

COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020

Introduction

Richard Watts, Chair, Community Rail Lancashire

Welcome to this update covering the work of the Community Rail Lancashire team. Despite living through unprecedented times, the team have been far from idle. Innovation, creativity and thinking outside the box have been the team watch words. I applaud them for the excellent work they have done which you can read as you go through this newsletter/update. As before I have asked each team member to briefly update on what they have been doing since the last newsletter and I hope you will find this interesting and stimulating. I would also like to thank the CRL Board and CRP Chairs for their positive encouragement and help they give the team.

In the last update I mentioned my involvement in two Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund projects. The Clitheroe to Hellifield project was one of the successful schemes in the first call for projects and work is now well underway to develop the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which is the next stage of the process. I am fortunate in being on the Project Steering group and able to help shape the way the project develops. The other project was about securing a passing loop on the South Fylde Line to enable a more frequent train service to operate. This was submitted as one of the 50 second tranche schemes and fingers are crossed that it will be one of the successful schemes.



Hellifield station in 1994 (Photo Craig Ward)

Covid-19 continues to have a profound effect on a lot of what CRL and its 4 CRPs can do. No more so than in our school engagement work. Clearly the various local 'lock downs' as well as the 'rule of six' affect what and how things can be done. The team keep this continually under review. However, a lot of engagement work will continue to be done by 'virtual' means and I commend the education team for the innovative way in which they continue to engage with schools, colleges etc. Central to this has been the 'Virtual Education Network' which Karen Bennett has successfully chaired and used to initiate projects such as Backtrack and Work Packs – you will see more about this in the following section.

It is gratifying that, despite all the restrictions, we were able to celebrate the completion of the Memorable Journeys project by holding two separate mini events at Accrington on the 18th September. The mini events involved a limited number of pupils from the two primary schools involved. Apart from the magnificent banners that now adorn the wooden fences there are explanatory posters on both platforms and a pull up banner in the booking hall. Well done to all involved especially Shahiesta and Alastair as well as CEL (Connecting East Lancashire) and Huckleberry Films. We also hope to install the artwork at Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station during October and to involve the young people involved in the project to help unveil it – watch this space and the CRL website!

Covid-19 has also affected train services covered by our CRPs and at the time of writing there are still several gaps to be filled. I maintain close contact with Northern to discuss this and I am hopeful that many of the remaining gaps will be filled in the December 2020 and again in May 2021. However, with a surge in Covid-19 cases taking place there may yet be further twists in the smooth path to restoring full services especially if there is a further national 'lock down'. It has not been easy for Northern to juggle the various stakeholder requests with the available staff – I do not envy the team this job and commend them for what they have done.

One service sorely missed this year was of course DalesRail and we certainly hope it will return in 2021 – Covid-19 permitting. I am certainly back in discussions to see if we can secure the additional bus links that were planned for this year. In the meantime take a look at 'Tales from DalesRail' the virtual DalesRail service: www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/tales-from-dalesrail/ . A big thank you to all those DalesRailers who shared what they enjoy most about the service. There is still time to send in more 'Tales' and I have some in the pending file to add to the growing list.

We continue to start new projects and one that has literally just got underway involves local artist Karen Allerton and young people being looked after by CANW (Child Action North West). The project is called 'Back on Track' and is asking the young people to think about the impact the lockdown had on their lives, both highs and lows and exploring their hopes for the remainder of the year and the future. It is hoped that, subject to covid-19 restrictions, that the group will be able to take the train to Manchester using it to think about the journey and how different the experience is now compared to a year ago. It is hoped to combine the trip with a visit to an art gallery to see how artists have shared their impression of what's going on around them at that point in history.

Others involve projects based on and around Kirkham & Wesham, Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Preston stations. The latter is joint with Avanti West Coast.

Preston station is the focus of three of CRL's CRPs so we welcome the additional support received from Avanti West Coast towards our core funding. This is a welcome boost and will enable us to develop a range of projects with them. We all know that Preston offers great opportunities for a bit of TLC not to mention rebuilding. The latter I sincerely hope will come because of the construction of HS2 and preparing Preston for HS2 classic compatible trains. However, that is still a long way off and in the meantime we all must continue to live with the day to day reality of the station. Yet Avanti West Coast want to make a difference and quickly which is music to my ears as little changed at the station during the whole time Virgin Trains were in charge.

To help get this ball rolling Katie and Caroline recently met with Melissa Woodhead to talk through what can be achieved in the short to medium term. It seems from the outcome of the meeting that it may be quite a lot. From involving local groups in creating a station garden, to involving local students in the development of artwork for display on the two over bridges to the very real possibility of a new community room that could be capable of hosting school groups – always an issue with the current facility on platform 4. To help turn these ideas into reality Avanti West Coast like Northern have a fund that can be bid into to support these sort projects. For now both Avanti and CRL are working creating an action plan which will be used to support funding bids.

Hope you find the various updates interesting and if you have any questions or want to know more contact me at richard.watts.crl@gmail.com.



Meeting with Avanti West Coast at Preston station with Melissa Woodhead on the left and CRL's Katie Musgrove on the right

Education Engagement Report July 2020 – September 2020

Karen Bennett

This report updates on the activities I have been involved in or led since July.

The Virtual Education Network: I have arranged and chaired three Virtual Education Network sessions discussing a wide range of educational topics including 'Backtrack', more of that below; 'How to use Canva'; 'Diversity in Rail' and Worcestershire CRPs Stitch Train Project. A Survey Monkey has been sent to members of the group who have all said they would like the VEN it to continue into 2021.



Attendees of the VEN come from across the UK as this map shows.

Backtrack Competition was launched and shared widely on Social Media. I will be joining Fiona Forsythe and Felicity Machnicki at the Cross Country Conference on 29th September to discuss the project's success. Katie Musgrove has made an amazing video which goes through the process and a link to the video can be found in Katie's update below.

I have met with officers from other CRPs to create **Work Packs** for schools to complete rail safety education in our absence. Details of the resources have been shared with other CRPs and are available to view on Down the Line.

Along with Katie and Shahiesta, I have been working on the **100 Women 100 Journeys** project. At this stage we have been collating stories from women in the industry and of passengers to put into the booklet. The response has been great so far. Women's Aid are going to get us some stories from survivors who have used the rail to refuge scheme during lockdown.



Rail Week 2020 plans have been worked on in September and I have been busy trying to get a panel of speakers for young people to hear from with a spotlight on diversity. We will have Aneela Ali from LNER, Paul Austin from Avanti who worked the Pride train and Victoria Snell from TPE who is an amputee. All three will discuss how the industry is open for all – BAME, LGBT and Disability backgrounds included.

Shahiesta Raja

Bonded Together with a Prayer Bead - A successful project that involved groups of vulnerable women creating a 1000 bead long decorated thread that was displayed at various locations and culminated in a trip to the Eco Mosque in Cambridge.

Schools Linking - A project involving Pleckgate High School and Islamia Girls High School in Blackburn where the pupils meet in a neutral place to get to know each other. With the help of CRL, the first neutral meeting took place on the train from Blackburn to Littleborough. Links made with Blackburn College Careers Tutor who is very keen to promote careers in the rail industry, particularly engineering and business related.

Memorable Journeys - A joint project between CRL, ELCRP, Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) and local artist Alastair Nicholson. The project involved 40 pupils from two primary schools in Accrington namely Hyndburn Park and Peel Park primary schools. The pupils created written and artwork that is now displayed on two large banners at the station along the theme of **Memorable Journeys**. Pupils considered journeys they have taken for leisure but also journeys that some of their families made to Accrington from other countries for work or to seek asylum. Followings delays resulting from the national lockdown we were able to launch the project at two separate mini events held at Accrington station on Friday 18th September. Huckleberry Films has already produced two short videos about the project, a link to these can be found in Caroline Holden's report, and a third one is in production.

This is what one of the pupils involved in the project said about it:

"I had so much fun!... We also went to the train station and Alastair showed us more of the local area so we could find our way to the station and back."

To find out more or to watch the two short films about the project click the links below:

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/memorable-journeys-project-unveiled/

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect/

A third short film is in preparation so keep an eye on the CRL website for more information about when it is to be launched.

Child Minders/Nursery – Links made with local nursery and child-minding group and trips to Blackburn and York have taken place. Many parents had never travelled by train with their children, so this gave them the confidence to do so.

ELCRP & CRL's Guide to Mosques on the East Lancashire Line - this is a work in progress at the moment and is hoping to be a guide for people to visit mosques by train along the line.

Places of Welcome - is a national initiative where local community groups get together to provide a safe place that is open to all people at the same time and same day of the week. This place should be somewhere accessible and a place where people can come to sit, talk and have a cup of tea.

The idea of a Place of Welcome at Accrington and Burnley Manchester Rd stations is to provide a place for a couple of hours once a week at the same time for people to come and find out a little about some of the work that that CRL do that could be helpful to the local community and improve the mental health of the people that attend. I would initially be the main person to lead the sessions and eventually have other volunteers that could also help from the Mental Health Champions group. This is a group based in Accrington that has completed a six-week mental health champions course that means that they have some basic tools to lead a small group.

Once a Place of Welcome is established at the stations it is possible for the idea to be rolled out to other stations and run by Friends Groups or CRPs.

Now I am in talks with the admin team at Places of Welcome to see what can be done in the current climate. Many Places of Welcome around the country have closed because of the restrictions so we will have to take advice from the authorities in order to progress.



Update from Katie Musgrove

Be a Gem

The 'Be a Gem' project was one of CRL's lockdown activities. The posters have been designed and printed – see below. They will be going into our CRL community station boards in the near future – look out for them especially at Bamber Bridge.



Backtrack

I have been part of the Backtrack team. Creating social media images, editing submissions to include visuals and logos and producing an overview film that explains this year's project. [Please click here to view.](#)



Awareness Days

I've continued to create Twitter content to promote relevant awareness days.

Rail Week

I've been the point of contact with Rail Week to organise a virtual event *The Right Track to Diversity*.

Taking the Train (post lockdown)

I worked with Mencap Liverpool (via Zoom) to create a Doodly about how to take the train. This was hoped to help people with anxiety. [Please click here to view.](#)

100 Women 100 Journeys

I am part of the project team putting the proposal together, creating visual/textual content to start to gather stories. Including working (via Zoom) with a women's group from Mencap Liverpool



Hidden Gems

Installed (with Simon) Hidden Gem boards at 7 stations: Crosby, Formby, Waterloo, Seaforth & Litherland, Bootle New Strand and Meols Cop.



Hidden Gems going up at Meols Cop

Autism Friendly Line: 2021

In order to develop the Autism Friendly Line (Blackburn - Manchester) I will be creating a station tour film for each of the ten stations along the line. This will result in a bank of films that will give young people (SEND) the chance to 'look around the station' before visiting. I intend to work with local SEND providers, as well as the National Autistic Society, to ensure that the films are accessible and hold a launch within Autism Awareness Week (30th March - 5th April 2021).



Launch of the Autism Friendly Line 30th July 2019

Reports from the two Community Rail Development Officers

Report from Caroline Holden, Community Rail Development Officer.

This is my second update since joining Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and it is with great relief that I have been able to start getting out and about and meeting people face to face rather than 'virtually'. Since the last report I have been involved in three key areas of activity namely working with the South Fylde Line CRP (SFLCRP), continuing my involvement with Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) and the station history project.

South Fylde Line

Since my last report I have now had the opportunity to visit the stations along the South Fylde Line in what I have named '**My Grand Tour of the South Fylde Line**'! This has enabled me to familiarise myself with the stations and more importantly, meet up with station friend's, which I have done so at all the SFL stations. I would like to thank Tony Ford and all those I have met for their welcome and look forward to assisting them in the future.



Meeting the Ansdell & Fairhaven adopters on the 11th August

Kirkham & Wesham

One of the key projects that I am involved in is to develop a range of projects at Kirkham & Wesham station. Since the last report it has been possible to install a series of CRL branded notice boards at the station some of which can be used for community notices. I am now working with the South Fylde Line CRP (SFLCRP) and Tony Ford to develop a friend's group for the station and it is very encouraging that some keen individuals have now come forward to adopt it. They will be contacting Northern and hopefully start work during this year. Other projects are in the pipeline such as a self-guide Town Trail leaflet but as with so many things Covid-19 has limited what can be done especially with local schools.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach

This is a station that has considerable potential given its location adjacent to one of Lancashire's major tourist attractions. Yet that potential has barely been harnessed and the station looks 'unloved'. So, during my Grand Tour I met with Charlotte Murray of UR Potential who wants to reinvigorate the friend's group and help create a more welcoming environment for passengers arriving at the station. I have now drawn up an action plan which will be shared with Tony Ford, Charlotte and the CRL team to hopefully get things moving.

Preston station

CRL has been working with Avanti West Coast on a range of initiatives. I am becoming involved in their plans for community projects at Preston station and recently met Millie Woodhead, from Avanti and based at Preston, along with Katie Musgrove to discuss some of them. The plans include creating a station garden possibly on platform 4, forming a station adoption group, developing artwork with local schools, colleges and UCLAN for display on the over bridges and most exciting of all to create a new community hub. For now, I will keep the suggested location under wraps as it has yet to be agreed by all parties but if it comes off it will provide an ideal location for school groups to come to.

Ramsgreave & Wilpshire & Darwen Stations

I have been working with Karen Allerton, the artist involved in the joint CRL and CEL project at Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station. The completion of this project has been delayed by Covid-19 but it is now hoped to install the art work mid-October, subject to obtaining the necessary permissions from Northern.

East Lancashire and Ribble Valley

Karen has now started a new project with Child Action North West (CANW) based in Darwen and called '2020 Back on Track'. The first virtual session took place on Monday 21st September. The theme is exploring recovery from the current pandemic with local young carers and the young people they support. All the participants have received Art Packs so that even when restricted to home, art classes can still be conducted on-line. The final product will be the result of the 6 sessions, and it will be interesting to see what ideas emerge from these sessions. They should help to lift the appearance of Darwen station.

Connecting East Lancashire

I continue to work with Connecting East Lancashire (CEL). This project was given additional funding to enable it to continue during this financial year to continue its development of active travel projects and to strengthen its links with East Lancashire stations.

Sometimes it is the smaller things that count, and the team have come up with a signage schedule that will help point out how to get to local employment centres, where there is cycle parking etc.

In this period, the final short film has been produced by Huckleberry Films about the 'Connecting Brierfield' project. Currently the third short film based on the 'Memorable Journeys' project at Accrington is in production following the successful 'launch' of the project on Friday 18th September. All the short films can be seen using the attached link: www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect/. Explanatory posters have been produced to explain the artwork and who has been involved in the project, see below for the poster about the Memorable Journeys' project, which are or will be displayed in the CRL notice boards.

Building on the 'Let's Connect' theme and the walks from railway stations in East Lancashire organised by the Lancashire Rail Ramblers, we are collaborating with Pendle Borough Council and CEL to update an existing Lancashire Cycleway map that will highlight the walking and cycling opportunities in the area.

Station History Poster project

This project was initiated during lockdown, when friend's groups had to temporarily stop their activities, to see if they would use their 'spare time' to help draft a history poster for their station. Many stations already have history posters but there were gaps especially on the South Fylde and Wigan to Southport lines. To help groups develop their poster a short doodly was produced which can be watched by clicking on the following link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iICFRVNZwY&feature=youtu.be

There was a positive response to this idea and a number of new posters are in production. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this project and a special thank you to Peter Fitton who has shared his wealth of knowledge and photographs, including hand drawings of track diagrams. In addition, at Parbold Station, the friend's group has collaborated with the Friends of Parbold Library to produce their station history. I also hope more friends group will work with my colleague, Katie Musgrove to create more 'virtual' history posters over time. See the link below to view the Accrington and Burnley Manchester Road virtual history posters:

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/virtual-history-posters/

Finally

I continue to appreciate the generosity from my colleagues, partners and volunteers in sharing their knowledge and ideas with me as I progress my learning of the industry. It really is a pleasure to be part of such an inspiring community and thank you to all the CRL team, everyone who I have met and partners I am working with.

Community Rail Update September 2020 – Simon Clarke

The COVID restrictions continue to affect the work of the community rail partnerships across the country and has seriously affected the numbers of passengers travelling although there has been an increase with the return of schools and colleges.

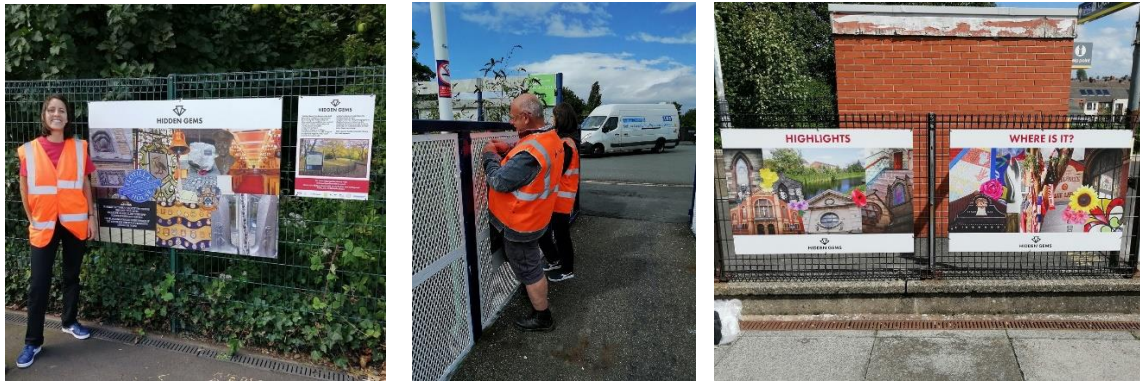
Since the last report CRL has produced several updated and new posters with the intention of encouraging people to get back out travelling by rail and to visit places where they can enjoy seeing places of interest safely. These have included a revised Make A Beeline for your station and explanatory posters for earlier projects. These have been put up across the CRL area in our red branded poster cases.



Promotional posters in place at Croston (above left) and Lostock Hall (above right)

Other work has seen the installation of a number of pieces of Dibond art work at stations as part of the Hidden Gems project including; Meols Cop, Blundell Sands & Crosby, Bootle New Strand,

Waterloo, Seaforth & Litherland, St. Helens Central and Formby and more recently two huge pieces of work for the Memorable Journeys project at Accrington station.



Hidden Gems installations with Katie and myself in Merseyside



The Memorable Journey banner installed on the Blackburn platform at Accrington

Each year Northern holds a Community Rail Conference, which is inevitably going to have to be held as a virtual event this year. Part of the conference is a video of the activities of the various CRPs and Friends of Stations groups over the Northern area and this year the Friends of St. Annes Station, led by Tony Ford, were asked to get involved. I also was asked to contribute and spent a pleasant morning in the sunshine on the Fylde coast being interviewed and filmed. Watch this space to see if I appear in the final version of the film.

Work has continued to support the Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) projects at Accrington (see above photo) Ramsgreave & Wilpshire and Brierfield stations. At Brierfield the strikingly coloured display boards have been relocated to the other side of the car park following an unfortunate incident with a car hitting the boards. The artwork installation has been delayed but is due to be installed towards the end of October.

Since the lifting of the national lock down restrictions it has been possible to visit the CRL office in the bunker at Accrington but even so most work continues from home and with team meetings being held virtually. Plans are in place for us to hold several CRP meetings virtually and the CRL Re-accreditation meeting later in the year will also take place virtually.

I have continued to work on the CRL and Down the Line websites and have supported the education team with an increased amount of work on social media channels including the Backtrack anti-trespass competition that is soon coming to a close.

Google Analytics (statistics) recording was restored on 18th June and since then figures show that visitor numbers to the websites have held up even through the lock down periods. The main CRL site saw 14,621-page views (12,361 unique) and with DalesRail and the new Tales From DalesRail project featuring heavily in the top 10 pages visited.

The Down the Line website saw 2,988 page views (2,262 unique) over the same period with Activities at Home and the Backtrack Competition being the main two in the top 10.

With members of the Friends of St. Annes Station we have also been running a photographic competition to try and record the last days of the Pacer units that have always been the mainstay traction across what is now being called the Lancashire Triangle. This competition closes on 30th September with judging and winners being announced shortly after.

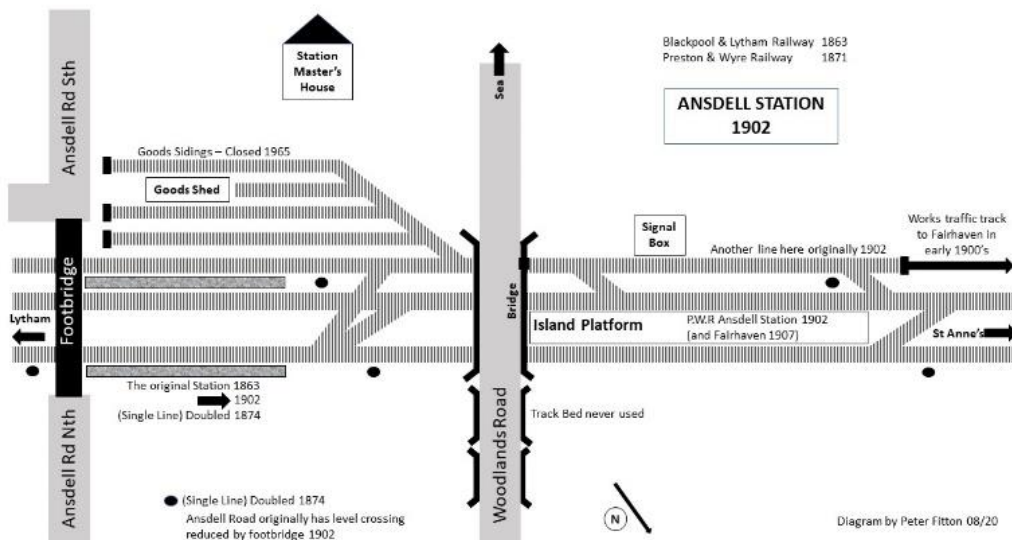
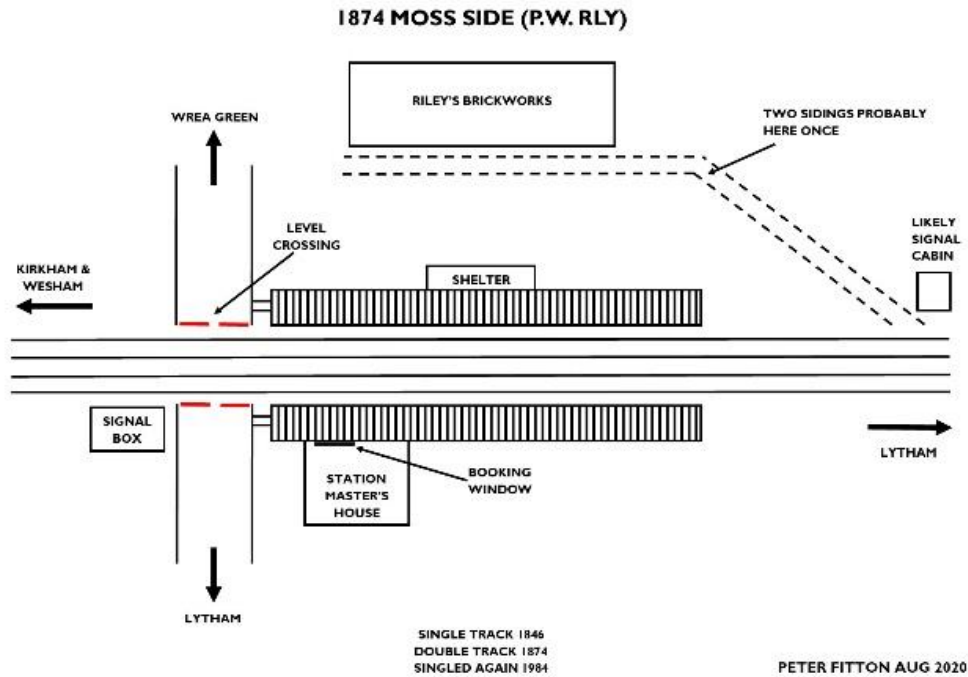


Pacer 142031 stands alongside 158815 in Accrington Station 12th Feb 2010

Social media continues to be one of the mainstays of lock down and working with Katie we have put out daily Tweets on a number of subjects including mindfulness, stations around the world and supporting various national days and weeks.

@CRL_live statistics since July look like this: 138 Tweets, 451 profile visits and 30 new followers bring total followers to 870.

Another piece of work that will come to fruition shortly is some new station history posters. Working with Caroline and station adopters at Ansdell & Fairhaven, Parbold and Moss Side stations three new posters are nearing completion. Part of the work has meant Caroline and me having to recreate track diagrams from hand drawn versions very kindly supplied by Peter Fitton.



Simon Clarke
Community Rail Development Officer
Community Rail Lancashire
September 2020