



## Newsletter - September 2016



Leaving Skipton, Class 142 'Pacer' in charge of the 10.34 Morecambe to Leeds service on 15th August 2016. The connecting stopping service to Bradford Forster Square is standing in platform 1.  
© Gerald Townson

In this issue we look towards the eastern end of the Bentham Line: the Chairman of the CRP explains how the Bentham Line starts at Leeds; we hear from our neighbouring rail user group in the Aire valley; the story of the electric services from Skipton into the West Yorkshire Metro area is told; a Yorkshire UNESCO World Heritage site is visited as one of our days out; and a familiar Leeds station landmark is highlighted.

People are often puzzled by what Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) actually are and do and how they relate to Rail User Groups (RUGs). They are also often mystified by the term 'designation'. The chairman of LLMCRP and secretary of LASRUG explains.

## EAST ↔ WEST

### Designation, the CRP and RUGS

The warmly-welcomed Community Rail Strategy was published in November 2004 to aid in the development of the more local and rural railways across the country. The route from Leeds to Heysham Port via Skipton and Lancaster was identified at an early stage as being one of the routes which could benefit from the establishment of a Community Rail Partnership. The CRP's role would be to raise awareness and actively promote the use of the line in order to ensure its long-term future and greater contribution to the local economy. It would also assist in enabling the route to become a thriving feeder route to and from both the East and West Coast Main Lines, as well as being promoted as a scenic trans-pennine route.

The three local Rail User Groups, councils in Yorkshire and Lancashire, county rail officers, and the train operating company, Northern Rail took on the challenge to improve the line for the future and in April 2006 formally established the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Co. Ltd, a not-for-profit company set up on co-operative lines. The CRP is the main rail group for the line. The name chosen to market the route by the company was 'The Bentham Line'.

Throughout, the CRP has also been supportive of station adoption. This is possible when local groups show a genuine interest in enhancing and developing their station making it a focal point and gateway to their community for the benefit of both residents and passengers.

All members of the management group of the CRP and the RUG committees are volunteers and give generously of their time and wide-ranging skills in support of the Bentham Line. The CRP benefits greatly from the support of our long-established RUGs. They continue to be free to campaign on behalf of their members and passengers for improvements in services and timetables and monitor punctuality and reliability, as well as offering advice and assistance. All parties involved in the line clearly see that there is greater benefit to be gained from a unified and determined approach.

After working for several years to establish the CRP, the time came in 2010 to seek a more formal recognition of the CRP's interest in and support for the line and work began on preparing an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the 'Designation of the Bentham Line as a Community Rail Service'. This was then sent out for consultation to all interested parties before the designation was granted and announced in Parliament in October 2012.

Designation allows the CRP to work more closely with the train operating companies to better design services to meet local needs. It also permits more detailed discussions on such matters as timetabling, rolling stock, station development and marketing. The Partnership is also able to contribute to county and local transport development plans. This has been reflected in the recent publication of the Craven Local Plan.



The Partnership and LASRUG have played a positive role, through their responses to DfT consultations and in discussions with Train Operating Companies, in gaining the greatly improved service for the Bentham Line due to begin in December next year. More immediate good news about fares can be found on page 6 of this newsletter.

The CRP works in cooperation with an increasingly wide range of stakeholders to promote the use of the Bentham Line to both local communities and visitors. A recent successful initiative, in association with Northern and the Forest of Bowland AONB, has seen Giggleswick, Clapham, Bentham and Wennington established as rail gateways to Bowland. Through its Rail to Trail walking and cycling initiative, the CRP sets out to combine green rail travel with a healthy lifestyle.



**The Annual General Meeting of  
LASRUG**  
will be held in Bentham Town Hall at 7.30pm  
on Friday, 16th September 2016  
**Guest Speaker: Sally Buttifant**  
Community Rail Partnership Officer for the  
Mid-Cheshire Line  
**'My Work as a Partnership Officer'**

### INTRODUCING OUR AGM GUEST, SALLY BUTTIFANT

Sally lives in Ellesmere Port and is one of the leading women in the world of Community Rail. She is the Senior Transport officer for the Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Community Rail Partnership Officer for the award-winning Mid-Cheshire Line.

Her cheerful enthusiasm for all things community-based and her imaginative projects have encouraged many volunteers to come forward to develop their stations and join in rail-themed art and cultural activities. In 2015, Sally played a leading role in the Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership's becoming overall winner of the National Community Rail Awards for Outstanding Delivery of the Community Rail Strategy.

Earlier this year Sally became a board member of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, ACoRP.

Recently, Sally has been working hard, as an inaugural member, to establish and develop a new national group Women in Community Rail, WiCR.

### Carnforth Station Heritage Centre

Monthly railway film nights will take place on the 12th September, 10th October, 14th November and 12th December in the Furness and Midland Hall at 7.30 p.m. Admission £4, including light refreshments. The programme can be viewed on the website: [www.carnforthstation.co.uk](http://www.carnforthstation.co.uk)

*We thought it important to have a look at our neighbouring rail user group, which works for users of the Skipton - Leeds - Bradford lines. Its treasurer, Rod Tickner reports.*

## AVRUG - THE FIRST 25 YEARS

The Aire Valley Rail Users' Group (AVRUG) represents users of the line from Leeds to Skipton and services to and from Bradford Forster Square. Since the demise of Wharfedale RUG a few years ago we maintain a watching brief over that line also as often issues on the one have a knock-on effect on the other. A recent example was the landslide at Baildon when our chairman, Tim Calow, was featured in a news story.

Our concerns primarily revolve now around the intensive electric commuter service although the longer distance services to Carlisle and Morecambe and the London services are of great interest. The whole of the Bentham Line needs to be seen in its entirety, even though we are focussing only on one part.

AVRUG was formed in 1991 when ten people attended the first meeting. Numbers quickly grew and have been about 100 for quite a few years now.

It is helpful to look back at our first simple two-page newsletter: the emphasis then was on whether or not electrification would happen. Members of the fledgling AVRUG were encouraged to write to their MPs because of the possibility that, while expenditure for infrastructure had been given the previous year, approval to purchase 14 new class 323 electric units from Hunslet TPL had run out in June 1991. A subsequent plan used 322 stock and then from 1995 we had 35-year-old class 308s.



I started commuting regularly by rail in 1991 when manual signal boxes from Kirkstall Junction with attendant semaphore signals were a feature of the route, with a splitting distant for Apperley Junction, one of the few remaining examples on the BR network at the time. Much of the infrastructure would have been similar to what it had been in Victorian times.

Services were often overcrowded when there were problems; nor were they as good. For example, the last departure from Leeds was at 22.33.

Trains to Leeds from Skipton were often subject to delay at Shipley, as they had to cross over to use what was then platform 5 (now platform 2) there being no what is now platform 1 in those days. The remodelling as part of the electrification works really made a difference to the movement of trains through that station.

Platforms had been lengthened at Saltaire and Crossflatts to enable four-coach sprinter units to call at these stations as well as allowing five-coach Pacer trains to also call. The big news was that the new 158 units being delivered for the Calderdale line would allow additional Pacer units for strengthening our service; many services were two-car Pacer units in the early 1990s and even when meant to be strengthened could not always be so. In those days it was often the case that one was unable to get on the Leeds-bound train from Bingley as the capacity was so limited. We have much to be thankful for with our modern class 333 units.

One interesting fact was that 1991 was the last year services to and from Bradford regularly terminated at Keighley; although there was a fast 0730 train from Leeds calling at Keighley only in order to get a unit back in time for another service.

Another item culled from the newsletter informs us that there were problems with the new Forster Square stair and lift tower, which meant a depressing and dingy entrance alongside the Midland Hotel there.

Trains were principally half hourly between Leeds and Skipton and hourly between Bradford and Skipton. Carlisle services were suspended on winter Sundays. A full Sunday service to Morecambe only lasted from May to September, a situation which was only remedied quite recently.

The car park at Shipley was to be extended to accommodate a further 50 vehicles. Keighley's ticket office had been refurbished – some of the station buildings had previously been in use as a second-hand furniture shop. Metro were still looking for additional car parking space at Steeton and Silsden which still had its signal box in situ used as a taxi office.



Class 333 EMU approaching Cononley.

So, there was much to campaign for, but electrification finally got underway. There was a lot of disruption in the early 1990s with services replaced by buses after 2200 hours to give longer possession to engineers as track was lowered through tunnels, bridges raised and platforms altered. In Keighley we had temporary shelters right along the platform for a few months.

In addition to the vastly improved service in terms of the speed, regularity and comfort provided by the EMUs, we have seen new stations - often replacing former stations in similar locations closed in the days of steam - at Crossflatts, Steeton and Silsden and Cononley and, most recently, at Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge. Usage is increasing all the time. The parking lots at most stations are being used almost to their full capacity.

Much has, therefore, been achieved in representing the rail users of the Aire Valley, but there are still areas for improvement which we shall continue to press for. As the nature of weekend trading continues to change, there will be a need to augment early morning services. Also there will be a need to improve capacity, which means longer units, which, in turn, will require platform lengthening. The continued success of the line brings new problems and AVRUG looks forward to continuing to press for improvements along with the other Rail User Groups such as LASRUG and the LLMCRP.

## FAIRER FARES AND RAILCARD OFFERS

Enjoy a trip out on the Bentham Line for less. Not one, not two, but three pieces of good news about fares and railcards this autumn and winter.

### The Introduction of Off-Peak Day Return Tickets

On Sunday, 4th September 2016 Off-Peak Day Return fares were introduced by Northern on the Bentham Line.

These fares are available after 0930 Monday to Friday and at any time on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. They are priced at 15% less than the Anytime Day Return fares which have always been available. There is no time restriction on returning from Leeds to stations beyond Skipton in the evening peak hours. Railcards, including the Dales Railcard can be used to obtain a reduction on these new fares too. Below are some examples of the adult fares. Off-Peak Day Single fares will also be available from 4th September 2016.

Origin	Destination	Without a Railcard		With a Dales Railcard	
		Anytime Day Return	Off-Peak Day Return	Anytime Day Return	Off-Peak Day Return
Bentham	Lancaster	£8.30	£7.00	£5.50	£4.60
	Leeds	£19.30	£16.40	£12.75	£10.85
	Skipton	£10.40	£8.80	£6.85	£5.80

### Dales Railcard Purchase and Renewal

The table above also shows how valuable a Dales Railcard can be when purchasing tickets for local journeys. The Dales Railcard is available to any local resident aged 16 years or over

From Sunday, 4th September 2016 until Saturday, 20th May 2017 the price of the annual Dales Railcard will be reduced by 50% from £13.00 to £6.50. Application forms are available from Bentham station and the Post Office. Dales Railcards can be bought in person at Carnforth, Settle and Skipton stations or on-line from the Settle Carlisle Railway website.

The cost of the Dales Railcard is recouped by just one return journey to Leeds. Any further journeys are then a bonus, saving 1/3 on the normal fares each time the card is used.

### Winter Offer for Dales Railcard Holders

There will be no increase in the price of the offer this winter. The flat day return fare will remain at £7.00 for journeys from Bentham Line stations and Settle, and journeys from other Settle-Carlisle stations will be £9.00.

The offer is available on all services on the Bentham Line and will run from Sunday, 30th October 2016 to Saturday, 1st April 2017, inclusive. Excluded dates are Saturdays and Sundays, 4th and 5th, 11th and 12th, and 18th and 19th December 2016, as well as 18th to 25th February 2017, inclusive.

## AIRE VALLEY ELECTRICS

The busy and relatively frequent commuter and local services east of Skipton - to Leeds and Bradford Forster Square - which are interspersed with the longer distance Leeds-Carlisle (mainly Class 158) and Leeds-Morecambe (anything goes) DMU services, have been successfully operated by Electric Multiple Units since 1994. The Aire Valley route lost its smaller stations under the Beeching Plan in 1965 - in stark contrast to the survival of most of the smaller stations on the Bentham Line.

The West Yorkshire PTE in the 1980s, however, began to unlock the potential of the Aire Valley and Wharfedale lines once again. Some stations were re-opened and extra trains - mainly Pacers - provided and as a result passenger numbers grew. This enabled the brave - and pre-privatisation - decision to be made to electrify the lines between Bradford Forster Square/Leeds and Ilkley/Skipton which was completed in 1994. Coupled with the slightly earlier electrification of the route to Doncaster, and with resignalling, this post-Beeching renaissance was only slightly marred by the need to operate 'cast-off' Class 308 EMUs from the south for a while.

In 2000, however, 16 new Class 333 three-car units capable of 100 mph running, (but limited to 90 on the Leeds area services), arrived from Siemens/CAF. These smart and speedy units, based on the earlier successful 332 class, were provided with 3+2 seating and disabled toilet facilities and quickly proved popular. As a result, the units were provided with a fourth car inserted into the formation from 2003. The funding of this fourth car was technically for a limited period only but a potentially farcical situation was avoided by an agreement between WYPTE, South Yorkshire PTE, the Train Operator and DfT.

The complexity of the funding has to a degree been mirrored by the change in livery to these sets which occurred! Still traffic grew and extra train sets were required at peak times. 5 surplus four-car class 322 sets were therefore eventually drafted in to join the three 321 sets and the sixteen 333 sets which together form the Leeds commuter electric fleet. Class 322 is an older design (BREL York from the early 1990s) than the 333 but a successful high-speed one and related to the 321 units which had been successfully running the Doncaster services. (They were among the last units to be modelled on the Mk3 coach body shell and were refurbished some 10 years ago.)

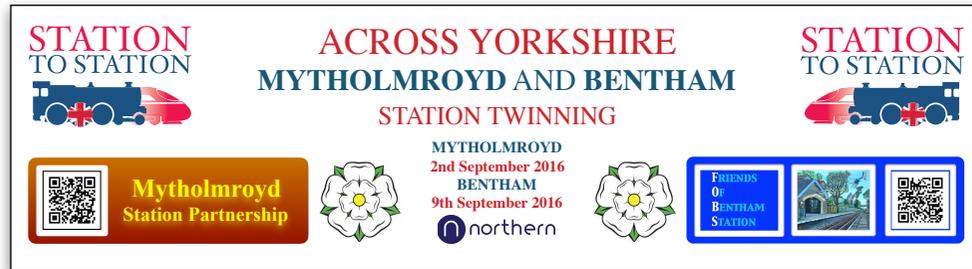
*Concluded on page 9.*



*Above: A Class 333 EMU. Below: A Class 322.*



## STATION TO STATION ACROSS YORKSHIRE



A first for Yorkshire and a first for the world of community rail is the twinning of two community stations and their respective station adoption groups, the Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS) and the Mytholmroyd Station Partnership (MSP). The twinning also reunites two parishes of the former West Riding of Yorkshire.

Banners and posters have been proudly displayed on both stations over the past month to highlight the new venture for the two strongly community-orientated stations.

Members of FOBS, guests from the CRP and LASRUG and the Mayor of Bentham, Gareth Adams, headed off to Mytholmroyd in the heart of the Calder Valley on Friday 2nd September for the first half of the twinning celebrations.



To mark the occasion the party took with them a hand-carved slate plaque which had been designed and cut by FOBS volunteer Bob Sloan.

The party received an extremely warm welcome from Geoff Mitchell, Chairman of MSP, his wife Sue, MSP volunteers and local dignitaries. A splendid buffet lunch was served, including a celebration cake. Speeches followed from the Chairmen of the adoption groups, the Mayors of Hebden Royd and Bentham and John O'Grady, Stakeholder Manager at Northern, who warmly welcomed the twinning on behalf of the train operator and wished the two groups every success with the venture.



FOBS was presented with a beautiful statuette of 'Hannah', the Dales farmer, mounted on a commemorative turned oak plinth. 'Hannah' was created this summer by Sue Mitchell of MSP. Bob Sloan reciprocated by presenting his newly created plaque to Sue and Geoff.

Considerable emphasis is being placed on station adoption by community groups in the new Northern franchise, not just by Northern but also the Department for Transport. Through the twinning FOBS and MSP plan to develop and share ideas for the two stations and the two communities and areas they serve. It is hoped this initiative will encourage existing groups throughout the North and the rest of the country to share ideas and new groups to come forward to adopt their stations and so create colourful and informative gateways to benefit their communities and passengers.

The celebrations move to Bentham station on Friday, 9th September, when a group from MSP will join FOBS and other guests from Northern, Network Rail and ACoRP not only to celebrate the twinning but also FOBS fifth anniversary.

*Opposite page, left:* Margaret Cowling and Lin Barrington of FOBS being presented with 'Hannah' by the Mayor of Hebden Royd, Anthony Hodgins.

*Opposite page, right:* Bob Sloan presents the commemorative plaque to Sue and Geoff Mitchell.

*Right:* Gerald Townson, Chairman of FOBS, John O'Grady, Stakeholder Manager (East) with Northern, and Geoff Mitchell, Chairman of Mytholmroyd Station Partnership, following the exchange of twinning gifts.



## AIRE VALLEY ELECTRICS continued from page 7

The only other regular type of passenger train seen to be on the eastern part of the Bentham Line are the IC225 sets employed on the limited Skipton and Bradford services to London Kings Cross.

What of the future for the Aire Valley electrics under the new franchise? It seems that the 333s will stay and be refurbished but new electric units have been ordered from CAF in Spain and these will not only replace the 321 and 322 classes but provide additional capacity in what is still a growth market. The timetablers will have to work out how extra trains for our line and the Settle-Carlisle line will be fitted in between possible extra trains between Keighley and Leeds and the extra commuter electric stops between Bradford FS and Leeds.

If only bi-modal (diesel and electric) trains were available!

David Alder

## VIRGIN TRAINS WEST COAST AND COMMUNITY RAIL

For almost a year, the LLMCRP and Community Rail Lancashire have been working closely with representatives from Virgin Trains West Coast (VTWC) to develop a better understanding of the roles played by the main line and the local lines in the communities they serve.

To help establish local links, VTWC has introduced 'Community Champions', at each of their stations in the North West. They are volunteers from amongst the station staff.

Earlier this summer Mark Wilkinson, community champion at Lancaster station, invited the Bentham Line CRP to take part in a VTWC 'Station to Station' event to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday and the volunteers who support the railway. Members of LASRUG and LM&DRUG joined Catherine Huddleston, the Bentham Line's Partnership Officer, at the event on 10th June, to promote community rail initiatives on our line. It proved to be a successful and enjoyable day for all involved in the Lancaster event.

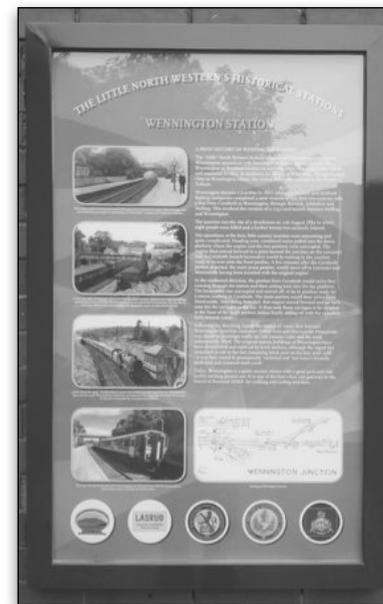
Brian Haworth of Community Rail Lancashire and Gerald Townson, chairman of the CRP, recently had the opportunity to visit the VTWC Training Centre at Crewe to discuss the training of VTWC apprentices with the main line train operator and on our community rail lines. Plans are being developed for a first group of five apprentices who hope to take up customer-facing roles with VTWC in 2017 to visit the Bentham Line and the Lancashire lines over a two-week period in February next year.



Left to right, David Bousfield (LM&DRUG), Peter Yates (LASRUG), Catherine Huddleston (LLMCRP) and John Bearpark (LASRUG) manning our Community Rail stall at the 'Station to Station' event at Lancaster station.

A tour of the VTWC Training Centre gave Gerald and Brian the opportunity to sit at the controls of a Pendolino.

In fact this first-class driving car, along with the adjoining buffet car, were taken out of passenger service following the Grayrigg derailment in Cumbria on 23rd February 2007 and transferred to Crewe for their new training role.



## RAIL TO TRAIL - CLAPHAM TO SKIPTON LEAFLET DISPENSERS

All twelve leaflets of the self-guided walks between neighbouring stations along the Bentham Line and the master leaflet are now available in print and continue to be downloadable via the CRP's website:

[leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk](http://leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk)

They can also be obtained in person or by post free from: LLMCRP at Bentham Station Building, Station Road, Bentham, Lancaster, LA2 7LF. Telephone 015242 98940.

Copies of local walks and the master leaflet are also available from new dispensers recently installed at each station from Clapham to Gargrave.

*Left:* The Rail to Trail leaflet rack with all walks soon to be installed at Skipton.



*Right:* Smaller racks have recently been installed at all stations between Clapham and Gargrave.

## LOOKING BACK IN TIME AT WENNINGTON STATION

LASRUG continues to support the CRP with historical information about the Bentham Line and has recently assisted in the creation of a suite of posters entitled 'The Little North Western's Historical Stations'.

The poster for Wennington has just gone on display at the station adjacent to the entrance of the eastbound platform. It reflects on the time when Wennington was a junction station and trains to and from Morecambe Promenade and Carnforth divided and combined there.

A further poster, relating to the derailment at Wennington Junction on 11th August 1880, is nearing completion. History posters are planned for other local stations too.

## 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.

It owns a large library and photographic collection and publishes a bi-monthly journal which contains articles ranging from the historical to the technical and modern. The society led the way in preservation in 1927 by saving the LB&SCR locomotive 'Gladstone', which is now on view at the National Railway Museum. in York.

Regular meetings and visits take place throughout the country, including such meetings as those of the branch in Kendal. This meets once a month from October to April.

### 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

**6/10/15 - The Quintinshill Disaster - A Century On: Professor Robin Smith**  
Causes, consequences and reflections on the disaster.

**10/11/15 - Eric Lomax - The Railwayman of War and Peace: Dr. Michael Bailey, President of the SLS. 25th anniversary presentation.**  
Eric Lomax's interests in railways before, during and after World War II. *(This should be especially interesting in the wake of Jonathan Teplitzky's controversial film of Eric Lomax's book - ed.)*

**1/12/15 - Recent Railway Rambles: David Alison**  
A pot-pourri of David's travels in the last year.

### 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.

It is run entirely by volunteers and its nearly 3000 members enjoy a range of services. The principal organ of communication is its magazine, The Railway Observer, which is published monthly and contains articles, reports and details of events. Information is supplied by members nationwide about the railway scene in their areas. There are 36 branches throughout the country; most offer monthly meetings with expert speakers, often professionals from the railway industry. The society holds in excess of 45,000 railway images; catalogues can be downloaded and printed copies ordered.

The society's archive has access via databases to material in 1,800 volumes of over 350 published magazines plus over 4000 books, pamphlets, accident reports etc. It has an enviable reputation for its accurate and detailed railway literature, not least for its series of locomotive histories.

### Meetings Programme

Meetings are held on Fridays at 7.30pm at the County Hotel, Lancaster Road, Carnforth, LA5 9LD. Secretary, Alan Sattenstall. Telephone: 01524 34840. Website: www.rcts.org.uk

**7/10/15 - The Embsay and Bolton Abbey Railway: Steven Walker**  
**6/11/15 - Wennington Junction to Grange - Over - Sands: Noel Machell**  
**4/12/15 - Annual Quiz and AGM**

## Continuing our occasional series on people who work or have worked on our line.

### JOHN COULAM

A substantial article appeared in the Craven Herald of 4th October 1929 to mark the retirement from the LMSR after 48 years' service of Mr John Coulam of Tweed Street, High Bentham. He was described by T.B.P. Ford, the Quaker owner of Ford, Ayrton Silk Mill of Low Bentham as 'the best known man in Bentham'. The District Goods Manager of the LMSR also expressed publicly his appreciation of Mr Coulam's long service. Three perhaps surprising tributes for a humble railway employee.

John, or Johnny, Coulam as he was known was clearly very popular and well liked. He was born in Caton in 1864. His father was a ganger on the old Midland Railway and moved to Bentham when John was a child. After education at the local junior and grammar schools, Johnny joined the Midland Railway at the age of 17 in 1881 as a shunter at



Bentham station. Not long afterwards, on the retirement of Mr J Adamthwaite, he was appointed drayman to the Company, starting with 16 shillings a week. Since the railway line only opened in 1850 he was only the third drayman. The station master was a Mr Ash at that time and Johnny saw five more come and go in his time. On the strength of that 16 shillings Johnny married Annie Umpleby the daughter of a cobbler and overseer at the silk mill.

In the newspaper interview John Coulam spoke of the many changes at Bentham station and in the village that he had seen. As the drayman, he was naturally aware of access for his horse and cart, but he comments on the repositioning of the booking office and water crane. He recalled the first signalman and the old 'turnovers' being replaced by a signal box, which was in turn moved. He witnessed the Midland Railway introducing bigger more powerful locomotives and stouter carriages on the line. There was no cattle dock at the station initially and cattle were bought and sold in the street.

His memories of Bentham are detailed and vivid enough to be useful to local historians. He also played a leading part in the Wesleyan-Methodist community, where his efforts were also well spoken of.

Bentham at that time was enjoying a period of prosperity and full employment in its mills. The station's goods operation would have been very busy and Johnny would have delivered far and wide in the surrounding area. The railway provided him and his wife Annie with a secure and fulfilling livelihood.

## RAILWAY LANDMARKS

They cannot have escaped your notice as you arrive at or leave Leeds station from the west: three towers that don't look exactly traditionally Yorkshire in appearance. In fact they're not; they're Italian in style.

These striking constructions were built to act as dust extractors and ventilators for a factory founded by T.R.Harding in 1864-6 which made steel pins for carding and combing in the textile industry. Their design was influenced by Mr Harding's love of Italian architecture. The largest (the Giotto Tower) is based on Giotto's campanile in Florence, whilst the second, the so-called Verona Tower, takes its design from the Torre dei Lamberti in Verona. The Little Tower, the smallest of the three, is thought to mimic a traditional Tuscan tower house.

Leeds City Council now owns the Tower Works complex and has been restoring and developing it as part of its South Bank programme. The council has recognised that the towers are a unique and characteristic landmark and an important part of the city's heritage. Their restoration and re-employment are part of the development of Holbeck Urban Village,



where the council is combining the modern and the traditional. It has been described as one of the most ambitious of recent development schemes in Britain.

### GARGRAVE AND BENTHAM COFFEE MORNINGS



The aim of our coffee mornings remains three-fold: to enable members to socialise and air current issues; to continue to raise the profile of the group in the local communities; and to raise funds for our work. The two recent coffee mornings were successful on all counts: they were enjoyable, useful and profitable.

At Gargrave, in June, £186.59 was raised, whilst the Bentham event last month added £332.28 to LASRUG funds. Our sincere thanks go to all who supported the events.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions fall due on the date of the LASRUG AGM, 16th September 2016. The annual subscription rate will remain at £7.00 for 2016/17.

Please send your subscription to the Membership Secretary or you may care to renew your membership at the AGM. Your membership renewal form is enclosed.

## Continuing our series about places to visit on the Bentham Line:

### No. 2. SALTAIRE

Where can you step out of a Bentham Line train straight into a UNESCO world heritage site? The answer is: at Saltaire. And you will very quickly see why it has been so designated.

Saltaire was the creation of the Bradford industrialist, Sir Titus Salt, who made his fortune in the textile industry, manufacturing a fine cloth from South American alpaca wool. He was one of a small number of enlightened Victorian employers who realised that his workforce would be healthier, happier and more productive in greener pastures than the dark satanic place that Bradford then was. So he took the bold decision to move his business out of the city and to create this model village.

The entire settlement was designed by his architects Lockwood and Mawson as an entity which would be dedicated to the physical and spiritual welfare of his workers and, which would thereby benefit his business. (The great mill was built first, in 1853.) The village, thus, has a unity of design in an Italian Renaissance style, especially striking in the case of the splendid United Reform Church, where Sir Titus is, in fact, buried. The workers' neat houses in their modern grid arrangement were of the highest quality for the time. Salt's philosophy extended to schooling, hospital care and recreation for his employees and rent-free almshouses with a pension for the retired.

With the decline in the textile industry after the Second World War, Salt's mill was finally compelled to close in 1986. Fortunately the mill was bought by entrepreneur Jonathan Silver and the village began to re-invent itself as a tourist attraction. It was added to the UNESCO world heritage list in 2001 as one of the earliest model villages. Bourneville (1879) and Port Sunlight (1888) came later.

There is certainly no shortage of things to see and do when visiting this fascinating place. How to fit everything into a day on the train?

The first thing is to take in the scale and nature and beauty of Salt's visionary creation: the layout of the village (with its quaint streets each named after a member of Salt's family), the superb church, the almshouses, the hospital, the school – now used by Shipley College – and the great mill itself. (Notice that there is no pub. Salt would not entertain the 'demon drink' in his village; it was a headache for many a 19<sup>th</sup> century employer.)

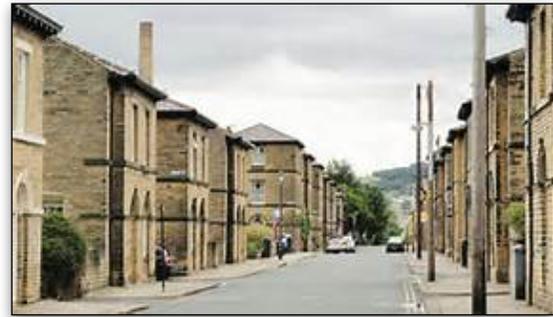
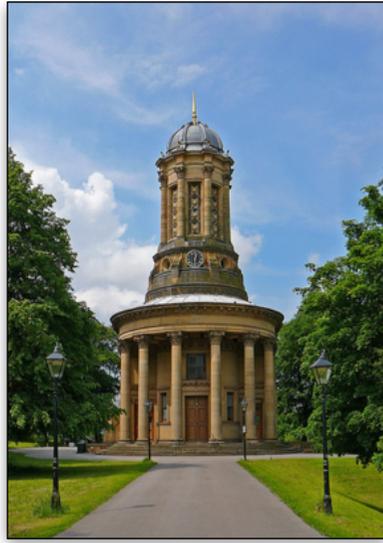


At weekends guided walks leave from the visitor information centre, which has plenty of information and a very helpful staff. Alternatively they can provide you with a leaflet that will allow you to be your own guide, if you so wish.

Salt's Mill itself is full of interest on all of its huge floor spaces. There are shops selling, amongst other things, books, art materials, antiques, bikes, jewellery and early musical instruments. There are cafés and a restaurant.

And, famously, there is a gallery devoted to the art of David Hockney, that famous Bradfordian. There is a new exhibition of his iPad paintings entitled 'The Arrival of Spring'.

(I visited the mill with a friend who was so fascinated by the very construction of the building that he didn't have time for anything else!)



The name of the village was made up of Salt's name and that of the nearby river Aire. Even nearer is the Leeds – Liverpool canal and you can stroll along its towpath, have a trip in the canal boat 'Titus' or have a snack in a narrowboat moored there. (Salt shrewdly built his village between canal and railway to distribute his goods quickly and cheaply.)

Beyond the canal bridge is Roberts Park a delightful green space with a bandstand, children's play area, restored buildings and landscapes.

Saltaire has a number of places to eat and drink and a wide range of shops stretching beyond the old village onto Bingley Road.

A further 'rail' experience that can be enjoyed at weekends and bank holidays is the Shipley Glen Tramway, Britain's oldest working cable tramway. Its 20" gauge carries visitors on a pair of toastrack cars up a gradient of up to 1 in 7 through scenic woodland to breathtaking views of the Shipley Glen and the moors beyond.

Saltaire station opened in 1856 to serve Sir Titus's settlement. It had no public goods yard; all the sidings served the mill save one which led to a cattle dock adjacent to the abattoir. The station was closed in 1965 but re-opened in 1984.

If you are arriving from the east you will be able to enjoy the now frequent (half-hourly) EMU services from Leeds and Bradford. If you are arriving from the Morecambe direction you will have to change onto the West Yorkshire Metro electric trains at Skipton.

*JSW*