

# RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



With a snow-covered Pendle Hill as a back drop and a clear road signalled,  
a class 153/150 combination departs Langho  
with a late afternoon Manchester /Clitheroe service  
February 2015

Number 108



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## From the Chair

2015 started well for the Clitheroe Line with only five cancellations during the month of January compared to fourteen cancellations in December. Any cancellation has a knock on effect for the passenger with missed connections or the inevitable wait for a bus replacement or the next train. We have spent many years promoting rail travel to residents of the Ribble Valley and they deserve a reliable service. With work due to commence in the summer on the doubling of the line at Darwen, this, when completed, should see fewer delays in this section. We are delighted that James Syson, Transport Strategy Team Leader with Blackburn with Darwen Council, will be speaking about this project at our Annual General Meeting in March.

Our Friends of Stations Groups are delighted that work has begun at Whalley Station in preparation for the installation of Customer Information Screens along the line. Our Friends Groups work throughout the year to ensure that our stations are clean, attractive and safe places for passengers to wait for their trains. The spring bulbs are just coming through in the tubs, and we will soon be placing our order for the bedding plants for the summer season.

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, we are having a stall on Clitheroe Market to promote Ribble Valley Rail and the service from Manchester to Clitheroe. This is the Jazz Festival weekend so we are hoping for a good response. Timetables for the new service to Manchester via Burnley Manchester Road and Todmorden should be available at this event. This offers travellers an alternative route from Blackburn to Manchester.

As you are aware, we now have a regular Sunday Service to Hellifield, which connects to the Carlisle train. There are organized walks linked to this service and information can be found in the Ribble Valley Rambler section on [www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk). Over the past two weeks, the views on the Clitheroe to Hellifield section have been spectacular, with snow on the top of Ingleborough. Come and join us on this lovely journey, and enjoy the café at Hellifield Station, which is a warm and hospitable place to wait for the train; the bacon butties come highly recommended!

*Marjorie Birch*

*Top left :*

Head Passenger Counter for the Ribble Valley Rambler Service, Bill Jeffries, poses with his Apprentice Counter, Colin Rushton, in between stations.

*Bottom left :*

RVR Members have donated generously to the new Book Exchange at Accrington Station.

Readers are invited to bring a book and take a book and all donations go to the Railway Children Charity.

Around £70 has been raised since the start of the scheme just before Christmas.

# ***Ribble Valley Rail***

[www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk)

***The User Group of the Ribble Valley Line***

***Hon. Secretary: Peter Eastham***

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Ribble Valley Rail  
will be held in the

**Trinity Church Hall, Parsons Lane, Clitheroe  
on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
commencing at 14:00**

Coffee / Tea will be available from 13:30

### **AGENDA**

Apologies for absence  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
Matters arising from the Minutes  
Chairman's Report  
Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts  
Membership Secretary's Report  
Other Reports  
Election of Officers and Committee  
Any other business  
Date and venue of 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting 2016

### **Members are asked to note:**

1. Any member can put forward his/her name to serve on the Committee. Please write to the Secretary at least 7 days prior to the AGM if you wish to serve as an active Committee Member. Places not filled by prior nomination will be filled at the AGM.
2. Nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer will not be accepted on the day of the AGM. Please send nominations at least 7 days before the meeting.
3. Any Member, wishing to propose a motion for discussion at the AGM, should notify the Secretary in writing at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Matters for discussion, not otherwise notified, will be considered at the discretion of the Chairman under Any Other Business.

**P. Eastham  
Hon. Secretary**

## Bill Briggs passes Driving Test



M. Birch

At January's RVR meeting a small presentation was made to Bill Briggs, who had recently passed out as a DMU Driver on the Wensleydale Railway.

Brian Haworth presented Bill with a set of drivers 'wings' to mark his achievement. It led to me thinking that, with Bill qualified to drive DMUs and fellow RVR member, Stephen Dodd, a passed-out guard, all we need now is a Craven's DMU two-car set, and we can run our own Santa Specials to Hellfield !!!

*Brian Haworth*

## First Railway Journey

It was third time lucky for me when I finally managed to take my grandson on his first train ride over the Christmas period.

My first attempt earlier in the year came to nothing as the train bound for the Clitheroe food festival arrived at Langho packed out with no room for us to board and then three weeks later my planned train was cancelled so it was great to finally get him on a train.

I can report that he fully enjoyed his first train journey from Langho to Clitheroe and had a smile on his face from seeing the train approaching Langho to waving it away from Clitheroe.

I know from working with primary school children that a train journey is still seen as an adventure by most children, and was pleased that George enjoyed his first train ride particularly as it was on the Ribble Valley Line.

*Brian Haworth*



B. Haworth

## **MEETING WITH ABELLIO Re: NORTHERN FRANCHISE**

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January, Peter Eastham, Secretary and Marjorie Birch, Chairman attended an event organised by Railfuture in Manchester.

Half-hourly sessions had been arranged to give User Groups the opportunity to outline their expectations for the new franchise to one of the preferred bidders.

The representatives from Abellio were Edward Funnell, Stakeholder Relations, Colette Fowler, Community Rail Manager and Robbie Burgess, Timetable Planner.

As we only had a short period of time to put forward our issues for consideration, the paper below was presented for discussion.

**Capacity** - this year the passenger figures are expected to reach 2 million yet for most of the day we have 2 car units. The early morning and peak return trains are strengthened to 3 car but are full and standing outward at Darwen and returning at Salford Central.

**Rolling Stock** - the units commonly used on the line are around 25 years old which contrast sharply to the units used elsewhere in the country. There is a desperate need for investment in new rolling stock in the new franchise period.

**Line speed** - the line speed needs to be increased to reduce the journey time of between 1 hour 15 and 1 hour 20 minutes. The current speed on the line for our service is 45 mph even though the track and signalling have been upgraded.

**Performance** – cancellation of trains due to lack of staff is prevalent as is terminating at Blackburn when running late. There is a 28 minute turn round time at Clitheroe, which allows time to be caught up.

**Connections at Blackburn** – since the May 2014 timetable connections at Blackburn have deteriorated with waiting time for connections to Leeds and York being around 50 minutes. Our service is often held at DS12 due to the late running of the Colne – Blackpool South service.

**Revenue collection** – as the Clitheroe Line is a rural line there are only 3 opportunities to purchase tickets before boarding the train, Clitheroe and Blackburn Station Booking Offices and the TVM at Darwen. Passengers boarding at other stations are not presented with an opportunity to purchase a ticket if the guard does not go through the train. This happens frequently on this line.

**Developments** – There is a need for the 23-04 from Man.Vic to continue through to Clitheroe. There is a market for this service as Manchester is the place for theatre and concert venues.

RVR support the aspirations of the Friends of the Settle – Carlisle Line for a service from Carlisle to Manchester Airport via Hellifield on the understanding that this service is additional to the existing timetable.

These topics were discussed in more detail during the thirty-minute session, and a copy of Ribble Valley Rail’s response to the Franchise Consultation document, produced by David Butterworth, was handed to them.

*Marjorie Birch*

## **DalesRail 2015**

The Lancashire DalesRail service is due to start on Sunday May 17th 2015, but it is with great regret that we have to report that Howard Hammersley, stalwart and chief organiser of DalesRail, passed away on Sunday 18th January 2015 after a short stay in hospital.

Richard Watts, Rail Development Team Manager for Lancashire County Council, said:

“Howard was DalesRail for me. He bridged the gap between those in the industry and the volunteers, who made the service work. Without his single-minded determination, DalesRail would not have become the great success it has. Yet he was also self-effacing, preferring to get on with the job rather than seeking media attention.

I will miss Howard very much as a colleague and a friend, and my thoughts and condolences go out to Sue and his family”.

Howard Hammersley,  
in full flow,

at the naming of the  
DalesRail Service

at Clitheroe Station  
in April 2010.

*Photo: S. Clarke*





The Blackburn Station Concourse improvements are shown to good effect





in this montage of photographs by Graham Dudley.



## PAST PAPERS

On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1856, an LYR train running from Blackburn to Manchester Victoria arrived on time at 09-57 am and as it approached the station, the engine was uncoupled, while in motion, at the usual place. It first ran along the up line, and was then, in accordance with a previous arrangement entered into between the pointsman and the driver, and sanctioned by the station master, turned through the buffer points, so as to cross in front of its own train to the buffer South line; while the train, consisting of seven carriages, including two brake carriages, one at each end, followed it, to be turned through the middle points, and so onto the middle line. It was the duty of the same pointsman to work both pairs of points, which are 40 yards apart and he would no doubt had done so, as usual, but for the circumstances that the carriages followed very closely after the engine, and that thus he had no time after turning the engine through the buffer points, to run the middle points, and turn the carriages in the opposite direction.

The carriages therefore ran down the departure line instead of the middle line, which had been previously prepared for them, and came into collision with an engine and carriages which were standing there, at a speed of about five or six miles per hour, bruising one gentleman in the face, knocking out the tooth of another and crushing the hats of several other passengers.

From the evidence produced at the enquiry it would appear that the carriages descended the incline with greater speed than usual after being detached from the engine. It was not clear whether the speed was attributable to the driver having run in too fast or the guard not applying his brake at the correct time.

The acting guard was a porter from Blackburn, who had done duty in that capacity thirty or forty times before and had conducted trains seven times previously into Manchester Victoria Station. The regular guard of the Blackburn train was absent on account of sickness.

It was stated that; "it is undoubtedly desirable that there should be a guard at the rear of every train running on the line, but it is also necessary to have a guard in front when entering Manchester Victoria in the manner above described, and particularly in so thick an atmosphere as that of Manchester, for independently the difficulty of determining from the last of seven carriages the amount of brake power necessary to pull up the train at a given point, the guard is often unable to see anything at such a distance on account of the fog. The collision was the result of a little extra speed given by the driver to, or permitted by the guard, on an arriving train, and was very likely accident to occur under the system adopted for working the trains into the station."

A recommended improvement was for the point levers to be brought closer together and working them from stages instead of employing pointsmen to dart about, between, and across engines and carriages in some cases at no little risk to their lives. The principal requirement however was permanent enlargement of the station and the establishment of separate arrival and departure platforms.

*Brian Haworth*

## Annual General Meeting 2014

The Minutes from the 2014 AGM will be presented at the 2015 meeting, and printed copies will be available on the day.

If anyone would like a copy of the minutes before the meeting then please contact the Secretary.

## Membership News

The Membership Secretary advises that there have been no new members join RVR since the last issue of RVRNews, but also notes that there have been no reported bereavements.

*He asks that all members, who received a pink membership renewal slip with the last magazine and have not yet renewed, do so as soon as possible.*

### Membership of Ribble Valley Rail

Membership of **RVR** entitles you to attend the monthly meetings in the Ribble Valley, either as a Committee member or as an observer, to receive a copy of the quarterly **Ribble Valley RailNews**, and to play your part in the on-going work of the group, according to your own particular talents.

The subscription, which may be paid annually or 3-yearly, is levied to cover the costs of **RVRNews**, postage and other administrative expenses.

Current subscription rates are:

	<b>Annual</b>	<b>3-year</b>
Individual	£6.00	£15.00
Family/Corporate	£9.00	£22.50

**Application forms** can be downloaded from the RVR website:

[www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk)

## ON THE LINE

by Brian Haworth

As 2014 drew to a close, freight traffic on the RVR Line has been good, with cement, coal, gypsum, timber and engineering services, regular users of the line, all of which travel faster than the passenger services!

The new timetable has seen the dreaded DS12 signal rear its head, and passengers once again on the journey from Clitheroe spend time staring out of the window at the far from scenic view at DS12, whilst the daily late running connection to Blackpool South (which has caused them to sit at DS12) departs Blackburn thus losing the possible connection to Preston.

On 10/12, Virgin units 221143/221104 worked a diverted 1Z69 Preston/Carlisle via the RVR Line, and three freight services were also routed this way with 66150 on 6C38, 66596 on 4Z14 and 66525 on 4Z42.

Later in the day, 2N53 the 21:03 Man Victoria/Clitheroe and its return was cancelled at Man Victoria.

Shortly after this cancellation, the rare sight of a class 90 90036, being dragged by 66092, on the diverted 6S02 Warrington/Shieldmuir service was noted.



On 17/12, 66601 headed 6M11, 66849 OZ60, and 66425 6K05.

The following day saw a flock of 66s appear with 66024 6M90, 66601 6M11, 66425 6K05, 66849 OZ60, 66024 6G35 and 66132 6C38 all recorded.

On 29/12, 2J52 was cancelled as the unit failed at Preston on its way to form the 06:43 Clitheroe to Victoria.

On 30/12, 142052 was paired with 142062 on 2J54.

Class 66 66427 was the last freight over the route in 2014 heading 6K05 on 31/12.

On 3/1/2015, 142048 was rostered on 2J54.

A class 156 heads up Langho Bank  
with the 15:28 Clitheroe/Manchester service

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On 7/4, RVR celebrity unit, 150149, made a rare appearance on RVR metals in the company of 142045 on 2J54.

On 8/1, 2N53 was cancelled at Bolton due to a door fault.

On 12/1, 153304 was paired with 142063 on 2J54. Another flock of class 66s were noted on 13/1 with 66425 6K05, 66117 6M90, 66849 6J37, 66161 6L93 and 66034 6L92 all recorded.

The following day again saw two ballast trains run with 66050 6L94 and 66034 6L95 in charge.

On 16/1, 142042 worked 2J52 solo.

On 18/1, 2N59 was held at Manchester due to a trespass incident in the Salford area. The train eventually departed Man Victoria 42 minutes late and was turned at Blackburn.

On 19/1, 2N57 the 09:51 service to Clitheroe was cancelled at Blackburn after arriving 39 minutes late. Its return working 2J56 started at Blackburn.

Later that day 66422 was paired with 66530 on 6K05, 66849 was on the logs and 66145 in charge of the Gypsum.



DRS class 66 climbs Langho Bank heading 6K05, the regular 'Engineers' service, running Carlisle to Basford Hall

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The following day saw a procession of class 66s, noted were 66145 6F36, 66109 6M90, 66206 6Z11, 66109 6G35, 66146 6C38, 66422 6K05 and 66849 6J37.

On 23/1, 150144 was paired with 142042 on 2J54.

On 25/1, an engineering service was top and tailed by 66005 and 66006 running as 6L46. Class 37 37423 worked over the RVR line light engine on 27/1, and was followed by 66016 6M90, 66024 6Z11, 66429 6K05 and 66849 6J37.

On 28/1, 66024 made heavy weather of Langho Bank on 6Z11 but made a fine sight in heavy snow.

# INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

## FARNWORTH TUNNEL

By the end of 2016 the Preston/Bolton/Manchester line will be electrified. Farnworth Tunnel, therefore, needs to have major improvement work carried out to allow overhead wires and new tracks to be installed.

The works will see the larger of the two existing tunnels opened out to accommodate double tracks.

The smaller tunnel bore will be utilised to operate services using single-line working practices during the works.

The works will commence on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, and run through until October 2015.

Obviously this work will affect Clitheroe /Manchester services, and further details of this major maintenance work will be available nearer the works start date.

For more information on the scope of the works, please see

[www.networkrail.co.uk/farnworth](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/farnworth)



*Photo courtesy Craig Harrop*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES 2015

<b>Mon 2 Mar</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Sat 14 Mar</b>	<b>RVR AGM Trinity Church Hall, Parsons Lane, Clitheroe</b>		<b>14:00</b>
<b>Mon 13 Apr</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 11 May</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 1 June</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 6 July</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>

### RVR WHO'S WHO & OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Hon Life Vice-Presidents: Alan & Sheila Kay	01254 826435
Chairman: Marjorie Birch, Raydale, Crow Trees Brow, Chatburn, C'oe, BB7 4AA	01200 441549
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**RVR website:** [www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk)  
**Community Rail Partnership Website:** [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk)

## THEN



An evocative picture of Lower Darwen stalwart 44462,  
a regular on Ribble Valley services,  
as it stands awaiting departure with the 10-19 to Hellfield in May 1961.  
The guard chats with the loco crew whilst some passengers stand back  
and admire the loco.

Of particular interest is the wall-mounted lower quadrant signal  
glimpsed just above the locomotive's dome.

The clock could be the one, which disappeared without trace,  
or the one that was stolen from Blackburn for use at Manchester Piccadilly.

## NOW



Fast forward to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015, and much has changed in today's photograph.  
The overall train shed roof has gone, replaced with a new domed structure .

The train shed retaining walls remain, although reduced in height,  
and phone kiosks at stations have in most cases been displaced by mobile phones.