

Train on Line

August 2014

A monthly electronic newsletter from the
Association of Community Rail Partnerships

ACoRP

Editorial

It's a fact that every August, I look at the diary and think I can really catch up with all the little jobs over the next few weeks – and every year something happens that puts the kibosh on that. It looks like this year is no different, and we are going to spend a fair bit of the summer 'tarting up' (sorry improving) the forthcoming Values report prior to its launch in the Autumn. Alongside this we are finalising the copy for this year's DCRDF report – this is in fact done by Simon at the DfT but we supply the base data and do the chasing. We will also be planning the next Members Seminars planned for 11 October in York and 18 October in London. It's a way off yet but any ideas for topics for these meetings are always welcome.

Peter has asked me to remind you all that the ACoRP AGM will take place on 2 October at 14:00 hours in the Crown Spa Hotel, The Esplanade, Scarborough. This of course is the afternoon of the Community Rail Awards, so why not come early and do both the AGM and the Awards. A heady mix!

Speaking of the Awards have you booked your table/place yet? Booking forms can be found on the Awards page of the ACoRP website or from Hazel at hazel@acorp.uk.com

I understand that as I write the awards judges are ensconced in a darkened room; the short list of their deliberations will appear around 11 August.

As always, please keep sending your news to me.

Brian



There was much excitement outside the office on 17 July when this GB Railfreight loco was named Huddersfield Town after the local football team. Patrick Stewart OBE named the locomotive in his capacity as celebrity supporter; guest of honour was former Town and England World Cup winner and Slaithwaite resident Ray Wilson MBE. The loco is seen after the naming in platform 5.

Mail held hostage!

Over the last few weeks Dawn has received from the post office little red cards saying that they (The Royal Mail) are holding mail for ACoRP that has not had the correct postage applied therefore a ransom is being demanded. This we are not going to do! So please, if you are sending items to the office by snail mail ensure that it has the correct postage on, if not, it will just rot in some dingy sorting office for ever more.

WW1 Commemorations

The Rail Delivery Group have been in touch asking about WW1 commemorative activity taking within the community railway for publication on a dedicated WW1 section of their website. If you are planning public events in relation to the above please let Angela King at angela.king@raildeliverygroup.com know asap.

Train on Line:

Editor: Brian Barnsley
Sub-Editor, Design & Typesetting:
Phillip Jenkinson

Contributors: Neil Bentley,
Sam Bryant, Sally Buttifant,
Neil Buxton, Larry Davis,
Graham Ellis, Brian Haworth,
Phillip Jenkinson, Faye Lambert,
Sue Mitchell, Wendy Otter,
John Stretton, Lynda Stone,
Jayne Sumner, Richard Watts,
Sheila Wild, Neil Williams,
John Yellowlees and Abellio
Greater Anglia.

Please send any material for inclusion in the next edition to Brian by 29 August

Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

Crouch Valley 125

It's been a busy month in Essex with the Essex and South Suffolk CRP alongside partners Abellio Greater Anglia celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the Crouch Valley Line. Originally called the 'Dengie Hundred' section of Essex Railways, the Crouch Valley Line, as it has become known, was opened to passengers in July 1889 by the Great Eastern Railway Company.

Events along the line over the last month have included an exhibition of railway archive photography and memorabilia at South Woodham Ferrers station. This has been curated by South Woodham Ferrers Local History Society in partnership with the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership and local volunteers. Train operator Abellio Greater Anglia have worked with funding partners South Woodham Ferrers Town Council and the CRP to redecorate and renovate the station waiting room in preparation for the exhibition.

Further information and opening times of the exhibition can be found at <http://www.essexinfo.net/southwoodhamhistory>

Meanwhile at Althorne Station station adopter Ursula Benjafield has created a presentation board about the history of Althorne station which will be mounted at Althorne station for all to enjoy. And at Burnham on Crouch the CRP have been working with the organisers of the Burnham Art Trail and Abellio Greater Anglia to transform the windows of Burnham on Crouch Station house from a boarded up and unwelcoming eyesore to a work of art.



A competition was held for all young people in the town between the ages of 5 and 18 to design individual scenes on the theme of Travelling Past Present and Future. Fifteen winners were chosen to have their work featured in the disused window frames. The younger children's work was interpreted by local artists.

A fun day was held on Saturday 21 June when John Whittingdale MP unveiled the windows and awarded prizes to the winners. The station has now become part of the Burnham Art Trail.

And finally at Wickford Station on Friday 11 July train operator, Abellio Greater Anglia marked the 125th anniversary of the Crouch Valley Line with a train naming ceremony. John Whittingdale MP unveiled the newly named Class 321 (itself 25-year-old) train 'Crouch Valley 1889 - 2014' to honour the occasion and an additional commemorative plaque was presented to John Jolly to be exhibited at the Mangapps railway museum in Burnham on Crouch. John Whittingdale MP said,

"I am delighted to be able to take part in this naming ceremony of the new "Crouch Valley 1889-2014" train, which is the culmination of the events to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Crouch Valley line. Having already attended events at both South Woodham Ferrers and Burnham on Crouch stations marking the anniversary, I am very conscious of the importance of the line to my constituents. I very much welcome the commitment shown by Abellio Greater Anglia to the future of the service which I know will be of great reassurance to passengers and to local residents"

Abellio GA, Lynda Stone, Jayne Sumner

Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

East Suffolk Line continues to thrive

The East Suffolk line between Ipswich and Lowestoft is continuing to thrive following the introduction of an hourly service by Abellio Greater Anglia in December 2012. Passenger numbers are now up by 92% on 2009/10, the last year before the start of the upgrades which culminated in a full hourly service along the entire route being launched just over 18 months ago. Passenger journeys on the line in 2013/14 reached 662,000 (despite disruption caused by flooding in December 2013) as the train has become a much more regular and convenient option for journeys along this key corridor.

The new era has also seen an ongoing programme of customer-focused improvements for this important route, as a result of a proactive partnership between Abellio Greater Anglia, Suffolk County Council and the East Suffolk Community Rail Partnership. They include:

- New ticket vending machines to enable easy ticket purchase and collection at Beccles, Saxmundham and Woodbridge, which have issued over 55000 tickets between them in the first year since they were installed;
- New help points at Halesworth and Melton; new Customer Information Screens at Oulton Broad South and Beccles and extensions and improved lighting for Melton and Wickham Market car parks;
- Introduction of print-at-home and mobile ticketing for a number of advance purchase tickets available from stations along the line;
- Completion of the £3m refurbishment programme for the two-carriage Class 156 trains used on the line, with new toilets, new carpets, dado panels, seat covers and a deep clean as well as the installation of a new passenger information system which delivers automatic announcements;
- Re-painting at all stations along the line;
- Production of interpretation boards to promote the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that are accessible from Darsham, Melton and Woodbridge;

- New bus links and through ticketing between Halesworth and Southwold;
- Car park improvements at Melton and Wickham Market;
- Improved cycle facilities at stations with the “Bike and Go” cycle hire scheme introduced at Lowestoft and more cycle parking at Ipswich station - including a “Cyclepark+” compound providing free, secure, covered parking for over 100 cycles on the station platform (requiring only an initial £25 deposit for a key fob) and 60 more sheltered cycle spaces within the station car park.

Another significant development took place in September 2013, when Suffolk County Council, Waveney District Council and Abellio Greater Anglia opened a new bus-rail interchange at Lowestoft station. The modern interchange, constructed on the station forecourt, provides customers with sheltered seating and real-time bus information to help them plan their journey. The improvements also included an exclusive bus lane which has enabled buses to pick up and drop off customers at the station without disrupting the flow of other traffic.

Looking forward, Abellio Greater Anglia is continuing to work closely with Suffolk County Council, the East Suffolk Community Rail Partnership, the East Suffolk Travellers Association and Visit Suffolk to promote the line and encourage even more people to take the train. The company has also committed to introducing two additional services on Sundays from May 2015 and there are plans for further station improvements.

"Over by Christmas"

Follow this link <http://vimeo.com/98747152> to see the trailer for *Over by Christmas* - a commemoration of *World War One* - that will take place at stations across Cheshire. Exciting and high profile events for rail across the old county of Cheshire.

Sally Buttifant
Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership Officer

Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

Awards a-plenty on North Staffs

Trevor Cotton, member of the Alsager Station Friends volunteers, has been awarded the Outstanding Volunteer Contribution Award 2014 by East Midlands Trains (EMT).

The award was made at the train operator's annual meeting and lunch for station adopters. Trevor was chosen by EMT from a host of nominations made by EMT's route station management team staff and community rail officers.

A volunteer at Alsager since 2007, he is one of the original members of the station's steadfast volunteer team, whose work has transformed the station gardens to make Alsager a more welcoming and attractive station, which is much appreciated by passengers.

Faye Lambert, Community Rail Officer for the North Staffordshire Line, which includes Alsager station, said:

"Each and every North Staffordshire Line station volunteer makes an outstanding, dedicated contribution to their station and community rail. This award to Trevor illustrates how he absolutely epitomises this dedication. It isn't only that Trevor works so hard for Alsager station, it's his character, his whole attitude, friendly, helpful and supportive, which makes him a great ambassador for station adoption and community rail."



At the same event North Staffordshire CRP and EMT recognised the fantastic support and help provided by TESCO Community Champion Richard Evans to Kidsgrove station with a special award.

Richard, who is based at Kidsgrove TESCO, has supported his local station in so many ways in recent years, providing funding for gardening equipment for the station volunteers and donations of plants for the station gardens; arranging with TESCO to provide lunch refreshments for station community days, and also rolling up his sleeves (and recruiting others) to help out at all station events.

The boost he gives to the station volunteer team through his unstinting support is immeasurable, as Faye Lambert says:

"Richard is an absolute star for Kidsgrove. The help he provides to the station volunteers goes above and beyond his role for the store."

Most large TESCO stores have a Community Champion, so if you have a store near any of your stations, get in touch for support with projects.



Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

Le Tour

It may have passed most of the UK by but during early July Le Grand Départ of the Tour de France took over Yorkshire. Getting 3.5million spectators to the route was always going to be a challenge. Leeds Station had its busiest day ever with 243,000 people moving through the station. Community rail lines across the region played their part too.....

Friends of Glossop Station took a full part in the event, assisting Northern Rail with the decoration of Glossop station in official Tour de France bunting inside and out. **Friends of Hadfield Station** similarly decorated Hadfield. Along with volunteer Station hosts over the weekend of 5/6 July FOGS provided a welcome table where visitors were provided with information as to where to view the race in Derbyshire. Glossop and Hadfield stations were extremely busy especially on Sunday's Stage Two. All the planned co-ordinations between 40 shuttle buses hired by Derbyshire County Council to move people up the Longdendale Valley and calling by at Hadfield station to link in with the trains, worked extremely well. Thousands of others chose to walk and cycle to viewing points with over 5,000 watching the event live on a Big Screen in Glossop's Manor Park. Northern estimated that around a thousand people used local trains to reach the Derbyshire section.

At **Mytholmroyd** the fantastic weather helped to enhance the Yorkshire stages and show it in the best possible light to the many visitors, viewers and 'nay-sayers' who watched The Grand Depart cyclists pass under our station viaduct on Sunday 6 July.

Mytholmroyd rose to the occasion in magnificent style with thousands of visitors crammed on and around our narrow streets, all enjoying the carnival atmosphere. I felt proud of the Region and of our small parish in particular.

Northern Rail organised the travel facilities here with style and efficiency, no accidents or nastiness, just co-operation between the visitors, Northern Rail staff, and British Transport Police, including the security staff.

Cragg Vale, a continuation of Mytholmroyd, although those residents might dispute that state-

ment, are now in the Guinness Book of Records as having produced the longest continuous bunting that is strung up alongside the 5 miles of 'Longest Continuous Incline in the U.K'

This has been a community-based project, with bunting produced by local groups and from further afield, and could well be described as a labour of love! Judith, one of our members, slept with hundreds of yards of bunting coiled up on her bed! But well done to us all, and especially the organisers of the mammoth task! We, they, must be mad!

On Sunday 6 July **the Penistone Line** had its best service ever with trains every 45 mins throughout the day; this was achieved by cleverly splitting the service at Penistone. A great bit of planning by Northern. Sadly this information did not make it onto the NRES website!

PLP Chair Neil Bentley said 'The day worked very, very well despite the 'Doom Merchants' - we quickly realised that we needed to strengthen one of the Penistone trains, which we did and it worked well. I never got down the Penistone Line but did an 11-hour shift (should have been just 5) up and down Leeds in the morning (plus I pinched an additional two coaches to strengthen my train to load four - good job as Mirfield platform was wedged and people queuing down the stairs but we didn't leave anyone behind); then come the afternoon after the race we did Mirfield and Marsden turnbacks to ease pressure off the scheduled service trains (from Huddersfield).

Great atmosphere, positive comments from passengers, no complaints so I say well done to everyone and well done to all the PLP Volunteers. As I said there were the doom mongers who were quick to say it would be a disaster and yes I and many others were very nervous, but in our area it went better than planned as we ran longer and even more additional services.

Neil may not have got down the Penistone line but some PLP volunteers did and were on hand to help direct the crowds at Honley, Penistone and Meadowhall stations.

Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

New Line Officer for MarshLink

Kevin Barry has been appointed as the new Community Rail Development Officer for the Marshlink line.

Kevin, who is based at Rye station and works for the Sussex Community Rail Partnership, said

“I was very pleased to be appointed to this role as I feel I have a lot to offer the communities on all the stations from Ashford through to Eastbourne, helping to reconnect the community with its railway. I am keen to work with partners to help improve the look of our stations and to encourage events to take place, and for more people to use the trains and other sustainable transport to get to the villages and towns.”



Sam Bryant, Kevin Boorman and Kevin Barry at Rye station Marshlink

Kevin works part time and he can be contacted via email, kevin@sussexcrp.org or mobile 07949 314233 or in person at Rye Station (just ask at the ticket office and they will direct you).

Working in partnership at Essex Stations



(Ed note) Kul Bassi tells me he is always looking for volunteering opportunities for groups from the DfT. Locations do need to be within reasonable reach of London however. If you have a project please contact Kul direct at Kulvinder.Bassi@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Thursday 17 July saw a joint working party from Network Rail, DfT, Abellio Greater Anglia and Essex & South Suffolk Community Partnership at Weeley and Great Bentley stations. The area at the rear of Weeley station was cleared ready for plants and grass seed and the new garden at the front of the station was also prepared for planting, which will make a great improvement to the look of the station.

The group then got on the train to Great Bentley Station where two trees were planted along with many shrubs and summer plants and the area was finished off with bark to retard weed growth.

A great day enjoyed by all transforming two rural stations on Essex branch lines.

Jayne Sumner

Route and Branch

News from Partnership Lines

Trans Wilts on the move!

The Swindon to Westbury service, being fostered by the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership, saw an increase from two to eight trains each way per day on 13 December, funded under an LSTF grant for a trial three-year period. The service runs from Swindon to Westbury via Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge, with the TransWilts trains being the only regular passenger trains on the single track section from Chippenham to Trowbridge.

With a limited train service from Swindon the previous service wasn't attractive to many customers, and there were just under 60 journeys a day made on the section unique to this service, with few of them getting on or off the train at Melksham, in spite of it being a town of some 24,000 people. The target in the first year is to raise the journeys on that section to 135 per day, and up to 320 per day by the end of the trial.

Wiltshire Council, First Great Western and the local volunteers have all been playing a major role in promoting the extra services and in promoting similar enhancements on Saturdays and Sundays too, and recent counts have recorded weekday passenger numbers just over 400 (regular working day) and 500 (half term).

Getting people onto the trains - especially from Melksham - is all about getting people to try something they've not done before as in essence it's a service change that now meets a new market. So we've been promoting widely - local press, on line via Facebook, door to door leafleting, and even walking in the Melksham Carnival, which we did on 12th July aided by friends from the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways. They all arrived on the new train service (of course!) and the theme of our group was 'things you can take on the train'. We had pushchair, wheelchair, cycles, dogs, and suitcases with us - people from child-in-buggy right through to

a pensioner! And we handed out specially printed timetables with a selection of day out ideas and prices too.

Summer is the time that holiday-area community lines are busiest, but we're not really a holiday line. Indications are that many of our 400 to 500 journeys are daily commutes, and with people moving home and / or job as they can do so. We're displacing road traffic too, and although there's free parking at Melksham station, it's turned out that we're pretty green - we have a free commuter rail link bus from the further suburbs to the station in the morning (and it waits for the trains in the evening if they're delayed!) and lots of people are walking. But the story's not just about Melksham; Trowbridge to Swindon is now direct (no dogleg via Bath Spa), faster and cheaper. And the direct train relieves overcrowding on the service into Bath, meaning that people are not being denied boarding so often due to overcrowding at Bradford-on-Avon.

A real win-win for the people of Wiltshire, and for the economy of the area. Even business visitors from London to the tyre factory in Melksham have started coming by train ...

Graham Ellis

Members of Trans Wilts CRP on parade at Melksham Carnival!



Wales and Borders

News from Partnership Lines

Ysgol Maenofferen

The sun shone and there were plenty of smiles when the children from Ysgol Maenofferen visited Blaenau Ffestiniog station on Thursday 17 July. The children from year 3 have been working hard and having lots of fun working with Arriva Trains Wales' School Liaison Officer, Phil Caldwell, on a rail safety awareness project. The class have made trips on both the Conwy Valley line and the Ffestiniog Railway and have also done some wonderful artwork which has been erected on the Ffestiniog Railway's station building to welcome Conwy Valley trains to the town. The murals are certainly bang up to date, even featuring people enjoying the newly opened Zip World at nearby Llechwedd Slate Caverns.

The murals were unveiled by Lord Dafydd Ellis Thomas Welsh Assembly Member for Dwyfor Meirionnydd at an early morning ceremony hosted and presented by the line's Community Rail Officer, Larry Davies but something was missing – trains! So the whole school came back in time to welcome the lunchtime arrivals from Porthmadog and Llandudno. Dr. Dewi Roberts, a Trustee of the Ffestiniog/Welsh Highland Railways addressed and advised the gathering of all the good work and achievements of the Project. Passengers were rewarded with some enthusiastic singing, flag



waving and music from the school band. Newly appointed Mayor, Rhian Williams, and Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, Clare Britton joined in the festivities.

Ysgol Maenofferen have also joined the Blaenau Ffestiniog Station Adoption group to look after 'their' station. The station adoption group were formed last year and their achievements are clear to see – cheerful flowers and a litter free station. A plaque recognising their work was also presented by Lord Ellis Thomas.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, a joint simultaneous departure of both FR and ATW trains was achieved at 11.46am to much whistling (David Lloyd George) and horn blowing (150260).

Both stations are looking much brighter with fresh paintwork on the Arriva platform and some new benches on the Ffestiniog platform to match those in the town car park. The money for these benches has been raised in memory of former FR booking office stalwart, Roy Woods, who passed away last year. Roy was a staunch supporter of the town and frequently complained about the lack of facilities, especially benches. Now we can say with certainty we have a station he could be proud of!



Station to Station

A Platform for Station Friends

Brimsgate's floral displays nominated for award

Brimsgate rail station is looking lovelier thanks to a partnership between a local woman and train operator Abellio Greater Anglia. As a result, the station, on the London Liverpool Street – Hertford East railway line, has been nominated for the Enfield In Bloom Awards in the 'Best Public Building' category.

Station adopter Avril Nanton has, with the help of Abellio Greater Anglia's station team, planted stunning floral displays to welcome visitors who arrive by rail. The platform now boasts an array of attractive new tubs planted with summer flowers including geraniums, lavender, petunias, marigolds, galadial, conifers, dahlias, lilies, Red Hot Poker and Fatsia Japonica.

Avril, a keen gardener, has only just taken over the care of the station garden as the station's



Station adopter Avril Nanton hard at work at Brimsgate

new adopter, but is already planning improvements such as winter displays and trying to find suitable planting for Ponders End and Enfield Lock rail stations. Approaching her role with great pride, Avril has also branched out into helping to clean parts of the station to ensure that the garden area is looking its best and is filling tubs and baskets with many of her homegrown plants.

Ashchurch Progress

Late in 2012 Network Rail approached the Ashchurch, Tewkesbury & District Rail Promotion Group with an offer of access to the land between the northbound platform at Ashchurch for Tewkesbury railway station and the adjacent children's nursery, with a view to converting this to a community garden.



Photo: Jack Boskett - www.jackboskett.co.uk

Over the ensuing 18 months a small band of volunteers has worked on clearing the site of brambles, buddleias, countless weeds and many bags of stones and ballast, initially on an ad hoc basis. Regular monthly work parties were introduced early in 2013.

To celebrate the progress of covering around 70 metres of the land with light suppressing matting in preparation for the next stage of development, the group erected a sign on 24 July, announcing the project and its details, witnessed by representatives of sponsors Network Rail, ACoRP, SevernVale Housing and NARHA, together with volunteers and other supporters.

John Stretton

Station to Station

A Platform for Station Friends

Littleborough celebrates 175 years!

On Friday July 4th, while Americans were celebrating Independence Day, the people of Littleborough were marking a much more relevant anniversary - 175 years since the station was opened to the public. 1839 was a long time ago, but much still remains of the Stephensons' (father and son) engineering achievements in and around Littleborough – the embankment, the viaduct carrying the line over Halifax Road, the aqueduct lifting the River Roch up over the line, and of course, Summit Tunnel, completed in 1841.

Outside the station in George Stephenson Square, pupils from Holy Trinity and Littleborough Community Primary School Bands kept the growing crowd of residents, rail enthusiasts and special guests, including Rochdale's Mayoress, Mrs Beverley Place, entertained, before Simon Danczuk MP unveiled a special commemorative plaque outside the booking office. The plaque was sponsored by local firm, Fothergill Engineered Fabrics.

Rae Street, Chair of the Friends of Littleborough Stations, (FoLSs), still on crutches from a recent op, welcomed everyone and spoke briefly of the proud history of the station, as well as the group's ongoing campaign for better waiting facilities at the station and electrification of the Calder Valley Line. She expressed thanks to the Littleborough Historical and Archaeological Society whose History Centre now occupies the station buildings on the Yorkshire-bound platform, for the use of the Centre on this very special day. Rae introduced Mr Danczuk who - in his own speech - stressed how much the railways had democratised transport for working people, enabling them to travel by train for work and recreation.

Light refreshments were served in the History Centre where copies of a booklet on the history of the station, written by Sheila Wild, Acting Secretary of the Friends, were on sale. Copies of the history,



The plaque is unveiled

price £3.75 inclusive of postage and packing, can be obtained through the contacts page on the Friends website <http://www.rochdaleonline.co.uk/sites/friends-of-littleborough-stations>.

The costs of photocopying of the history, a leaflet entitled "The Stephenson Trail", and a commemorative edition of the Friends' newsletter was met largely through a grant from ACoRP. Northern Rail provided the bunting, and Littleborough Lions hung it up for us. Our gardeners, Maggie Muir and Annie Bracken, made sure the flower tubs were looking splendid, while Dilys Pearson and Jackie Carmichael made endless teas and coffees. External Relations Officer Richard Lysons worked the crowd and sold copies of the history and trail leaflet. A huge thank you to everyone who helped to make the morning such a success.

The event has raised our profile locally, giving us the opportunity to meet up with local councillors and form new relationships with schools in an easy and informal way. We hope to build on this to raise the several thousand pounds needed to replant the embankment with something more attractive than thistles and willow-herb.

Sheila Wild

Station to Station

A Platform for Station Friends

Station rooms brought back to life at March

Two of the old refreshment rooms at March railway station that have been redundant for years have been restored and brought back into community use. The rooms on platform 2 were formally opened in July by Councillor Ralph Butcher, Fenland District Council's Cabinet member responsible for transport and chairman of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership.

The refurbishment has been carried out by the Friends of March Railway Station. Historic details uncovered during the work included the old main doors that had been hidden behind panelling and some fine original Victorian tiling.

Cllr Butcher congratulated Adrian Sutterby and Gary Christy, the Friends' chairman and vice chairman, and their team of volunteers on "an exceptional job".

"All the projects the Friends have completed are excellent examples of what can also be known as community rail. Community rail is about establishing greater local involvement in the railway and its stations. It is also about enabling local people to have a voice in helping to determine and deliver local priorities for the railway."

The Friends want to encourage community groups to make full use of the rooms. The main room can be booked on a regular basis or for one-off meetings or for special events such as craft shows.



The second refurbished room – the old station bar – will serve as a small library. It will be home to three pictures of destinations on the line from March – Norwich, Lincoln and Great Yarmouth. The pictures, which were rescued from another room further along the platform, have been donated by Jim Mears.

The Friends' future plans include refurbishing one of the remaining redundant rooms, extending the demonstration track and replacing the boundary fencing with a disabled path.

Two open days are also due to be held at the station on September 13 (10am-1pm) and December 13 (9am-noon).

Wendy Otter

Glossop VIP

The Duke of Norfolk visited Glossop station to unveil a special plaque marking his forefather's - the 13th Duke of Norfolk - building of the station in 1847 and the branch line to Dinting. The Duke was given a tour of the station by Natalie Loughborough, Customer Service Director for Northern, Theo MacLauchlan Glossop Line Manager and Neil Williams Chair of Friends of Glossop station. The Duke was shown the collaborative improvements made at the station in recent years. He was particularly interested in a commemorative poetry display marking the Great War. His family, like so many, had lost a son killed in action.

In his speech Neil praised the vision of the 13th Duke in building the station privately to ensure Glossop connected with the main Woodhead line. 167

years on the station continues to do the job for which it was built - serving the railway. And currently, with over 800,000 annual journeys, its usage is the highest in its history. In his reply The Duke replied that the Station and line had cost his family £10,000 to build. However the station and branch line were subsequently sold to the Sheffield, Ashton under Lyne and Manchester Railway Company thus ensuring, as he said with a smile, that the Howard family got its money back!!

The link to the Howard family can still be seen today at Glossop station with the iconic Howard lion standing proudly over the station frontage. For the first time this link is made clear in the citation on the plaque. A successful and happy visit and FOGS were delighted that The Duke attended thus continuing and marking the Howard family links to Glossop station.

Points and Politics

MPs Call for Improved Services to Isolated Communities

Policy makers across all Government departments must recognise the fundamental importance of passenger transport for providing access to education, healthcare and employment in all kinds of isolated communities, warn MPs on the Transport Committee.

In a report of an inquiry that examined passenger transport in isolated communities, the cross-party Transport Select Committee warns that neglect of these services will reduce access to education, employment, health services, and other essential services.

Launching the report, Transport Select Committee Chair, Louise Ellman MP, said:

“Old and young, unemployed people, those on low incomes and disabled people who live in isolated communities rely on passenger transport. For example two out of every five job seekers cite lack of transport as a barrier to finding work.

“All these groups are disproportionately affected by inadequate or reduced services. It is vital that all ministers recognise the fundamental importance of passenger transport in providing access to education, healthcare and employment.”

MPs also highlight how ‘isolated communities’ are frequently situated in urban as well as rural areas and island settings. Commenting on this Louise Ellman added,

“Policy makers sometimes equate ‘isolated’ with ‘rural’ or island communities, but we found that some urban and suburban areas have inadequate passenger transport. The DfT should draft a definition of ‘isolated communities’ for use across central and local government to target scarce resources in ways that reach all types of isolated community”

“We reiterate our long held concern that subsidised bus services continue to disappear as funding is cut. The bus industry must work with local authorities to deliver essential local services through the development of quality contracts similar to arrangements that operate in London.”

The Committee also challenges the Department for Transport’s assertion that community transport schemes run by volunteers can compensate for decreased bus services in isolated communities. “We recognise their value but many community transport schemes are tiny and only serve particular groups in the community. It is unrealistic to expect volunteers to replace local bus services,” added Louise Ellman.

MPs highlight the need for ‘total transport’ - the pooling of existing transport assets to deliver a broader range of services. “If, for example, hospital transport were combined with local bus services, it might revolutionise services for isolated communities. We want to see the DfT test that concept in practice by co-ordinating large-scale pilot schemes,” said Louise Ellman.

West Midlands Appoints New Transport Authority

A new West Midlands authority to drive investment in transport projects has been formally launched.

The inaugural meeting in Birmingham saw the political leaders of the West Midlands seven metropolitan councils appointed as the new West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA). The group is responsible for transport strategy, budgets, scheme prioritisation and bids for funding.

The ITA said the move was aimed at ensuring the metropolitan area acted in a unified way on transport and could punch its collective weight when seeking funding for rail, tram and road schemes which could grow the economy. It will also create a direct link with the region’s three local enterprise

partnerships (LEPs) - Greater Birmingham & Solihull, the Black Country and Coventry & Warwickshire.

Centro, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, will continue to deliver transport projects while working with bus, rail and tram operators to improve services and infrastructure for passengers.

Essex Thameside Retained

The Essex Thameside franchise has been retained by its current operator, National Express, who currently market it as C2C, for a new 15-year term which will take it through until 2029.

Citizens' Rail

Citizens' Rail is an EU Interreg IVB project to develop local and regional railways by involving the community. Its lead partner is the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, working alongside partners in Lancashire, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Lancashire Children Welcome European Partners in Style

Children from Padiham Green Primary School near Burnley gave Citizens' Rail's French, German and Dutch partners a fantastic welcome to Lancashire for the project's latest partner meeting.

At Burnley Manchester Road's new station building (now to be opened later in 2014), the pupils performed an educational play about their local railway (complete with historical hats and moustaches!), followed by presentations about each of Citizens' Rail's partner regions. The children also created a wide range of railway-related artwork, adorning the station's community room. The partners were hugely impressed and touched by the effort and imagination that the children had clearly invested in learning about the culture, economy, food and history of each local area. The children in turn were excited to meet representatives from each of the countries they had been studying – providing a chance to find out more, and to try out their language skills.

Uwe Müller from Stadt Aachen in Germany said:

"The children's work and enthusiasm was really outstanding! I was very impressed by what they had learned and presented about Aachen. I hope that one day we might be able to arrange for the children to visit our cities in person."

Teacher Janet Ennis said: "All the children thoroughly enjoyed researching the cities and our links with Europe via rail networks. We were also happy to share the presentation again with parents during an assembly the following day."

All of the Citizens' Rail partners would like to warmly thank the staff and pupils of Padiham Green Primary School who made it such a terrific occasion.

Thanks also go to Community Rail Lancashire for facilitating the project – made possible thanks to their years of engagement and relationship-building with local schools. The other Citizens' Rail partners are keen to tap into this depth of experience, and the following day received a presentation on the subject from Brian Haworth at Accrington Station's "bunker" – a fantastic facility that provides a classroom for school sessions and a base for Community Rail Lancashire. More than 5,500 children have used the bunker so far.

Further inspiration was provided by Paul Salveson who gave the partners a thought-provoking presentation on the importance of community rail, and the impact it can have on making stations more welcoming and interesting – helping to shape many visitors' first impressions upon arrival into our cities, towns and villages.

To find out more about Citizens' Rail and to see more photos of the children's presentation at Burnley Manchester Road, visit www.citizensrail.org.



North of the Border

John Yellowlees has news of developments at three Scottish stations

The classic wooden station building at **North Queensferry** at the north end of the Forth Bridge had stood boarded up since 1985 until the North Queensferry Heritage Trust led its restoration as a cafe, meeting-room and gallery (right). Opened on 1 July by Fife Provost Jim Leishman with Network Rail's Alex Sharkey and the last station-master, the new facility has received funding from the Railway Heritage Trust and the Scottish Stations Community Regeneration Fund, and can expect to see increasing usage if the current bid for World Heritage status for the Forth Bridge proves successful.



Enhanced with new lifts, waiting rooms and a new access-road, the splendidly-restored **Gleneagles** station now stands ready to receive spectators for this September's Ryder Cup (left). ScotRail are already looking beyond that date in the hope that Auchterarder Rotary or others might make community use of surplus accommodation to complement the Gleneagles Hotel's gardening at the station.

Last year the pioneering East Dunbartonshire garden suburb at **Westerton** celebrated its centenary. Now local conservationists from the Cairnhill Woods Group have presented Westerton Station with attractive fence-mounted panels depicting a floral train which was spray-painted by the youngsters seen in the photo.

John Yellowlees



Watts on Rail North

Richard Watts, ACoRP Board Member and on various Rail North working groups, reports

As I write these notes we are just getting to the end of the DfT/Rail North consultation on the replacement Northern and Trans Pennine franchises. Thank you to those CRPs who have copied me in to their responses. It is good to know what is being said out there and the issues that you see as important for the new franchises. Neil has circulated the ACoRP response and I have shared my draft response for LCC with some of you.

Lancashire County Council hosted one of the consultation events at Preston County Hall which was made more lively (at least for the front of house staff) by the RMT who used the occasion to lobby on issues of concern to them. One of the issues worrying them seemed to be the role of CRPs going forward. This is resulting in a high level meeting being arranged with the RMT to look at these issues in more detail - more on that once it has taken place. At the Preston event some very good questions were raised covering all manner of issues from timetables, to rolling stock, stations and Community Rail (thank you Sally for those well asked questions especially about designation).

So let's focus on stations for a moment as I have done quite a bit of work on this recently and also as some of you will know have led station development for Lancashire County Council over the last 25 years (yes it is that long!!). Notable achievements include the bus/rail interchanges at Clitheroe and Burscough Bridge; the Eco station at Accrington; the new 'modular' station at Burnley Manchester Road and many other refurbishments. All have been the result of the significant investment in time and money made by the County Council. The future of this investment rests on making sure that the ITTs are drafted in such a way that they encourage the continuation of the good work that has been demonstrated across the north of England along with a more realistic management of those assets once provided. Innovation & investment coupled with effective & proactive asset management - a heady mix indeed.

Yet stations have too often been the poor relation within the railway industry itself when put against the need for track and signalling renewals or new trains. The recent upsurge of big station projects by Network Rail is very welcome and the impact of NSIP (National Station Improvement Programme) and Access for All on smaller stations should not be underestimated *but* - in the north of England without significant local authority and/or CRP involvement in station development I do not want to contemplate what many stations would be like. Certainly the stock in Lancashire would look very different from how it does today. Franchising over the last 20 years has done little for most Northern stations with the notable exception of TransPennine. Even the main inter city operators have concentrated on

track and trains but *not* stations - just think Virgin. The most significant investment Virgin has made at Preston is in a big multi-storey car park which I am sure has had a positive impact on shareholder value but alas has not done much to improve the station facilities themselves. So the issues I heard about when I joined LCC are still the same - access between platforms, the subway, the narrowness of some of the platforms, poor catering facilities, etc. Yet Preston station has a glorious overall roof if only what is beneath it could be made more user friendly.

So what is being done? In recent weeks I have prepared two papers on the subject - one for Rail North and the other for DfT - and have given a presentation on behalf of Rail North to the DfT refranchising teams on the topic. I am very passionate about stations and the need to get it right this time. Stations are after all the gateway to the rail network and the passengers' first and last direct experience of using the network. Get them right and you enhance the whole experience of travelling by train.

As I discussed earlier many stations are in considerably better shape today, due in no small measure to local authority and CRP involvement, than they were 20 years ago; yet many still lack essential features such as real time information screens, public address systems, passenger help points, CCTV, cycle parking, etc.

The replacement Northern Rail and TPE franchises will need to address how the positive station developments that have been achieved to date will be sustained as well as setting out a framework for the encouragement of new ideas and projects. It is likely that the new franchises will need to be more market focused with greater business definition. For community rail this should result in greater management focus supported by a *customer experience & community engagement strategy* that sets out how Local Authorities, CRPs and the TOC will work together to achieve agreed outputs. There remains scope for the more proactive CRPs to look at taking a bigger role in station management.

Research shows that passengers like 'staff' at stations but this does not have to be a booking clerk sitting behind bullet proof glass in a warm booking office who never appears on the platform. The 'staff' may not even be railway staff it could be a local cafe operator located in a former railway building, a crèche facility for commuters, a local bakery, station friends working in the garden or railway staff who walk round the platforms providing a reassuring and authoritative presence as well as information. Stations need to be designed as convivial places that people want to go to rather than a 'distress purchase'.

Next time I will look at how Rail North is developing its partnership with DfT and how this will involve CRPs.

All Along the Watertower

Former ACoRP Secretary Philip Jenkinson takes a sideways look at the public transport media. Views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect ACoRP policy

We start this time with *Passenger Transport* 087 (11 July), which reveals that rising costs threaten delays to the Great Western electrification, at the same time confirming that the North West infill electrification scheme remained on time and on budget. 'Mystery Shopper' Alex Warner gives the Merseyrail operation a high rating, while John Nelson in his 'Comment' column, lends his weight to the increasing volume of critics stating "the neglect of railways in the North is wrong and it must end". Having said that I wonder where he's been all these years when he declares that he was 'amazed to discover' that his connection to Rotherham (a town whose size he overestimates by miles due to its giving its name to a much larger metropolitan borough) is a 'Pacer'; that he was 'aghast' to discover another such on a Saltburn service, and that other journeys on the units were a shock to his system. The poor dear has obviously been down south far too long! We've got nearly 100 of them up here, John; what did you think we did with them? Meanwhile here's Nick Richardson weighing in too with "is too much transport investment being channelled into Britain's capital city?" You bet it is! And before I'm accused of banging the North's drum too loudly I at least am very well aware that the West has equally good claims for neglect.

Today's Railways for August speculates editorially on George Osborne's 'HS3' proposal and wonders whether it has already had its 15 minutes of fame. Paul Abell reviews at length what he calls "a recent deluge of paperwork concerning the ... (Northern and TransPennine Express) franchises."

Incidentally I was interested to read that the increasingly militant pensioners' group organising demonstrations against South Yorkshire's withdrawal of free train travel call themselves 'Freedom Riders'. Does choosing the title of an old Traffic classic indicate that my generation is still not ready to lie down?

Rail these days has more of the flavour of a football programme than an objective publication but as long as you're happy to accept the way it 'talks up the team' its news coverage continues to be the best in the business. For instance a headline in *Rail* 752 (9 July) suggests that track doubling between Bolton and Blackburn is going ahead, an impression which is

dampened by the reality of the small print (the loop at Darwen might be extended by a mile or two).

The Northern re-franchising and 'HS3' take up quite a few column inches in this issue. Philip foresees one or two problems with the simplistic HS3 argument; Christian Wolmar suggests that before even dreaming of HS3 investment is needed to support and preserve the current service levels. *Industry Insider* joins in and argues that connectivity must take priority over operating convenience. Wolmar, incidentally, also ponders a problem area far from the North; the very real issue of what to do with the Isle of Wight, still running 1938 tube trains. There's another update on the Borders line and – returning to our 'bête noir' – a feature on the affordability of long-distance London commuting (which is what HS2 is really about in this writer's opinion)

Rail 753 (23 July) carries a major interview with Alex Hynes of Northern and only thinly disguises its disappointment at his suggestion that Pacers might well last beyond 2020. Wolmar considers the disproportionate charges that regional railways are expected to pay in studying a new PTEG document called *A Heavy Load to Bear*. A correspondent from Falmouth agrees with my own sentiments (above) about the South West but elsewhere in the same edition *Rail* waxes lyrical about the results of Network Rail's 'genuinely exciting' viable options for a Dawlish diversion.

Which returns me to my theme. For while *Rail* pumps up the volume, *Local Transport Today* 652 (25 July), reviewing the same study, reports that all the options represent very poor value for money. At the same time it reports Devon CC's plans to extend from Bere Alston to Tavistock. Elsewhere it reports on proposals to solve the rolling stock shortage in the North by using redundant London Underground trains. Given that the said trains are actually a bit older than Pacers this writer is not enthusiastic. Perhaps the Isle of Wight could use them?

And I haven't forgotten *Local Transport Today* 651 (11 July) which has its own take on how the long-term rail strategy for the North might sit with the area's local authorities (which is of course *LTT*'s niche in the transport publication market).