

RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews





From the Chair

In my report to the Annual General meeting of RVR, I highlighted that May 30th would celebrate the 21st anniversary of the re-opening of the line to a regular passenger service. Over that time, we have seen the introduction of the Sunday service, the strengthening of the commuter trains in and out of Manchester to cope with ever growing demand, and the year round Sunday service to Hellifield. Since its inception there has been a constant growth in passenger numbers. These have risen from 1.56 million in 2006/07 to 1.96 million in 2013/14 a rise of 23.9%. During the period 2014/15 these figures will exceed 2 million.

One constant throughout this period has been the work of the Friends of Stations groups, which were formed in 1994. These groups have been maintaining and working to enhance our stations, many on a daily basis for 21 years an achievement to be proud of. On behalf of our travelling public, RVR and the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership I should like to say a very big thank you for all the time and effort they put into their work. Thanks also to the Parish and Town Councils along the line for their financial contributions towards the purchase of plants.

Our members were busy on Clitheroe Market on 2nd May where we promoted rail travel and distributed the new timetable, which came into effect on 4th May. (See photo opposite.)

Timetable 12 includes the service from Blackburn to Manchester via Burnley, which forms an alternative route when the work begins at Darwen. Waterproof plastic leaflet holders have been placed on all platforms on our unstaffed stations along the line filled with timetables, again looking to provide information to our passengers.

Sunday 17th May saw the editorial team from RVR board the first service from Blackburn to Manchester Victoria via Burnley Manchester Road. They were joined by many rail enthusiasts on this historic journey. A formal opening of Burnley Manchester Road Station will be held later this month.

Marjorie Birch

Front Page:

Stephen Cornish watches on as Mayor, John Travis, cuts the first sod for Clitheroe Station on 5 January 1993

Photo: Ken Roberts

Left Top:

Joan Moore, Alan Scholfield & Brian Haworth take the first shift on Clitheroe Market

Photo: Brian Haworth

Left Bottom:

2015 RVR Annual General Meeting

Photo: Brian Haworth

SPREADING THE NEWS

Ribble Valley Rail members have been busy spreading the news of the timetable changes on the Ribble Valley Line. Timetables have been given out on trains, and put in local shops and villages all down the line. Timetables were also given out on the Rambler Service, and placed in the café on Hellifield Station. Ribble Valley Rail also hired and manned a stall on Clitheroe Market on a very cold Saturday morning to publicise the timetable changes.

Ribble Valley Rail also purchased Timetable Holders, which were fitted on the platforms of all the un-manned stations between Clitheroe and Darwen, and filled with the new timetable. This has proved very popular with station passengers, and the holders have had to be replenished on a daily basis prior to the start of the new timetable. (See right)



B. Haworth

ROLL OUT THE BARREL

The tenth annual Clitheroe Beer Festival took place over 15th & 16th May 2015. Ribble Valley Rail agreed to sponsor a beer barrel at the festival and the barrel picked was a pale ale from Lancaster brewers Borough.

The Clitheroe Line CRP once again sponsored the festival glasses. Good numbers of festival attendees travelled to and from the event via the Ribble Valley Line, and RVR gained good publicity from this event.

OPENING CEREMONY OF 2015 CLITHEROE BEER FESTIVAL



Unknown



S. Clarke



Class 150, 150205, departs Littleborough running 2 minutes late with a Clitheroe service on the first day of operation 17th May 2015

During the 1960's passenger services on the route were gradually reduced until eventually only a handful of summer services remained that linked Yorkshire to Blackpool.

Manchester Road station was closed on the 6th November, 1961, and eventually much of the site was sold off to a local diary company.

Revival of the route started in the 1980's with the introduction of a new service between Preston and Bradford sponsored by the National and Provincial Building Society, following the merger in 1982 of the Provincial Building Society in Bradford and the Burnley Building Society.

As part of the Line's revival, a new station was opened at Burnley Manchester Road on 13th October, 1986 at a cost of £139,000. Soon the Roses service, as it was known, linked Blackpool to Leeds, and beyond.

The latest stage in the revival of the route took place on Sunday 17th May, 2015, when a new service between Blackburn and Manchester via Burnley, and the newly-restored Todmorden West Curve, was introduced.

Browsing in a second-hand bookshop in Manchester recently, I came across a copy of “The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Then and Now” by Alan Earnshaw. I find the book interesting, not so much for the multiplicity of descriptions, maps and photographs chronicling the history of our local lines throughout their history, but the “Now” aspect, which gives descriptions of our local railways, with photographs, in the early 1990’s when this volume was published.

These observations are not pleasant, and, indeed, the author, in his introduction, writes “When I first expressed an interest in writing this comparative study, a fellow railway historian dismissed the idea as a most depressing topic on which to write. Though much of the railway’s flesh has been stripped away, a substantial skeleton remains on both sides of the Pennines. Yes there is much to be negative about: for example, many of the once-proud stations are now reduced to the status of un-staffed halts, and bear testimony to years of neglect.” Throughout the book there is much evidence of this with photographs of closed freight yards, overgrown, semi-derelict stations, minimal train services on former busy double-track routes reduced to single lines operated by the “iconic” pacer trains, and so on.

Our own Ribble Valley Line is noted as having “closed on 10th September 1962, although Langho station had closed six years before this”.

Accrington station is said to have gone into severe decline. “Today it is little more than an eyesore, the cut-back footbridge and solitary brick building on the Colne-bound platform do little to enhance its appearance. Most of the Blackburn-bound platform has become weed-strewn and neglected”.

Mr. Earnshaw writes of the then station at Todmorden: “is little more than a disgrace, its buildings shabby and unkempt, its platforms partially overgrown. The station has been stripped of all but its basic facilities, although still staffed. The course of the once busy line curving round to Stansfield Hall can just be traced in the undergrowth. Regretfully, there is no longer any way people can catch the Copy Pit (East Lancashire) trains unless they travel back to Hebden Bridge to catch them.”

All this decline, of course, goes back to the aftermath of the glory days of the railways, the demands made on them during two World Wars and culminated with the Beeching cuts and later the severe rationalisation in the 1970’s when they were at their lowest ebb – but what a turnaround in the intervening 25 years since this book was written!

Since the 1990’s, the rail industry, Governments, local authorities and community groups, like Ribble Valley Rail, have worked in partnership to reverse this decline and improve the network. From passenger figures of zero in 1990, the Ribble Valley Manchester-Clitheroe line now carries 2 million passengers a year, and this has involved the provision of four new stations – all made possible by Lancashire County Council and local authorities, the then rail operators, and Ribble Valley Rail, working together.

Accrington now has a bright clean new ecostation – even providing a refreshment service. As I write, the missing Stansfield Hall curve at Todmorden has been re-laid, penetrating through the former “jungle”, to provide an hourly service from May. In July, a project, led by Blackburn with

Darwen Council, will result in a re-doubling of the single track line at Darwen to permit a doubling of service frequency.

As part of the above process, and with input from the train operators, Northern Rail, all our RibbleValley Stations will this year receive live-train information screens and upgrades to shelters and other facilities. The line is also now included in the official list for the next round of electrification of services.

The socio-economic value of railways is now recognised, and this process of improvement continues apace. In our area, outside a Metropolitan Authority, the leader is Lancashire County Council. As part of planning ahead, the Council has held regular meetings to involve stakeholders – industry experts, planners and local authority representatives, to draw up a list of improvements needed in our local transport system. Consultants have been commissioned to look into, evaluate and investigate the feasibility of the resulting ideas and suggestions, involving the detailed statistics, which have been collected. Ribble Valley Rail is pleased to have had input into this process, which has so far covered the East Lancashire and RibbleValley Growth Corridors. Some very interesting challenges have come to light, and much work goes on to improve our roads and railways in order to provide a network for the benefit of all. An exciting time lies ahead.

Reference: “The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Then & Now”

Alan Earnshaw,

Publisher Ian Allan ISBN 0 71 10 2058 2 1992

Peter Eastham

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:

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

Application forms can be downloaded from the website, www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk or by contacting the Membership Secretary, Bill Briggs, whose address details appear on page 19.

Occupational Crossing Closes

by Brian Haworth

Network Rail have closed Shore House Farm Crossing (13 miles 26 chains), adjacent to Ramsgreave and Wilpshire Station, which was a popular location for Railway photographers. A new road has been constructed off Knowsley Road to give access to the farm.



B. Haworth

Shore Crossing with one gate still *in situ* but locked off, and the opposite gate replaced with a stone wall.

The gateway access on the farm side of the tracks has been walled up, and the telephone for the signalman contact at Daisyfield Signal Box has been removed. One locked gate remains *in situ* presumably for Network rail access.

Class 156 heads
over Shore Crossing
with a morning service
from Clitheroe

during April 2015



B. Haworth

Ribble Valley Rail: Through the Years in Photographs





A busy time of year with all manner of works being carried out on the RVR Line, ballast drops and increased engineering trains tell the picture. Preparation work for the Darwen doubling is taking place and of course there is the major project on Farnworth tunnel up and running.

The embankments around Hellifield have been cleared of trees giving views of the old station masters and shed foreman's houses from the station platforms a view I can remember last seeing as a young train spotter.



Extension at Entwistle



Culvert Signage

Platforms at Darwen and Entwistle have been extended to cope with the strengthened services due to the Farnworth Tunnel works. Most peak services are now booked 4 car units.

Engineers have also recently located and labelled up all underground water culverts which cross the RV Line between Blackburn and Clitheroe. (See *above right*)

DalesRail 2015

The 2015 DalesRail season started on Sunday 17th May with one train running in the same times as last year. The fares have changed slightly with around 40p added to the adult return fare.

There is a programme of guided walks as usual with an average of six per Sunday giving a total of over 90 for the 17 Sundays. The walks are all led by volunteers from the Lancashire Rail Ramblers, and cater for all levels of walkers, whether you are a beginner or more experienced .

The season must without doubt be dedicated to the charismatic Howard Hammersley who sadly passed away in January of this year. (See RVRNews 108.)

Down (or up) the Line

A number of things have been happening at the fringes of the Ribble Valley Line.

At Hellfield, the Leeds, Lancaster & Morecambe CRP has installed some branded poster cases to help promote the three lines that pass through the station. Hellfield is the terminus point of the Ribble Valley Rambler service that traverses the Clitheroe Line, and it is also a calling point for services between Leeds to Morecambe and Leeds to Carlisle. (See below right)



Massive tree clearance at Hellfield has revealed views not seen for many years.



Community Rail Partnership Branded Boards in place at Hellfield

A recent development has seen the clearance of trees around the Bellman Park Lime Kilns between Clitheroe and Chatburn. Clitheroe Civic Society have started a project to try to stop any further decay, and English Heritage have added this scheduled monument to the 'at risk' register.. The kilns are now clearly visible to the right from the train as it makes its way to Hellfield.

Even further afield, Community Rail Lancashire has recently been involved in a Community Rail Marketplace to support 'Learning at Work Week', at the headquarters of the Department for Transport in London. Representatives were on hand to talk about the CRL Education programme.

Community Rail Lancashire's award winning education programme had its roots in primary schools along the Ribble Valley Line and the first CRL DVD 'Explore the Ribble Valley Line' featuring Brian the Bull was filmed along the route.



Leanne, from Barnes Bakery in Little Harwood, helped by making some 'Brian the Bull' biscuits that were transported in *bull-friendly* conditions to London, and offered to the visitors to the stand.

Photo: S. Clarke

Watch trains on the RVR from the comfort of your armchair!

Technology and railways are never far apart these days, so when a group of like-minded enthusiasts got together a couple of years ago, it was only a matter of time before there was a meeting of the two. A recent innovation has been the implementation of webcams at strategic points on the rail network, where the enthusiast and layman can follow the transit of trains on their computer, television or mobile telephone, from the comfort of his or her armchair.

One of these cameras has been sited on the Ribble Valley Line near Horrocksford, where both passenger and freight trains can be viewed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The images are broadcast live to the internet, and available to view at www.RailCam.uk.

On special days, such as when the steam-hauled *Fellsman* and *Cumbrian Mountain Express* are operating, the images are accompanied with audio.

Other webcams are sited on the West Coast Mainline at Bolton-le-Sands and Euxton, and the East Coast is served by two cameras at York and Cramlington, other areas of the country being at Dalmuir, Barking, Bedford and Portsmouth.

A recent addition has been a webcam at Corfe Castle Station on the Swanage Railway, where steam trains can be viewed daily throughout the summer and special operating days.

The operation of the webcams is met by RailCam.uk, an enthusiast-run organization, who work voluntarily to keep the cameras broadcasting. The viewing of the images is free, but to help with the cost of operating, maintaining and purchasing new cameras, the group ask for a donation of £10 per year, and, in return, the viewer becomes a 'supporter'.

Also in return, the supporter is given access to an additional service – extra cameras at some sites, and a growing range of live signalling diagrams. The diagrams show the live transition of trains upon the national network as seen by Power Box signalmen, and work in conjunction with the RealTime Trains' website.

Another interesting feature of RailCam.uk is the archiving of stills from the cameras so, if you wish to see which locomotive was pulling that morning's Castle Cement train, you can check back to see what you missed. The website also has a lively, entertaining and informative forum, with dialogue from visitors from all over the world.

If you're interested in railways and trains, whether as a casual visitor or a hardened enthusiast, then www.RailCam.uk is the place for you.

David Eaves
RVR Member 572

ON THE LINE

by Brian Haworth

Class 66 units continue to dominate freight traffic over Ribble Valley Line metals exemplified on 26/2, when 66422, 66302, 66849 & 66005 were all noted.

On 28/2, Duchess 46233 worked 1Z87 a Carlisle / Euston Steam Special.

On March 3, adverse weather saw a couple of Virgin services diverted over the Ribble Valley Line with 221142 / 221105 heading 9M62, Edinburgh / Birmingham and 221106 / 221108 in charge of 9S80, Euston / Edinburgh. The following day, unusually saw class 70, 70011 work light engine as 0Z52, Basford Hall / Carlisle. Later in the day 66060 headed 6Z11, 66523 6M95, 66302 6K05 and 66213 6C38. Also noted was 57009 on route-learning duties.



DRS class 57, 57308, heads down Langho Bank
with one of the regular route-learning diagrams during April 2015

On 5/3, 66307 was in charge of 6M90 the Avonmouth / Clitheroe cement empties and again 70011 worked light engine over the route. Later in the day, brand-new 68006 also had a trip over the Ribble Valley Line, running as 0Z37, Carlisle/Preston, and return.

On 6/3, 142044 worked 2J52 solo and 68006 repeated its diagram from the previous day.

On 9/3, 37607 worked a route-learning diagram, but, on the 11/3, .was replaced on this by 57009

On 15/3, 66602 worked 7Y53, a Culgaith / Basford Hall Engineers, working. On 17/3, 2N52 , and its return working, was cancelled due to staffing issues.

On 20/3, 2N51, the 06:44 to Clitheroe, was cancelled at Blackburn due to a door fault.

On 21/3, 47773 worked 1Z90, a Tysley / Carlisle excursion.

Later in the day, 46115, *Scots Guardsman*, worked 1Z87, a Carlisle / Euston excursion.

On 23/3, 142058 was paired with 150135 on 2J54. 2N57, the 09:51 service to Clitheroe, was cancelled due to signalling problems between Salford and Bolton, and which caused it to arrive at Blackburn 27 minutes late. 2N58, the 10:51 to Clitheroe, and its return diagram, was also cancelled, bus replacement being provided.

On 25/3. 2N51, the 06:44 to Clitheroe, was terminated at Blackburn following a 26 minute late arrival due to a train fault.

Later in the day, Jubilee 45699, *Galatea*, worked 1Z19, a Kidderminster / Carlisle working.



On 26/3, seven different class 66s worked on RVL metals, noted were: 66177 6F96, 66230 6M90, 66094 6Z21, 66430 6K05, 66849 6J37, 66177 6C38 & 66230 6G35.

On 27/3, 2N57, the 09:03 Victoria/Clitheroe was cancelled due to signalling issues at Bolton. Interestingly, the following service, the 10:03, worked through to Clitheroe even though it arrived at Blackburn 38 minutes late!

On 31/3, 2N57 was terminated at Blackburn after arriving 41 minutes late.

The first day of April saw Jubilee 45699 active working 1Z40, a Rugby / Carlisle excursion.

On 6/4, 66164 and 66423 worked ballast trains North in the early evening. On 7/4 6K05 had three class 66s in charge 66424, 66555 & 66610.

On 7/4, evening ballast trains were again noted with 66301 heading 6D60 and 66423/66424 in charge of 6D61 and again on the following evening with 66813 6Y60 and 66826 6Y61.

These services continued on the 9/4 with 66526 6Y60 and 66513 6Y61. On 13/4, 6K05 had 66430 paired with 66552. On 14/4, a rare sight on RVR metals of a class 68, hauling a revenue-earning freight, was noted with 68008 rostered for 6K05.

From the start of the Maytimetable, many Clitheroe services have been strengthened to two units (four carriages), but this has caused some problems:

Passengers boarding at Ribble Valley Stations have no idea if all four coaches will be available, some days they are, other days they are not. It seems almost magical that one day four carriages will fit on the platforms, and yet, allegedly, the next day they won't! There does need to be some consistency on this matter as passengers are becoming frustrated, and, in some cases, angry.



On 13th May 2015, class 150, 150150, disgorges its passengers at Whalley from a mid-afternoon service from Manchester Victoria.

On 17/4, class 37 37665 was in charge of 6K05, and it was good to hear it working hard up Langho Bank.

On 21/4, 6J37 'the logs' had 66849 paired with 60002.

On 22/4, 2N52, the 20:51 to Clitheroe and its return, was cancelled at Man Vic due to a track circuit problem at Bromley Cross.

On 24/4, class 37 37423 worked the rote learning diagram instead of the usual class 57.

Later in the day, 2N59, the 11:51 service to Clitheroe, was terminated at Blackburn after a 40 minute late arrival, caused unfortunately by a fatality in the Clifton area.

On 25/4, 67015 was noted heading 1Z16, a Derby / Carlisle excursion. On 27/4, a rake of class 66s 66432, 66428 & 66430 headed OK05 South.

On 28/4, 2N59 was again terminated at Blackburn after arriving 21 minutes late due to signal failure at Bromley Cross.

Early combinations noted were 150275/156486, 142007/156491 on 4/5 and 156429/142050, 156491/142050 5/5.

Unfortunately, the use of a 142 restricts the speed over RVR metals to 30 mph, making it a very slow journey, a ridiculous situation considering the line has been upgraded and re signalled over the last couple of years.

On 6/5, 2N57, the 08:58 from Man Vic, was terminated at Blackburn, after arriving 43 minutes late. The delay was caused due to the service, on departing Man Vic, being diverted via Wigan.

On 9/5, 67005 was noted heading 1Z42 an excursion from Coventry to Carlisle.

On 12/5, the 13:51 to Clitheroe, was terminated at Blackburn after a late arrival, caused by signalling problems between Salford and Bolton.

The following day saw 6K05 headed by 66430 & 66506.

On 17/5, 2J66 the 18:02 to Clitheroe was cancelled due to non-availability of driver.

Later in the day, 66117 worked an infrastructure train running as 6L44, Hellifield/Basford Hall.

On 18/5, 66527 was in charge of 6F73, Carlisle /Fiddlers Ferry and 66304 on 6C18, Basford Hall / Carlisle. Much later 66545 headed 6Y58 Basford Hall/Garsdale.

Infrastructure trains were noted again on the 19/5 and 20/5 again with two class 66s in charge.

Breaking the Banner



Saturday 19th May 1990, Clitheroe joins Network Northwest

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES 2015

Mon 1 June	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30
Mon 6 July	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30
Mon 3 August	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30
Mon 7 Sept	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30
Mon 5 Oct	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30
Mon 2 Nov	RVR Meeting	New Inn, Clitheroe	19:30

RVR WHO'S WHO & OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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BT Police: Railwatch	Freephone 0800 40 50 40
Network Rail National Helpline	08457 11 41 41
Clitheroe Integrated Transport Facility Control Room	01200 429832
Northern Rail Customer Helpline	0845 00 00 125 (option 2)

RVR website: www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk
Community Rail Partnership Website: www.communityrailancashire.co.uk

THEN



An unusual view of the private side of Langho Station taken during the 1960's.

The large brick, double-storey stationmaster's house and single-storey waiting rooms etc are looking rather run down, and the chimneys give some idea of the number of fires the station staff had to tend.

Langho Station, which opened on the 22 June 1850, was closed on the 7 May 1956, but the station house remained in use for a number of years.

NOW



Fast forward to 2015, and a small housing development stands on the site of the station buildings and goods yard.

Fortunately the station re-opened on 29th May 1994, although the Blackburn-bound Platform was re-located a few yards from the original site.