

# RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



Class 150, 150140, heads off towards Horrocksford  
in Christmas Card conditions

**Number 115**



**December  
2016**

## SANTA IN RETROSPECT



Santa and helpers pose for the camera before boarding  
an RVR Santa Service in the 1990s



Crowds throng the platform at Hellifield  
after arriving on an RVR Santa Service

## **From the Chair**

This year has seen many changes with work on the Farnworth Tunnel, the improvements at Darwen, and, more recently, the work on the strengthening of the Whalley Viaduct. It was good to see that the contract for the railings and brackets has gone to a local company, Harrison Engineering, based in the mill just by the Viaduct. Work has also commenced on the new diesel depot close to Blackburn Station.

We were looking forward to a new timetable starting in December 2017, but it has recently been announced that, because of the delay to the Great Western electrification scheme, it means that the scheduled cascade of DMUs, required to enhance a full timetable in December 2017, will not be available as originally planned. As a result, the planned timetable enhancements will now be phased, with the majority of improvements introduced from May 2018. As yet we do not know whether the planned new half-hourly service from Blackburn to Manchester will be affected.

At a Northern Conference in November in Manchester, Carolyn Watson, Community and Sustainability Director, spoke about Station Adoption. She said that currently 61% of stations were adopted and that they were focusing on station adoption groups rather than individuals. A Station Adoption Fund of £100,000 has been created, which could be used for projects at stations and equipment. A new handbook has also been produced, the Station Adoption Volunteer Pack, which was distributed at the event.

Our work is enhanced by our involvement with the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership and our connections with BTP. A recent spate of nuisance at Ramsgreave and Wilpshire station has been addressed by visits from PCSO Dax Byrne-Turner and the vigilance of Ken Roberts, one of our station adopters.

December is a busy time on our line with passengers flocking into Manchester for the Christmas markets and our trains are full at weekends, before reaching Blackburn.

Last year all our Saturday services were strengthened with at least 3 cars, but sadly this hasn't yet been replicated this year. With all the new houses being built in the Ribble Valley, we will need 3/4 car units if we see the anticipated growth in rail travel from the area.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Committee of RVR, to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

*Marjorie Birch*

## **STATION USAGE FIGURES**

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) have just published their annual data for station entries and exits (footfall) for 2015/16

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
<b>Darwen</b>	+3.12%	+2.35%	-28.0%
<b>Blackburn</b>	-3.73%	-5.12%	-8.23%
<b>Ramsgreave &amp; Wilpshire</b>	+3.39%	-1.55%	-13.3%
<b>Langho</b>	-3.27%	-4.21%	-22.4%
<b>Whalley</b>	-6.77%	-6.87%	-8.2%
<b>Clitheroe</b>	-9.21%	-10.0%	-16.5%

These figures show a continuing decline in passengers numbers on the line. Accepting that engineering works have had a negative impact, there is still the urgent need to address the issues of unreliability of the service and overcrowding at peak times.

*Marjorie Birch*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The death, in April, 2016, of Mr Guy Henderson (RVR 435) of Burnley, is noted with regret. Our sincere condolences are extended to his widow, Mrs. M. Henderson.

Members, who have already received a pink Membership Renewal notice with RVRNews114, are reminded to renew promptly, preferably before the Christmas rush, and definitely before 31st January 2017. To those of you, who have already renewed, many thanks. Many thanks, also, to those, who have sent donations, some of which have been very generous.

*W. A. Briggs  
(Membership Secretary)*

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Another much larger project has just started involving the construction of a new diesel train depot on the site of a former coal concentration depot on King Street in Blackburn, called The Wranglings.

Network Rail are building the new depot to house diesel multiple units displaced from Blackpool North on completion of the Preston to Blackpool Electrification Programme. Train crew associated with the new depot including drivers, conductors, managers and signing on staff will be accommodated in offices on Blackburn station.

Community Rail Lancashire are developing a project with a working title of 'The Wranglings Revisited' and this will see a nearby primary school getting involved with, and investigating, the rail history of the site and creating art work for display on the site. Community Rail Lancashire and local artist Alastair Nicholson will be overseeing the school's involvement and artwork.



Original Lancashire & Yorkshire  
Railway Boundary Stone  
discovered at The Wranglings

Photos: B. Haworth



Resident shunter stands in the snow and clutter of  
Blackburn Coal Concentration Depot

## LANGHO IN BLOOM

Langho in Bloom, a group formed only a few months ago, have since transformed the village with planters, half barrel tubs and benches. The group then asked if they could work on the station approaches and gardens.

Community Rail Lancashire are working with the new group to develop some art-based signage at the station. The two local primary schools were approached to see if they would like to get involved and both agreed.

The children worked on designs for the signage and also on logos for the In Bloom group. The two winning designs, one from each school have, incorporated into the signage and can be seen at the bottom right hand side of the image below:



Two boards have been created and will be mounted as running in boards on each platform at Langho. It is hoped that these will be in place and officially unveiled during spring term 2017.

Photo:

S. Clarke



Gordon Wilson, Friend of Clitheroe Station,  
hard at work keeping the Station Garden  
looking spick and span.

### RVRNews Archive Online

You can find back copies of RVRNews on line by visiting the resources section on the website or directly by using the following address:

[www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/rvr](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/rvr).

## RIBBLE VALLEY RAMBLER

The Ribble Valley Rambler service continues to run on Sundays throughout the winter months between Blackpool North and Hellifield, and, pictured below, RVR Chair, Marjorie Birch, enjoys the luxury of a Class 156 unit along with RVR members Ian Tingle and Gordon Wilson.

Service details can be found on [www.ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com](http://www.ribblevalleyrambler.wordpress.com)



Photo:

B. Haworth

## WHALLEY ARCHES

On a bitterly cold day, 18 November 2016, I was invited to view progress on the current Whalley Arches maintenance project and the sequence of pictures show some of the works. The main thrust of the works is to control the flow of water from the viaduct to the river in times of flooding and to refit hand rails the full length of the viaduct. I was able to view the viaduct close up from the top of scaffolding but unfortunately the sleet and driving rain made photography difficult.

The photographs over the centre pages are as follows:

Photo 1 Showing scaffold tower giving access to viaduct.

Photo 2 Showing small amount of surviving cast iron LYR hand rail

Photo 3 Showing close up of brickwork looking towards Old Sols Bridge.

Photo 4 Class 156 passes with a Manchester / Clitheroe service

*Brian Haworth*

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# ARCHES

3



B. Haworth

4



B. Haworth

## A VICAR REMEMBERS

The Reverend Robert Ingram, in writing a farewell letter to his parishioners in Chatburn in 1877, makes very interesting references to the building of the railway through Chatburn, which he witnessed, and he talks about the navvies, who are often the brunt of criticism concerning their behaviour. Speaking about the different people, he had met since his arrival in the Parish thirty-nine years earlier, Mr Ingram thinks about the men and their families, who lived in Chatburn, while building the railway extension to Hellifield.

He writes -

"I see navvies and engine men and infer from the loading of the trucks what part of the operations of new line are making most progress; excavations, quarrying, or construction of the viaduct, or at what distance from the village the labourers are mainly engaged. This able and useful class of workman are so migratory – here for a while then off again somewhere. Recent comers I cannot hope to become acquainted with, but for many who remain I have a great regard.

I have been pleased with friendliness and amiable characteristics, meeting men well brought up, thoughtful, intelligent, frank and pleasing in manner and conversation. The women seem sadly out of their proper place as they make their home in the midst of the disagreeable and unwholesome circumstances of hut life or tumbledown cottage unfit for habitation. They must have been in their earlier days accustomed to all that is congenial to well-trained minds and domestic habits, to everything decent, wholesome and kindly.

Regarding the children, we are amazed that in the forbidding conditions of their life they have retained the simplicity, gentleness and charm of childhood, as they pleasantly peep from under a mask of unavoidably dirty. We dread the future for these poor children and pray God to open a way of escape from the horrors and dangers of hut life, from circumstances so indelicate, indecent and degrading, from sights and conversation so immoral and polluting, from the hearing of profane and malicious language, from sights of drunkenness and fightings.

These families have been, for two years or more a considerable element in our population. I have met people from almost every county of England and Wales and have been deeply interested in the accounts they have given me of their lives and experiences early and recent in their descriptions of places which I know well.

*B Haworth*

## EDEN BROWS UPDATE

The iconic Settle – Carlisle railway line in Cumbria that suffered a half-million tonne landslip last December is on schedule to re-open on 31 March 2017.



Photos courtesy Network Rail

As you can see from the photo above the piling contractor is getting ready to use the crane needed for the works.

Manufacture of remaining piles is nearing completion. The first set of piles will arrive to site next week so this phase of work can commence.

Ongoing design for slope and scour works are taking place, with a view to beginning these towards March next year.

Below you can see an image of the pile casings. These are critical to getting the railway re-opened.

**Rhiannon Price, Project Manager for Network Rail**, said; “The viaduct-like structure we’re building will safeguard this section of railway for generations to come. If the land gives way again, the railway will not.”

This is a complex repair job many months in the planning. We are now focused on getting this iconic and much-loved line fully reopened right the way to Carlisle as soon as possible, which is on schedule for 31 March 2017.”

**Paul Barnfield, Regional Director for Northern**, added: “The work carried out on the Settle to Carlisle line is nothing short of remarkable. We are delighted that, in the near future, we will once again be able to provide a full rail service to our customers travelling between Yorkshire and Cumbria on this iconic line.

We know it has been a difficult 12 months for our customers, but with the completion of the engineering work, we now look forward to being able to welcome passengers for many years to come.”

Once the railway is reopened, Network Rail plans to carry out earthworks improvements to the foot of the embankment below the line and above the River Eden.

This will include drainage ditches and pipework, rock armour to guard against erosion when flows are high, and finally replanting trees over the entirety of the affected area.

Great care is being taken to ensure ecology is protected, including badger setts and spawning salmon. Natural England will advise on the tree replanting.

With the top end of the S&C still closed, freight services over the RVR line are vastly reduced, to say the least.

On 4 and 5/10, 66070 worked 6M90 the Avonmouth cement, and On the 5/10 classmate 66113 worked the Mossend cement. Class 47 47830 was employed on route-learning duties on the 5, 6 and 7/10.

On 7/10, 66054 worked the Mossend cement, and, later in the day, tamper DR73921 worked the route-running as 6J11.

On 8/10, 2N59 was cancelled at Blackburn after a 30 minute late arrival.

On 10/10, 2J52 was worked solo by 156487, and, later in the day, 66113 was noted on the Mossend cement service.

On 11/10, the daily leaf-buster service commenced with 66423 paired with 66429 running as 3J11. On the same day 66041 worked the Avonmouth cement. Class 66 66113 was back on the Mossend cement on 12/10.



The Washer Train heads up the Bank through Langho  
during early December 2016

On 19/10, 66733 worked the same diagram.

On 20/10, tamper DR73914 ran as 6T43 Kirkham/Appleby, returning later in the day.

Class 66, 66154, worked the Mossend cement on 21/10, and several engineering workings took place overnight 21/10 into 22/10. Noted were 66523/66550 6Y50, 66564 6Y51, 66415 6Y52 & 66561 6Y53.

The following day saw 66564 head 6Y52 and 66561/66415 head 6Y53. Later that day, tamper DDR73906 worked over RVR metals, and 66106 was noted on the Mossend cement.

On 25/10, 66171 worked the Avonmouth cement, and 66124 worked the Mossend cement the following day.

On 28/10, 2N53 was cancelled at Blackburn after a 30 minute late arrival.

On 29/10, DR73904 worked 6T42 Guide Bridge/Hellifield.

On 1/11, 66171 was noted on the Avonmouth cement. The following day saw 156472 work 2J54 solo.

On 3/11, the washer-locomotives saw a shuffle with 66421 being rostered with 66429, which had been noted on the diagram since the start of this winter's service.

Class 66 66167 headed the Avonmouth cement on 3/11, and 66122 had charge of the Mossend service on the 7/10. The same day saw 66429 paired with 66426 on 3J11. This pairing ran until 11/11, when 66301 worked the diagram with 66429.

On 12/11, 2N57 was cancelled at Blackburn after arriving 25 minutes late.

On 14/11, 66145 worked the Avonmouth cement. On 18/11 66301/66427 worked the washer and Jubilee, 45699 *Galatea*, graced RVR metals running as 5M50. *Galatea* worked this diagram all week on test. Class 66 66066 was noted on the Avonmouth cement on 19/11.

The following day saw 156425 work 2J52 solo. Later several cancellations occurred at Blackburn due to signalling faults: 2N57 was cancelled at Blackburn after arriving 29 minutes late, and 2N52 was cancelled at Blackburn after arriving 27 minutes late.

The following day, 21/11, saw 2N54 cancelled at Blackburn due to a late arrival.

2N55 was also cancelled at Blackburn similarly due to late arrival.

The following service 2N57 arrived at Blackburn 35 minutes late but was allowed to run through to Clitheroe!

On 22/11, 66102 headed the Avonmouth cement, and, later in the day, 2N59 was cancelled at Blackburn after arriving 26 minutes late.

On 29/11, 156472 worked 2J52 solo. Following this working, several services were disrupted due to a unit derailment in the entrance throat of Newton Heath MPD.

Following on from the morning's issues, the 13:03 service from Man Vic to Clitheroe met with a points failure at Salford Crescent, and was eventually terminated at Blackburn due to a late arrival.

Class 66 66105 worked the Avonmouth cement on 1/12.

On 2/12, the Network Rail Track-Test unit was worked over RVR metals with 37604/37601 running as 1Q83. The pair worked North in the late afternoon, returning south in the early evening.



The Network Rail Track Testing Train heads into Blackburn Tunnel  
heading for the RVR Line with 37604 & 37601 in charge

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES 2017

<b>Mon 9 Jan</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 6 Feb</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 6 Mar</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 3 Apr</b>	<b>RVR Meeting</b>	<b>New Inn, Clitheroe</b>	<b>19:30</b>
<b>Mon 8 May</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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FoCS: Gordon Wilson 01200 426214

RVR Website & RVRNews Layout: N. Kirby

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

**Community Rail Partnership Website:** [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk)

## THEN

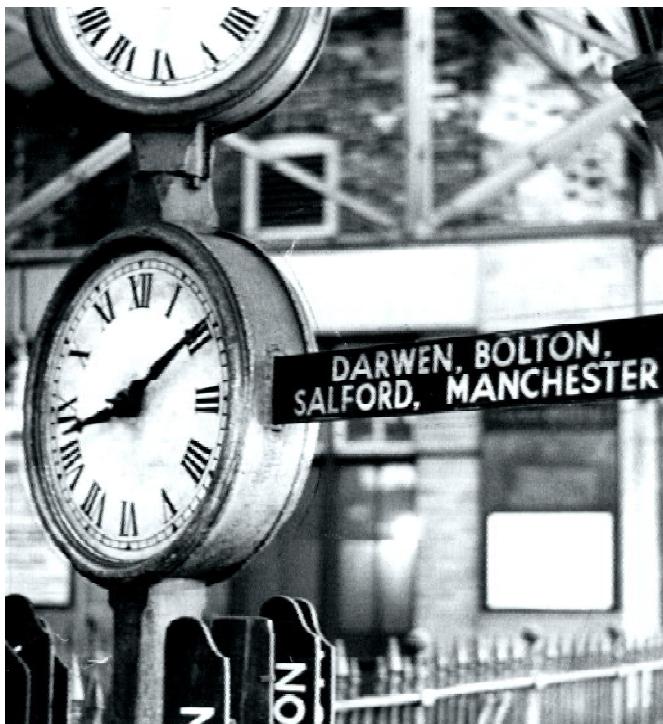


Photo:  
B. Haworth  
collection

## NOW



A good comparison, which shows how information systems have changed dramatically.

Gone are the manually-operated Finger Boards and Clocks, replaced by Digital Customer Information Screens

(Some would say the manual system was less prone to misinformation !!!)