an hour late to play Everton. When Lancaster rugby club travelled to play Aspull in 1892, they found they had to walk from Wigan station over two and a half miles in melting snow and slush to reach the ground.

Continued overleaf.

NEWCASTLE to CARLISLE RAILWAY

Carlisle Races WRESTLING.

A SPECIAL TRAIN

Will leave the NEW CARLISLE STATION on the morning of

Wednesday, July 1st,

At 11:30 AM. On the 1st of July, 1894. The train will leave Newcastle at 11:30 AM. and will arrive at Carlisle at 1:30 PM. The train will be composed of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class coaches. The train will be run by the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company. The train will be run by the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company. The train will be run by the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company.

First Class	11s.
Second Class	8s. 6d.
Third Class	5s.

JOHN ADAMSON,
Clerk to the Company.

Printed by William Douglas, Station Office, King Street, Newcastle.

LOCAL RAILWAY SOCIETIES' EVENTS



The Stephenson Locomotive Society

The society was founded in 1909 and is a leading society for the study of railways in Britain and abroad.

Meetings Programme

Meetings are held on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the St. John Ambulance Centre, off Sandes Avenue, Kendal, LA9 4LL. Chairman, Alan Wilson. Telephone: 01539 725100. Secretary, Eric Bartlett. Email: ericjbartlett@btinternet.com or look on the website: www.stephensonloco.org.uk

5/01/17 - South African Railways: Martin Elson.

An illustrated account of Martin's travels in South Africa.

2/02/17 - Open evening.

2/03/17 - My Railway Career and Hobby: Michael Ellis.

An illustrated account of Michael's work and scenes from the Lancaster area.

6/04/17 - Railways Around Preston: Michael Norris

Part 2 of Michael's coverage of the Preston area.

The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

The RCTS is a leading organisation for people interested in all aspects of railways past and present and is highly respected by both professional railway people and enthusiasts, a position it has held since its formation over 80 years ago.

RCTS

Meetings Programme

Meetings are held on Fridays at 7.30pm at the Royal Station Hotel, Market Street, Carnforth, LA5 9BT. Secretary, Alan Sattenstall. Telephone: 01524 34840. Website: www.rcts.org.uk

6/01/17 - Photographs and Video Night: Contributions welcome.

Open evening.

3/02/17 - European Video Night- Denmark and North & East Germany:

Colin Kennington

3/03/17 - The Revival of Blackpool Trams: Jane Cole and Brian Lindop.

7/04/17 - Changing Times: Steam, Diesel and Preservation in South Wales:

Stuart Warr.

5/05/17 - More American Wanderings - Heading East: Gordon Davies.

BLOOMING BARE

The friends group at Bare Lane continue to enhance the station and is involving local school children, as David and Liz Alexander who motivate the group report:



Great Wood School reception class contributed some wonderful paintings together with the sweet peas and beans that they had grown to enhance Bare Lane station this summer. We had emphasised the importance of bees, birds and butterflies in all our planting at the station and the imagination of the children encapsulated these themes. 'Bee Happy' was particularly appropriate! Safety also played a part in their paintings, urging people to keep away from the platform edge.

Both paintings and plants were kept going well into October and we hope to continue the connection with this local school next year, working with a fresh group of 6 year olds! The school wanted to encourage their young children to be aware of the community and the local environment beyond the school gates, and this was a perfect project for them to be involved with. They certainly contributed to the Gold Award achieved at Bare Lane in 2016.

Bare Lane Station was given a Gold Award and a runners-up cup for Community Challenge in the 2016 Morecambe in Bloom competition.



SUBSCRIPTIONS REMINDER 2016/17

The LASRUG annual membership remains at £7.00. Subscriptions fell due on the date of the LASRUG AGM, 17th September 2016.



**Coffee Mornings
at Bentham Town Hall
10am to 11.30am**

**Friends of Bentham Station
Saturday, 28th January 2017**

**LASRUG
Saturday, 25th February 2017**



TIMETABLES ON THE LEEDS-MORECAMBE LINE

Part 8: The 1970s & 80s

In May 1975 British Rail replaced its five summer and winter regional timetables with a national timetable, lasting 12 months, (with supplements in October and January containing amendments). At last all the stations between Leeds and Morecambe were shown in the same timetable. All trains were operated by diesel multiple units, which facilitated the various reversals required. The timetable shows trains running to and from Heysham to connect with Isle of Man ferries, but with a warning that these sailings might cease to operate; as they did before the timetable came into effect. Heysham disappeared from railway timetables for the time being.



By 1975 there had been a small improvement in the immediate post-Beeching service of six weekday trains each way. There were now seven trains eastbound and eight trains westbound Mondays to Fridays. Departures from Leeds were at 7-55, 9-15, 10-57, 14-15, 15-35, 17-12 and 21-05. There were no main-line platforms at Shipley at this time, but none of these trains made the reversal into the platform there used by trains from Bradford, which was the procedure with Leeds to Skipton local trains. Each was preceded by a connecting train from Bradford Forster Square to Skipton, which served Shipley. The 7-55 from Leeds called only at Bingley, Keighley, Skipton and Carnforth; it arrived at Morecambe at 9-49. Other trains stopped at all stations except Shipley between Leeds and Morecambe, with an overall journey time of 2hrs 25 mins. Lancaster is not mentioned – for connections at Carnforth you had to turn to the local Lancaster-Morecambe-Barrow timetable later in the book. On Saturdays the now diminishing holiday traffic was catered for by two additional trains, during a brief ‘summer’ season. The first left Bradford Forster Square at 8-28 and called at Shipley, Bingley, Keighley, Skipton and Carnforth, arriving at Morecambe at 10-07. The other started in Sheffield, picked up at Leeds (8-40) and Skipton only, arriving at Morecambe at 10-21.

Eastbound, most trains did call at Shipley, by running through the Bradford-bound platform, and then reversing on to the Leeds line. The first left Morecambe at 6-48 for Bare Lane, Carnforth, Giggleswick, Hellifield and then all stations to Leeds, arrive 8-46. Seven all-stations trains followed, leaving Morecambe at 7-35, 10-03, 12-14, 14-15, 16-45, 18-25 and 19-35. The last of these omitted the Shipley stop. All had connecting trains to Bradford from Keighley. On Saturdays there were two additional limited-stop trains during the brief ‘summer’ season, leaving Morecambe at 10-45 and 11-57.

Sundays saw only two trains each way. From mid-June to the first Sunday in September, the first left Leeds at 8-30 and ran to Bradford Forster Square, where it reversed before continuing all stations to Skipton, and then to Gargrave, Giggleswick, Clapham, Carnforth, Lancaster and Morecambe (arrive 11-09). During the rest of the year it left Leeds at 8-49 and called at Shipley via the reversal mentioned above. It then stopped at Bingley, Keighley, Skipton, Carnforth and Lancaster, arriving at Morecambe at 11-04. The second train left Leeds at 15-53, made the same stops and arrived at Morecambe at 17-58. There were no connections from Bradford for either of these.

The first eastbound train on Sundays left Morecambe at 12-25 and ran via Lancaster to Carnforth, Skipton, Keighley, Bingley and Leeds (arrive 14-30). There was no connection to Shipley and Bradford. The next train was the 19-33 from Morecambe. This also ran via Lancaster to Carnforth; during the ‘summer’ weeks it called at Giggleswick, Clapham and Gargrave, and all year continued to Skipton, Keighley, Bingley and Shipley, where it reversed on the Bradford line before going on to Leeds. There was no Bradford connection. From mid-June to the first Sunday in September there was a third eastbound train: this left Morecambe at 20-13, and stopped at Lancaster and Carnforth before running non-stop to Skipton, then all stations to Bradford (reversal) and Leeds.

In 1979 a platform was built on the down main line at Shipley, which meant that trains from Leeds to Skipton and beyond could call there without the need to reverse. In the following year re-signalling made it possible for trains towards Leeds to cross over and stop at this platform. When the line was electrified in 1992 a platform was built on the Leeds-bound line. At the same time the tracks on the Bradford-Skipton side of the triangle were reduced from two to one. This simplified the electrification work, and had limited effect on capacity: the sharp curves through the two original platforms meant that passenger trains were not allowed to be in both platforms at the same time.

In subsequent years, Morecambe trains became extensions in alternate hours of the hourly Leeds-Skipton service. These left Leeds at 35 minutes past the hour, with the last at 19-35 (replacing the former 21-05 ‘boat train’). Departure from Morecambe was at 22 minutes past.

Continued on page 18.

Above left: A Class 111 DMU heading westbound from Skipton with a stopping service to Morecambe.

Right: Class 144 DMU stands at Morecambe having just arrived from Leeds, in October 1988.



LANCASHIRE STATIONS CHALLENGE



On Friday 16th September local fundraiser David Chandler, in an attempt to raise money for St John's Hospice Lancaster, set off on a challenge to visit all 62 railway stations in Lancashire within 24 hours. True David had 'previous form' in this sort of exercise having succeeded in visiting all 270 London underground stations in less than 21 hours, so 62 in Lancashire should be a doddle for him. But was it? Read on.

As our line has several Lancashire stations some, such as Heysham, with one train a day, rather difficult to visit, the LASRUG committee decided to support David's venture with a £50 donation to the hospice.

Thus on that morning I found myself standing on Wennington station with a cheque to hand to David, should he appear on the 11.20 arrival from

Morecambe. He duly arrived accompanied by Mike Stevens of Radio Lancashire. So everything was going well so far? Well not quite, they had already had to start off earlier than expected – before 6 a.m. – due to the anticipated cancellation of one of the trains they intended to use. But, otherwise, so far so good.

We had chosen Wennington to meet as it is close to the Yorkshire border giving David no option but turn round and go back the way he had come. So, having presented David with his cheque, we crossed the bridge to the Westbound platform. En route I selected a leaflet from the handy CRP rack and was able to explain to David, and any good Lancashire folk who may have been listening, the selection of station to station walks we were now promoting on the line.

On the Westbound platform I was surprised to meet Cat Smith the MP for Lancaster, who had popped down to meet David and advise us that Wennington was the only other station in her constituency, apart from Lancaster itself, a fact I had not previously known.

The train arrived on time. However, as Mike was waiting for a singer to conclude his slot before continuing our interview, I joined the train with them and was able to advise David et al that had he been making his challenge after December next year he would have had a greater selection of trains to chose from due to improvements proposed by the new Northern operator - Arriva Rail North. I left the train at Lancaster leaving David and Mike to continue to Heysham in pursuit of their challenge.



Having left David sufficient time to catch up on lost sleep I contacted him to see how the rest of his day had gone. There had been some problems. David's choice of date had not proved the best as, due to a landslide and derailment at Watford, Virgin trains were being delayed. This resulted in a three-minute change at Preston, and a four-minute change of trains and stations at Wigan - both made - but still leaving one station Burnley Manchester Road impossible to visit within the 24 hours.

However, with a bit of creative accounting, but still within the challenge rules, David realised that due to his early start he could revisit some of his early stations late in the 24-hour period thus retiming the start and still visiting all 62 (including Burnley) in the required 24 hours; in fact 23 hours 28 minutes.

Sponsorship raised approximately £1,000 towards the Hospice. Well done David.

Richard Rollins

LEEDS-LIVERPOOL CANAL BICENTENARY



2016 is the two hundredth anniversary of the completion of the Blackburn-Wigan section of the Leeds-Liverpool canal which enabled boats to traverse the whole route between the two cities for the first time.

The history of the canal's construction along a somewhat circuitous route - a considerable achievement involving some impressive locks - is complex, work having started as long ago as 1770. The section of the canal from Leeds, (and Bradford), to Skipton and Gargrave, which can be glimpsed from Leeds-Morecambe trains, had in fact been completed by 1777 and similar rapid progress had been made from Liverpool towards the Wigan coalfield.

The middle sections caused more problems and the final gap was bridged by an agreement with the Lancaster Canal – a part of whose northern reaches can also be seen from our line between Borwick and Carnforth - to use some of its

existing line of route between Chorley and Wigan. The canal operated successfully, even after the advent of railways, as a conveyor of bulky items such as coal, wool, stone and sugar. It was only after the First World War that competition from road transport and the reduction of canal side industries caused a steady decline in the canal's fortune's and the carriage of goods ceased in the 1960's.

Like other surviving canals the Leeds and Liverpool has seen a resurgence in use for leisure activities and is managed by the Canal and River Trust (canalrivertrust.org.uk), the successor to the British Waterways Board. There is also the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Society (www.llcs.org.uk) which owns the canal boat Kennet which in October recreated the inaugural journey from Leeds to Liverpool. Congratulations to all concerned in keeping our canal heritage alive.

GHOST TRAINS, REAL AND IMAGINED

Oxford English Dictionary: *ghost train* - a train of cars at a funfair that travels through dark tunnels in which there are ghostly (spectral/shadowy) effects; a train that runs during the night to keep the track clear in cold weather.

Autumn to Midwinter is the dark and misty time of year, a time when people's thoughts have long turned towards ghosts, spirits and the supernatural. Ghosts and trains seem for one reason or another to fit very well together. The genre of ghost stories developed in early Victorian England and followed on from the Gothic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sheridan le Fanu, Charles Dickens, and his circle, were instrumental in popularising stories which could frighten as well as entertain and which could be enjoyed on long winter evenings. This development coincided with the growth of the railway network which introduced new opportunities for those with a fertile imagination – dark tunnels and cuttings, high viaducts, lonely stations, dimly lit trains, wraith-like clouds of steam, the possibility of fearful accidents. Turner's picture, *Steam, Rain and Speed* paints an exciting but somewhat ambiguous view of the new Railway Age. Travel by rail also brought new memories and left new imprints on the human psyche – meetings and farewells, fleeting encounters, excitement and apprehension, missed opportunities, spiritual parallels, the contrast between industrial, city, rural and mountain landscapes.

So it was inevitable that ghost stories and tales of mystery, quite apart from Charles Dickens' classic railway ghost story *The Signalman*, of 1866 would include many scenes set in or near trains. Railway travel would also foster a great deal of philosophical musing, by poets in particular – such as Thomas Hardy - perhaps a way of seeking to exorcise their own personal ghosts. There are many songs dealing cathartically with traumatic events on the railway, especially in the USA, such as *Casey Jones*. Emile Zola's novel *La Bete Humaine* ends with a remarkable passage about a runaway driverless train. Wartime use of railways for troop transportation and for mass deportation would give an extra chill to accounts about these events whether in words, film or music - Steve Reich's haunting *Different Trains* is a good example. Mystery films such as *The Lady Vanishes* and *The Woman in Black* employ railway locations to good effect. The real railway network meanwhile accumulated numerous incidents with ghostly overtones – often linked to past tragedies.

As the railway system moved from being a universally dominant transport mode to a much more streamlined, specialist network it began to create its own nostalgic ghosts which John Betjeman, amongst others, has captured so well. So we get ghost stations – famous on the London Underground - junctions, signal boxes, tunnels, depots, marshalling yards – sad relics of a vibrant and useful past. On our own line, Wennington Junction and Carnforth East Junction signal boxes were for several years 'switched' out and could be said to have achieved ghost status. The former of these two boxes was relocated to the preservation project on the Fleetwood branch whose junction with the Preston-Blackpool line at Poulton-le-Fylde is ironically and currently an excellent example of a ghost junction – totally intact, including signals, but unused and overgrown.

Stockport to Stalybridge		
Train times		
Fridays 28 May to 10 December 2010		
Stockport	depart	09.22
Reddish South		09.26 (Stops on request only)
Denton		09.31 (Stops on request only)
Guide Bridge		09.43
Stalybridge	arrive	09.49
This train is operated by Northern.		
There is no service from Stalybridge to Stockport.		
Trains do not run on this route on other days.		

My own first encounter with a ghostly railway was with the historically important but now totally dismantled Bolton and Leigh Railway which as a child I had been told had just been closed. I was therefore amazed to see one evening two light steam engines busily heading towards Bolton. The line had in fact closed to regular passenger traffic in 1954 but remained open for occasional passenger trains and for freight for a number of years and thereafter became a source of youthful fascination. I sadly observed its gradual decline and eventual destruction over a fifteen year period.

In this area the Glasson Dock, Pilling, Lakeside, Sandside, Warcop and Ingleton branches are examples of lingering ghostly decline. But we do, as Michael Williams has described in his book *The Trains Now Departed* still have ghost trains regularly running on our network today, not quite the OED definition quoted above but serving a similar purpose and allowing a return from the dead. (The train will come tomorrow year, The signals clamber into signs, The gates will open on the track, Where weeds have grown among the lines..... Alan Brownjohn.)

Railway legislation dictates that a railway operator cannot withdraw a passenger rail service from a stretch of line or an individual station without going through a statutory process involving public consultation. Politicians have long been aware that proposed railway closures can generate huge and well organised opposition – the Settle and Carlisle case being the most famous example. For a number of years therefore they have not pursued the closure process option except in exceptional and unavoidable cases. Some services and stations therefore survive by a ghostly thread – their operators make no pretence of providing a useful service but as the lines they use are still required for freight or diversionary purposes the Department for Transport are happy to see a skeletal service, often with very few passengers, continue. Our own example of this is the continuing use by one Morecambe-Leeds service each day except Saturdays of the Hest Bank to Bare curve. This was the route used for some years following the closure of the Wennington-Green Ayre route. There may be some pathing benefits from this device – and different trains have been used over the years to provide the statutory service – but there has been no attempt to use the curve to provide any sort of meaningful timetable between Carnforth and Morecambe. Other Northern examples include Stockport-Stalybridge – one train a week in one direction only! ; Runcorn-Helsby – one direction



Ghost train approaching Teesside Airport.

only, but a regular service might yet be restored; Leeds-Goole direct – one train each way daily; and the Gainsborough Central-Brigg line – 3 trains each way on Saturdays only. Without Local Transport Authority support or a positive marketing approach by the franchise operator, such situations are likely to continue. So you do not have to go to Blackpool Pleasure Beach to sample a ghost train and at least the 'real' ones do keep the lights on!

David Alder

BOOK REVIEWS - CHRISTMAS READING

Following David Alder's article on current 'ghost trains', here are two books on 'real' railway ghosts.

Shadows in the Steam: The Haunted Railways of Britain by David Brandon and Alan Brooke. (The History Press 2009)

This fascinating volume charts some of the strange and unexplained hauntings across Britain's railway network. Based on historical and anecdotal accounts, the book is a collection of the mysterious, the spine-chilling and the weird.

From Tapton House, Chesterfield, where the ghost of George Stephenson, the 'father' of railways, apparently asks (in a Geordie accent, of course) for a cup of tea to the spirit of a Victorian lady who lurks in the subway at Wakefield Kirkgate station there are visitations of every kind. The book surveys dozens of examples county by county. (Lincolnshire seems to be home to more spooks than anywhere else.)

There is the grim story of 'Fair Becca' at Clayton west of Bradford, the ghostly signalman of Middlesbrough and the sinister shunting yard at Grimsby that repelled all who had to work there.

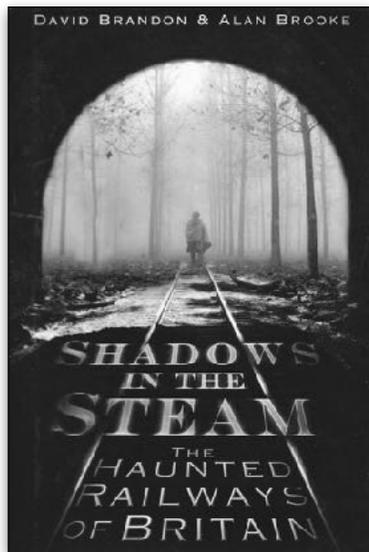
Glasgow's underground, the so-called 'Clockwork Orange', has its share of the curious and the unexplained, as does the London Underground, which has chapters to itself. Entwistle on the Bolton - Blackburn line has two separate manifestations – an ethereal boy and a boggart, a malevolent spirit taking either human form or that of a dog, which is an omen of death.

Here you will find haunted stations, trains on lines on which there is no longer a service and lots of ghosts, frequently at the scene of violent crimes. Tunnels especially in the earlier days of railways were dodgy places both for those who worked on them and for those who travelled through them. Not surprisingly, therefore, they appear repeatedly as the sites of spectral events, not least Box Tunnel, Brunel's famous masterwork on the London - Bristol line, where right from the start of work there were reports of inexplicable occurrences, since so much drama and tragedy was involved in its construction.

There are also sections on railway ghosts in literature and film, which leads nicely to...

The Ghost Now Standing on Platform One, ed. Richard Peyton (Souvenir Press 1990)

This anthology, subtitled 'Phantoms of the Railway in Fact and Fiction', supplements nicely 'Shadows in Steam', since it adds to the latter's non-fiction catalogue a wealth of railway ghost tales by celebrated writers guaranteed to intrigue those who like their spines chilled at Christmas time.



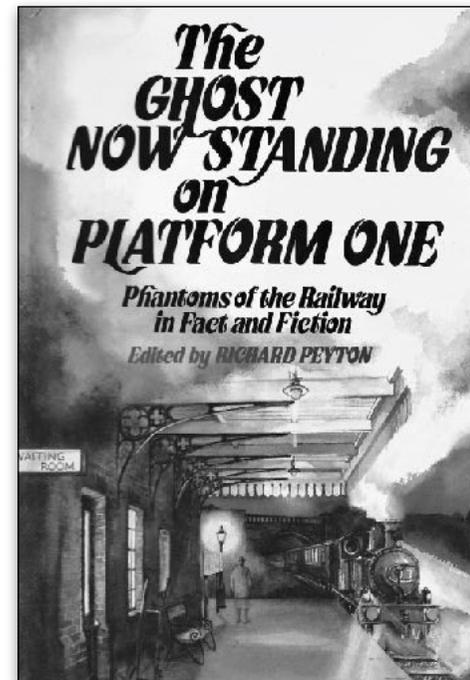
Here are stories by Rudyard Kipling, Charles Dickens (who tasted railway tragedy personally), Arnold Ridley (of 'The Ghost Train' play and film and 'Dad's Army' fame), Alfred Noyes, SF writers Ray Bradbury and John Wyndham, Richard Hughes, F.Scott (Great Gatsby) Fitzgerald and many more.

L.T.C.Rolt, the author of 'Red for Danger' offers 'The Garside Fell Disaster', where the setting clearly echoes the Settle & Carlisle line.

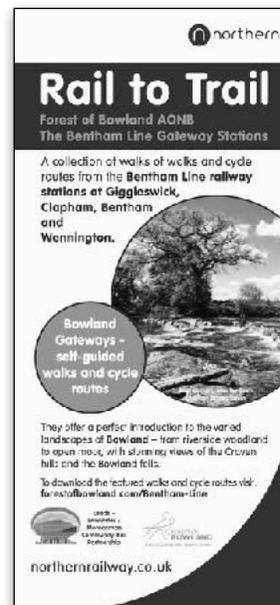
The editor is an enthusiastic railway traveller and collector of ghost stories. He ends a book of 322 pages with 'the shortest railway ghost story in the world' - just 29 words long!

It's a splendid collection in nice clear print with attractive engraved decorations as a bonus.

Though both of these books may be out of print, there are plenty of copies available on line at, abebooks.co.uk, addall.com, amazon.co.uk or on ebay.co.uk



JSW



RAIL TO TRAIL - FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB GATEWAY STATIONS

Enclosed with this issue is a copy of the newest of our ever-growing family of leaflets accompanying the award-winning and increasingly popular Rail to Trail scheme.

Following on from the launch of the Bowland Gateway Stations at Wennington, Bentham, Clapham and Giggleswick, and installation of large Bowland information panels at these stations, the leaflet complements the station information and will be distributed across the Northern network.

This is the first of the leaflets to encompass cycling routes, as well as self-guided walks, and focuses on day visits to the AONB.

Following its introduction earlier this autumn, the new display of all the Bentham Line literature in the booking hall at Skipton station is proving to be popular and requires regular top-ups.

TIMETABLES ON THE LEEDS-MORECAMBE LINE

- Continued from page 11

In 1981 BR formally proposed closure of the Settle-Carlisle line; the following year the weekday Leeds-Carlisle service was reduced to just two trains each way, and connections to Carlisle and Glasgow were offered via Lancaster. To make the journey more attractive to through passengers, a number of trains were speeded up; these ran non-stop between Skipton and Carnforth, and then via Lancaster to Morecambe. Lancaster connections at Carnforth were now shown for the other trains. Smarter diesel units were drafted in for the new, faster trains. As to be expected, there was outcry from people who used the intermediate stations (most noisily from Bentham), whose service was now much reduced, with some long gaps. Westbound, all-stations trains left Leeds at 8-25, 10-35, 14-35, 17-12 and 19-35; limited-stop trains left at 12-10 and 16-05. Towards Leeds, there were all-stations trains leaving from Morecambe at 7-05, 9-19, 11-10 and 17-23; limited stop trains left at 12-37, 14-35 and 19-31.

The two Sunday trains each way stopped at all stations; these left Leeds at 9-10 and 15-05, and Morecambe at 14-05 and 19-08. During the 'summer' weeks the first westbound and second eastbound trains ran via Bradford.

Protests were noted, and from the following May stops at Giggleswick and Bentham were made by the 15-53 and 19-53 'fast' weekday trains from Morecambe - but there were no equivalent stops westbound. The two 'fast' trains from Leeds now left at 10-05 and 12-35. In May 1984, Class 31 diesel locomotives hauling five coaches took over the faster trains and the all-stations 17-12 from Leeds; these all ran to and from Lancaster (with a connection to Morecambe), but started from and returned to Hull. The 17-12 all-stations train was also loco-hauled and started from Hull - this now terminated at Lancaster. The return workings from Lancaster at 13-39, 16-02 and 19-35 all ran through to Hull.

In 1987 the experiments were over. Ron Cotton (while officially overseeing the closure of the S & C) had introduced more Leeds-Carlisle trains, and our seven trains reverted to diesel multiple-unit operation, running between Leeds and Morecambe and stopping at all stations via Lancaster. The importance serving Lancaster had now been realised. The Sunday service continued to be three in winter and four in summer. Although designed for use on suburban lines, Class 142 and 144 four-wheeled 'Pacer' units were now appearing on some trains.

The announcement in April 1989 of the saving of the Settle-Carlisle line was greeted with justified jubilation, but we knew that this was likely to have a negative impact on the service to Morecambe. In May 1990 our fears were fulfilled. The large car park at Giggleswick station reminds us still of British Rail's intention that this should return to its original role as the station for Settle.

John Bearpark



Passing Settle Junction on 5th May 1984, a Class 108 DMU heads the 10.05 Leeds to Morecambe.

NEW-LOOK NORTHERN

Over the past few months Northern have taken initial steps towards refurbishing the rolling stock they will be retaining.

A 3-car Class 158 diesel unit (158 752) has been partially refurbished and recently came out of the workshops in the new Northern livery.

Internally, new LED lighting



has been installed to give a brighter environment. New carpets, seat cushions and covers, a modern passenger information system, dedicated wheelchair spaces with 'call-for-aid' facilities and improved toilet areas with baby changing facilities all add to the improved travel experience. Free passenger WiFi and other enhancements are still to come.

The Class 158 has entered service on the York-Leeds-Bradford-Blackburn-Preston-Blackpool route and passenger reactions to the enhanced design will be monitored carefully.

Northern is fulfilling its commitment to obtain stakeholder and passenger views on design elements of its new rolling stock and refurbishment initiatives. It recently held a series of 'seat roadshows' across major stations in the north to help determine the best design for new train seating. LASRUG members were amongst thousands who tried out the three designs at Leeds station. Seat chosen, they have now begun their consultation on the design for the seat covers.

We are sure that you would all echo LASRUG's and the LMCRP's requests for at least this quality of rolling stock on our line.

Photographs courtesy of Arriva Rail North.



STATION TO STATION ACROSS YORKSHIRE - PART TWO

The second of the Mytholmroyd and Bentham Twinning celebrations was arranged to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Friends of Bentham Station, held at the station on 9th September. Guests from Mytholmroyd Station Partnership, Northern, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships Arriva, the British Transport Police Community Rail Lancashire and LASRUG, along with local Mayors and councillors, joined FOBS and CRP members for the celebrations. The visitors were warmly welcomed to Bentham by the Mayor, Gareth Adams.

On behalf of Northern, Paul Barnfield, Eastern Region Director, referred to the high level of commitment from the volunteers of the groups to ensure projects happened. He hoped that this approach would extend to other community groups who adopt stations for the benefit of their communities. Included in the new franchise is £40m investment for the stations, with the majority directed to smaller stations. Stations along the Bentham line are recommended to receive new LED lighting, customer information screens, video help points and other improvements.

Sincere thanks were offered to Bob Sloan of FOBS who carved two superb slate plaques for the stations and to Sue Mitchel of Mytholmroyd who created a beautiful statuette of 'Hannah of the Dales' which was presented to FOBS on an engraved oak plinth.

The opportunity was also taken at the celebrations to formally unveil the 'A Day in the Life of Bentham' art panel on the footbridge. New visitors to Bentham, Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain and Emily Elliot, the new-in-post education officers at Community Rail Lancashire were called upon to do the unveiling.



Above: Paul Barnfield, Area Director-East at Northern, Gerald Townson, Chairman of FOBS and Geoff and Sue Michell of Mytholmroyd Station Partnership with one of the two twinning plaques.

Below: Everyone gathered for a 'reet good do' at Bentham. *Photographs courtesy Paul Bigland.*

