



RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



NOVEMBER 2008 BLOCKADE

Eshton Terrace is closed to road vehicles as RVR Committee Member Dean Weaver photographs the brand new Freightliner-liveried Class 66, 66956, slowly hauling a long rake of ballast



wagons northwards over Low Moor Level Crossing on 13 November 2008. The UP road has already been lifted and dug out ready for re-balling and track relaying.
Photo: W. Briggs

Number 86



Winter
2009

SANTA SERVICES 2008



Left: Santa and elves, Simon Clarke and Jason Wade, being snapped by Nigel Kirby (6/12)

Below 1: Something amuses Simon and Jason as Santa distributes goodie-bags (6/12);

Getting the message: youngsters examining Network Rail's "No Messin'" booklet (13/12)

Below 2: Santa and elf, Kieran O'Brien, pose with "clients" under the Clitheroe nameboard (13/12);

Dean Weaver and grandson, George, have their photo taken with Santa and his elves (13/12)

Below 3: An unexpected bonus for Santa Service customers: ex-LMS Stanier Black 5, 45407 Lancashire Fusilier, taking a lunch break at Blackburn (6/12);

A study in concentration: Off-duty elf, Kieran, complete with "No Messin'" beanie hat, gets stuck into his "No Messin'" booklet whilst sister, Aoifa, looks on and his off-duty elf Mum, Client Stakeholder Manager Kathryn O'Brien, enjoys a laugh with two, off-camera, RVR members (13/12).

All photos: W Briggs



EDITORIAL

N.B. Views expressed in RVRNews, ascribed or otherwise, are to be taken as those of the writer and may not represent either the views or policy of Ribble Valley Rail itself, unless otherwise specified.



Happy New Year! I'm just wondering what else I can say that won't have been said, overleaf, by the Chairman! Nevertheless, there are sentiments which must be echoed and/or enlarged upon. First of all, large sections of both lines were relaid last November in an operation carried out with almost military precision. The methods were as described in RVRN84 except that, this time, the lengths of continuous welded rail were laid singly from the opposite track and not by a machine travelling down the same track inserting both rails at once. My grateful thanks, and those of Peter Moore and Simon Clarke, must go to Karen Hornby of Network Rail for facilitating our "inspection" of the work in progress between Clitheroe station and Primrose viaduct. Despite the use of all the modern technology, like laser levelling devices and so forth, it was interesting to see the wooden sleepers on Primrose viaduct being aligned using that most ancient of implements, a skerritt!

The photographers were out in force and Nigel Kirby has had a field day constantly updating the website picture galleries. So popular has the RVR website become, that it's getting more hits than a dartboard and is in danger of exceeding its bandwidth.

The new track certainly gives a smooth ride, for which Santa was very glad. Fortunately for him there were still a few 20 mph slacks which made his life a bit easier, though he may have to up his work-rate a bit when the line speed is raised to 60 mph!

Elsewhere in this issue, David Butterworth details some of the new journey opportunities from the Ribble Valley which have been brought about by the December '08 timetable changes.

James Syson explains the Multi-Area Agreement, signed by the Prime Minister, the contents of which, if it does get implemented, should see some long called for improvements to the Blackburn - Bolton section. It appears that one of the first things on the agenda is doubling the track one mile either side of Darwen station. Quite what that will achieve is open to debate but, at least it's a start.

Also featured is a piece on level crossing risk-takers, put together from information supplied by Keith Lumley of Network Rail. I also recommend an up-to-date book on the subject by Stanley Hall, whom some of us remember as a YDNP walk guide from the days of the old original LCC-chartered DalesRails, another subject featured at some length.

So, you've got 24 tightly-packed pages and, if you're reading this, you've paid your subs, bought a copy, or receive a complimentary copy. Alternatively, you could be reading somebody else's. Some, but not many, of the "Extra Mailing List" have been persuaded to receive RVRNews by e-mail in .pdf format. Our member in Thailand, Colin Carr, gets his that way and thinks it's marvellous.

If you know someone who's interested in railways and/or the Ribble Valley get them to join RVR. You don't need an official Membership Form, just name & address on a piece of paper with a cheque to "RVR" for £6 (1-year) or £15 (3-years). One each would double the membership in a year. Why not come along to our meetings which are open to all members. The beer's cheap and the "entertainment" is free.

One meeting you shouldn't miss is the RVR 2009 AGM which will take place on Saturday 21st March 2009 in the Council Chamber of Ribble Valley Borough Council, Church Street, Clitheroe, 1.30pm for a 2.00pm start.

In a departure from the usual format, we welcome a guest speaker from Network Rail who, it is understood, will speak about the implementation of the Lancashire & Cumbria Route Utilisation Strategy and what it will mean for the Ribble Valley Line.

The Notice and Agenda paper is included with this RVRNews. The important business is the election of officers and committee and a motion to tighten up the wording of a clause in the RVR Constitution.

See you there!

W.A.Briggs

Peter's Platform*RVR Chairman, Peter Moore talking to Simon Clarke >>*

Since the last issue of RVRNews there have been some big changes to the line between Blackburn and Clitheroe, as a good portion of the line has been relaid. This work was carried out over two and a half weeks last November. It was completed efficiently and to time and has left us with a much smoother railway.

The bus replacement service ran very well and having an express between Clitheroe and Blackburn as well as a stopping service proved to be very successful. The publicity for these services was excellent and having dedicated poster cases at the bus stops was a great help. The outstanding speed restriction through the station at Clitheroe will be lifted in April this year and the installation of the additional signals at Whalley and Langho should both be completed by late June.

Soon after the completion of the works we ran our annual Santa Services and these proved, once again, to be very popular. I think they were the best we have ever done and a huge amount of praise is due to the organising team under the leadership of Marjorie Birch.

The new timetable, introduced in December, is settling in well and apart from a few teething problems is working well. I am particularly pleased to see the 22.01 departure from Manchester coming through to Clitheroe, giving people a better chance of an evening out. Maybe soon we will see the 23.00 departure also getting north of Blackburn! I am also pleased to see that the Clitheroe Line CRP's plea for extra trains at Entwistle has been answered - now all off-peak trains have request stops at the station.

In RVRN85 I commented that RVR could do with some new and younger recruits and, lo and behold, we have two new members one of whom is in his thirties and the other somewhat younger than that! This certainly helps lower the average age a bit!

There are a few of you who will be wondering where the raffle tickets were when your copy of RVRN85 dropped through the letterbox. It was decided that we would try a different time of year to hold our annual fund raising raffle and this will now take place over Community Rail & Clitheroe Festival Weekend in May. We are also having a stand at Chipping Steam Fair over the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May. We will be selling raffle tickets at this event as well.

Finally, to the much trumpeted signing of the Pennine Agreement by PM Gordon Brown. Let's hope that sufficient funding can be found to carry out the infrastructure works that will help create more capacity on the route between Clitheroe and Manchester. If successful this will see platform lengthening on RVL stations and strengthened trains on the route. We may even see a half hourly service between Blackburn and Manchester? Fingers crossed!



Peter is pictured on the Santa service on 6 December with the new Northern Rail Area Director North, Matthew Beeton who, at that date, had not yet officially taken up his post.

Photo: W Briggs

<p align="center">“To Hellifield And Back” Blackburn - Hellifield - Blackburn cab-ride DVD 1 hour 30 minutes. Price: £10 (+ £1p p&p). £9 (+ £1 p&p) to RVR Members. “DalesRail to Carlisle” and “DalesRail Return” Hellifield - Carlisle - Hellifield 2-DVD set Each disc 2 hours. The set is priced at £16 (+ £1 p&p). £15 (+ £1 p&p) to RVR Members. Purchase all three DVDs for £25 (+ £1 p&p), (£23 + p&p to RVR Members) Cheques (made out to Ribble Valley Rail) with order to W.A.Briggs, 55 Bank Head Lane, Hoghton, PRESTON, PR5 0AB, (quoting RVR membership number, if applicable). Please allow 28 days for delivery. Also available from Clitheroe or Blackburn TICs.</p>
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2008 Santa Services – the best ever!



I think that everyone involved would agree that the 2008 Santa Services were the best we've ever had. We started our planning early and the support from the committee was outstanding with every member giving of their time to work on the services.

A team of helpers packed over 500 bags of high quality presents which this year was made up of donations from BT Police, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Booths Supermarket, Lancashire County Council, Network Rail and Northern Rail.

This year, Santa had two additional elves, both managers at Northern, Jason Wade and Kathryn O'Brien who brought along her son Kieran to lend a hand. The newly-appointed Area Manager North, Matt Beeton, with a colleague Wayne Dixon, travelled with us on the first Saturday.

As we did not sell raffle tickets this year we produced a RVR Christmas card to give out to adult passengers on the trains. The cards contained a brief history of RVR, a membership form and details of the return train times from Clitheroe. They were such a success that we had to print extra copies for the second Saturday.

The train crews were excellent and entered into the spirit of the event and they were supported by Community Support Officers from BT Police.

Most importantly of all, the children enjoyed every minute of the journey and, after receiving their biscuits and drinks, waited with anticipation for Santa and were delighted with their gifts. At Blackburn on 6th Dec, children of all ages had the added bonus of seeing Stanier Black 5, 45407 *Lancashire Fusilier*, as its excursion train took a lunch-time lay-over.

We couldn't operate these services without the contributions we receive from businesses and organisation in the local area, in particular Abbey Biscuits, D Byrne & Co for the sherry, Northern for the mince pies and Booths supermarket for the crisps, sweets and drinks.

Our only concern for 2009 is now that the speed restrictions have been lifted on the line, due to the improvements, will Santa manage to see everyone before we arrive in Clitheroe?

Marjorie Birch, Chair of Santa Services Committee

On 16.12.08 Simon Clarke also wrote to the relevant "Railway" people:-

Just to thank you all for your input to the Ribble Valley Rail Santa Services that took place on Saturdays 6th & 13th December. They were, once again, very successful - our best year yet, we think! We gave out over 400 goody bags to children. The quality of the contents was very high and thanks must go to all those who contributed gifts.

Without doubt, thanks must also go to those in Train Planning and Control who were able to provide the correct units, in very difficult circumstances, to make the services workable. The crews from Manchester Victoria must also be thanked for their unstinting good humour and their patience in putting up with Santa and his helpers.

Without all the prior organisation and planning these services would be virtually impossible to run effectively and this year we demonstrated what good teamwork can achieve. A number of customers have taken the time to thank us for the pleasure we give to their children and this says more than anything about how successful the 2008 Santa Services have been.

Could we also take this opportunity to invite you to the next RVR Committee Meeting on Monday 5th January 2009 in the New Inn at Clitheroe, when RVR will be laying on a pie and pea supper to thank everyone who was involved with this year's Santa Services?

Thanks once again!

Simon

Unfortunately, owing to sickness and prior commitments, only one "Railway" person was able to attend. However RVR's unwillingness to waste any of the pie & peas resulted in the recruitment of a new member!

NOTES & NEWS

many thanks to all contributors



Gordon Wilson, Alan Bowles, Brian Haworth, Ken Roberts, David Butterworth, Brian Race.

Friends of Stations

At **Clitheroe** Gordon Wilson (01200 426214) reports that the P2 fence has become increasingly decrepit and will no longer support hanging baskets. The ash trees adjacent to P1 have become dangerously lopsided and need felling as their roots have started to disrupt the platform foundations. The UP track is still a dirty mess and hasn't been attended to. Let's hope, when it is relaid, later this year, that it will be kept a bit cleaner. All the baskets and containers have been emptied of flowers and the large planters (on all the stations) need topping-up with soil. A new source for plants for this Spring is being investigated.

At **Whalley** Alan Bowles (01254 823331) reports that it is becoming increasingly clear that strangers to the area, alighting at Whalley, need a sign on the road directing them to Whalley or to Mitton. The station lights timer has not been adjusted to take into account the later time of the last train, resulting in the platforms being plunged into darkness about five minutes before the train is due. The planters need a hefty top-up and an offer of spring bulbs has been received. The December '08 timetables have been distributed to the usual outlets in the village.

At **Langho** a damaged shelter window has been replaced. Signage to the station has still not reappeared after, now, SEVEN YEARS & TEN months!

At **Ramsgreave & Wilpshire** Ken Roberts (01254 264772) has been kept busy tidying up. There were a couple of minor incidents of damage prior to Christmas but the current problem is plastic bags of rubbish being thrown onto the car park. A CCTV notice has appeared at the entrance to P2, but another is required for P1. As usual, the PA system is giving out bogus information.

At **Blackburn** a full-width canopy and re-surfacing have been promised for P4. Timescale?

At **Darwen** Brian Race (01254 247575) has been kept busy litter-picking and reporting damage which unfortunately seems to continue at this station. Drinkers gathering on Darwen station are causing damage and intimidating passengers. It is the worst-affected station on the Clitheroe to Manchester line. Although cases of vandalism are 'comparatively low', litter is the greatest problem.

At **Entwistle** one of the decorative signs has become dislodged. As nearly every train will now stop there by request, Entwistle has become much easier to get to/from.

Brian Haworth (01254 247844)

Bus Replacement during November Blockade

The December RVR meeting received a debriefing from Mark White of First Bus Replacement regarding the replacement buses. It was generally accepted that, with one notable not-to-be-repeated exception, things had gone very well. The "Express" and "Stopping" services were a good idea, though there appeared to be room for improvement on fare-collection. The buses provided by Transdev for the stopping service were ideal and the First Bus staff at the railway stations did a good job. Mark thanked everyone involved for their co-operation. It was an example of all the stakeholders pulling together.

Date for celebration

Easter Saturday, 11 April 2009, will be the 20th Anniversary of the reprieve of the Settle & Carlisle and Blackburn – Hellifield lines.

The New Timetable – what it means for Ribble Valley residents

David Butterworth

The changes to the National Rail Timetable (NRTT) which came into force in mid-December constitute the greatest alterations for many years. The completion of the West Coast Main Line rebuild and the introduction of the Virgin Very High Frequency services to and from London Euston have had a significant spin-off effect on many secondary routes. Services within south Manchester for instance have changed radically whilst others have seen less upheaval. Such is the case with the Ribble Valley line services (Clitheroe to Manchester) where there have been often welcome but still fairly minor changes. Below are examples of what can now be achieved by rail from our valley. 'Old' refers to the pre-14 December timetable whilst 'new' refers to the current one, valid to mid-May 2009. For simplicity reference is made to Clitheroe but the same results, with adjusted times apply to the other RV stations. Typical journeys are shown; there may be exceptions.

To/from Manchester In general services depart 4 minutes later than previously, giving a 21 minute journey to Blackburn (previously 26 minutes) and 1h12 to Manchester Victoria (previously 1h20). For some reason the return journey from Manchester is 2 minutes slower (1h17) but faster from Blackburn (now 25 minutes compared with 27 previously). The recently spruced-up Entwistle now becomes a request stop for the majority of services, providing an hourly frequency in each direction. It remains to be seen whether Network Rail will increase the overall line speed from 45 mph to 60 mph when all the track renewal between Clitheroe and Blackburn has been completed. This will obviously improve the service but will cause serious problems for Father Christmas as he attempts to get through a four-coach train as it 'flies' north of Blackburn! However, that is not in itself a good enough reason for resisting an increase in line speed.

To/from Preston For quite some time Preston has been something of a no-no by train. The outward journey was not too bad but a 37 minute wait at Blackburn on the return killed any enthusiasm. On the outward journey there is now a 14 minute connection at Blackburn, with an overall journey time of 52 minutes, whilst on the return what once took 1h21, with that dreaded 37 minute wait, now takes 55 minutes. The connection at Blackburn is now a sensible 6 to 10 minutes. The only fly in the ointment is that the 17.44 peak-hour departure from Preston still involves that dreaded 38 minute connection. Not good for a worker who does the trip every day.

To/from London The many professional people who live in the Ribble Valley region often need to reach the capital for meetings, etc. There are two routes by train; either via Preston or Manchester. The new timetable shows that, using the first train out of Clitheroe, it is possible to reach London by 11.00 (but this involves changes at Blackburn, Preston and Crewe). Going via Manchester (having changed at Bolton) gives an arrival in London at 11.04 (a 3h57 journey time compared with the previous 4h06 and 11.09 arrival). One used to have to return on the 18.08 from Euston, changing at Preston and Blackburn (oops, 37 minute wait) to arrive in Clitheroe at 22.15. A similar departure time (now 18.30) gives a 44 minute connection at Preston but only 6 minutes at Blackburn. However, one can now leave Euston at 19.30 and travel via Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate (a 25 minute connection for a walk which takes a maximum 10 minutes) then changing again at Bolton (8 minutes) to arrive in Clitheroe at 23.15. It is a pity it is not more straightforward to reach London from our area. One can imagine that many will still prefer to drive to Preston, at least once the new multi-storey car park is completed.

To/from Liverpool The north west's second city has always been hard to reach by train from the Ribble Valley. A typical journey with changes at Bolton and Oxford Road takes 2h08, whilst going via Manchester Victoria and using the 'stopper' to Liverpool takes 3h03. An afternoon return via Preston takes 2h21 whilst using the Victoria 'stopper' takes 2h28. There is no straightforward way of getting to Liverpool without numerous changes or slow trains.

To/from York There has been little change to the previous pattern where the outward journey takes around 2h40 and the return a lengthy 3 hours, mainly due again to a long wait at Blackburn (35 minutes).

Morecambe anyone? Prior to the timetable change it was possible to make an early start and reach sunny Morecambe on one train (07.51 from Clitheroe), taking just 1h30. Due to pathing

constraints north of Preston this train no longer runs. The replacement journey now involves changes at Blackburn, Preston and Lancaster and takes 1h46. Admittedly more connectional inconvenience but not much more journey time overall. A late afternoon return, with the same changes, takes 2h21, of which 43 minutes is taken up with (you guessed it) a 43 minute stay in glorious Blackburn.

To/from Glasgow or Edinburgh Overall, the journey opportunities to Scotland have improved. Previously the first arrival into Glasgow was at 11.28, taking 4h25. Now the same first train from Clitheroe gives an arrival at 10.36 (3h29). Again it is now possible to reach Edinburgh at 11.10 instead of 12.19. The last possible return from Glasgow is now at 18.40 (previously 18.10), reaching Clitheroe at 22.17. The greatest improvement is coming back from Edinburgh, where it previously took 5h24, having left Edinburgh at 16.51. One can now stay until 18.11 and take just 4h06 to reach Clitheroe at 22.17. The journey planner shows that it is also possible to leave at 18.52, travel the Wigan stations and reach Clitheroe on the last train at 23.14 (but you would need to check if this is a permitted route).

Going abroad? The opening of the amazing ‘new’ St Pancras station has created a whole range of new journey opportunities, even from Ribbles Valley stations. Paris is but a 7h27 journey from Clitheroe, leaving at 08.26, changing at Bolton, Piccadilly and Euston/St Pancras, arriving in Paris at 16.53 (local time). The return fare from Manchester to Paris is from £84. Admittedly the London stations transfer and check-in is a bit tight on this journey so a Eurostar departure at 15.00 would be easier (arrival 18.56). It is even possible to reach Basel (just inside Switzerland) by 21.15. I can personally recommend ‘Leisure Select’ on Eurostar (free champagne and plenty of food) and a ‘wizz’ down the TGV Est. *Superbe.*

Entwistle Request Stop

Info: Richard Watts, David Butterworth, & Bill Briggs

RVR has long campaigned for **all** trains to stop, by request, at Entwistle. Partnership efforts have now succeeded in obtaining:- UP & Down: Mon-Sat 18/23, Sun 15/15 trains. Most trains take 50 minutes for the journey between Man Vic and Blackburn with the fastest journeys being on Sundays when there is no call at Salford Central and services take 48 mins.

Between the old and new timetables there is no significant change to the Darwen – Bromley X timings (with or without the Entwistle stop). The typical time between stations, with the stop at Entwistle, was 12 minutes whilst the new typical time is 13 minutes. However in the old TT there was at least one journey without the Entwistle call which took 14 minutes.

More importantly, the overall journey time from Clitheroe – Man Vic has **reduced** from 1h14 to 1h11, even with a much increased opportunity to join/alight at Entwistle. Also, contrary to what is stated in the *LT* press cutting, the usual Mon-Fri time from Blackburn to Man Vic is 48 min (10/18 “stoppers”), **not** 51 min (it used to be 50 min). In the old TT Darwen – Bromley X timings generally allowed for a stop at Entwistle even though it may not have been included for a particular journey. Why the UP journey is faster than the DOWN is not clear.

Entwistle station is, in many ways, an unlikely survivor but, having survived, it is a handy starting point for walks in the West Pennine area and this is the reason the additional request stops have been added to the timetable. The aim is to make it a more usable station and to promote walking opportunities from the station to access that beautiful area of countryside with a link to the BwDBC website and the Warpers’ Trail which starts at Entwistle station and the Strawberry Duck!

See: http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Warpers_Trail.pdf

Reopening dreams

Info: LT 4.1.09

Lib Dem Cllrs on BwDBC have called for Spring Vale (closed 2.8.58) and Turton & Edgworth (closed 3.2.61) stations to be reopened. However, re-doubling of the track between Bolton and Blackburn is a “must” before even considering adding two extra stops to an already tight schedule and “fat chance” of the £2m+ required for the stations themselves. Still, “... You gotta have a dream...” [NB This re-opeing “dream” does not have the official support of RVR whose stated aim is the restoration of passenger services between Clitheroe and Hellifield. Ed.]

Multi-area agreement signals the way for improved local rail services

Info: James Syson, Principal Transport Planner BwDBC, Chair CLCRP and ELCRP

With the Pennine Lancashire multi-area agreement (MAA) having been officially agreed and signed by the Government, the Department for Transport will now work with local authorities, Northern and Network Rail to facilitate the introduction of enhancements to the Clitheroe to Manchester rail line and also strengthen the Todmorden curve business case. The sticking point, in the past, has been convincing the Government that these local rail enhancements have been a priority.

This agreement between Councils in Pennine Lancashire and the Government sets out a local rail vision which will help improve people's lives and the local economy. An MAA Rail Project Board has now been established to progress both schemes. The MAA for Pennine Lancashire, which is designed to be a cross-boundary local area agreement, brings together key players in flexible ways to tackle issues that are best addressed in partnership – at a regional and sub-regional level.

The Pennine Lancashire MAA has highlighted that without improved transport links the productivity and wealth gap between Pennine Lancashire, the North West, and the rest of the country will continue to widen. Research has already indicated that poor connectivity between Pennine Lancashire and Greater Manchester is the main constraint affecting greater interaction between these two economies and improvements to the local rail network could help address this imbalance.

Fair progress has already been made on the Clitheroe to Manchester rail infrastructure project since Autumn 2008. A desktop timetabling study, commissioned by BwDBC and undertaken by ARUP, investigated the viability of implementing a half-hourly, off-peak rail service between Manchester Victoria and Blackburn. ARUP identified that in order to achieve a robust timetable certain engineering solutions would need to be developed and implemented which include a 2 mile extension of the Darwen loop (one mile north and one mile south of Darwen station) and Turton Level Crossing line speed improvements. The overall cost, at a +/-50% estimating accuracy, was identified as approximately £9m.

A series of meetings has subsequently been held with DfT, MPs, Network Rail, Northern Rail and NWDA in order to progress the scheme through Network Rail's GRIP process. It has also been agreed that information contained within the ARUP report should now be verified by consultants with a full operational analysis, using standard software such as RailSys, in order to help better inform the MAA Rail Project Board of the exact engineering solutions required and their cost.

On 12 January 2009 The Prime Minister signed an agreement which includes the improvement of rail links. If the government honours its pledge, key junctions of the M65 will be widened, more than 1,000 public-sector jobs will move to the region, and multimillion pound business parks will be set up. Sceptics argue that this is just another case of Government spin.

Reinstating the Todmorden Curve link would re-establish a direct rail service between Burnley and Manchester, potentially benefiting 170,000 people by giving journey times to Manchester of 38 minutes from Burnley, and 49 from Accrington. At present only 2.6% of Burnley residents, and 3.6% from Blackburn, commute into Manchester. Poor transport links, notably the infrequent train service, have been deemed to be the main barrier to the area's growth. 90,000 new jobs are expected to be created in Greater Manchester in coming years and, with increased congestion on the M66, the rail commuter market is seen as vital.

CAT [15.1.09] says; If the Government honours its pledge, this could result in a more frequent, reliable, safe and affordable rail service, carrying twice as many passengers by 2014. [My italics! Ed.]

Chmn M says that if all the improvements get the go-ahead, there would be double track, improved signalling, longer platforms for longer and more frequent trains. It is an exciting prospect.

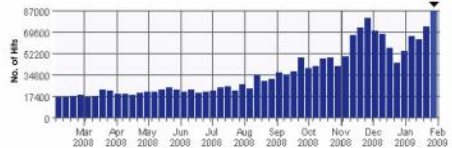
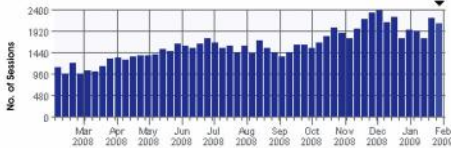
Richard Watts, LCC Rail Projects Manager, grounds our feet firmly by stressing that talks are in their early stages and no decisions have been rubber-stamped, yet.

“Pennine Lancashire” is made up of six East Lancashire local authorities, Ribble Valley, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale, and Blackburn with Darwen.

Website News

Nigel Kirby, Webmaster, writes:

RVRN85 reported a weekly average of about 1500 visitors to the RVR website (measured by “Sessions”). This number rocketed to a peak of almost 2400, and has remained at about 2000 almost every week since then, with the expected slight dip over the Festive Season. The website statistics for the week beginning 25 January 2009 indicate that the number of visitors has dropped very slightly, to 2087. Hits (files accessed) have reached an all-time high of 86739. The relevant information, regularly updated, may be accessed via the Home Page, and there is strong evidence that the site continues to attract new visitors. Files, on the website for some time, are still being viewed.



The popularity of the website increased following the November Blockade. The small panel on the Home Page, showing the dates and brief details of updates as they are made, may have helped. Many are only accessing the Home and Timetable sections, presumably just to obtain train running info etc., exactly as intended. Blockade pictures were posted on the site within an hour of receipt and progress monitored on a daily basis. Many thanks to all those who contributed photos.

The advent of the new timetables, operative from 14th December 2008, was an opportunity to provide, not only quick links to those published by Northern but also to provide them in the format of the National Rail Timetable, supplemented by the tables covering the East and West Coast Main Lines (Tables 26 & 65 respectively), Cross Country services (Table 51), the service linking Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Peterborough and Norwich (Table 49), used by so many, plus Table 41, by which the *complete service* between York/Colne and Preston/Blackpool may be accessed without the need to use two separate timetables.

The Picture Galleries have been updated, including an interesting new one provided by Peter Bleasdale - “West Somerset Railway (Bishop’s Lydeard - Minehead) Heritage Railway” and the “Gilling East (North Yorkshire) Outdoor Model Railway”. Ted Buckley recently sent photos of the fascinating and probably quite unique “Wuppertal Suspension Railway”.

My own project, to display photographs on the right-hand side of the Home Page of each station in the North West, is now underway, having received immense help from Simon Clarke and Brian Haworth. I strive to update the website on an almost daily basis and have incorporated, at Colin Carr’s suggestion, the panel close to the top left of the Home page listing details of recent updates. As always, I am most grateful to the contributors, who spend much time taking photographs and/or writing original articles, all of which helps to keep the website fresh and vibrant.

Dr. Paul Salveson MBE

Congratulations to RVR Member Paul Salveson, Northern Rail’s Head of Government and Community Strategies, who received his MBE, awarded for “Services to the Rail Industry”, from HM The Queen on 4 November 2008.

Paul has some interesting publications on his website: www.littlenorthernbooks.co.uk

Rebuilt Stalybridge conservatory opens

Info: Keith Lumley

On Friday 30 Jan 2009 Lord Pendry opened the rebuilt conservatory that forms part of the famous buffet bar on Stalybridge station and replaces the original 123-year-old structure.

[Highly recommended! Ed.]

www.bufferbar.freewebspace.com

Page 11 Upper Photo: Notice the fashions! The gentleman’s hat seems rather out of keeping with his 1940s-look mackintosh. The lady’s hat and coat, however, were very “in”. Her hat could well have been real fur and the black wool coat with the three large buttons and faux fur collar was the height of fashion. My late wife possessed one but my Grannie had a pair of those boots! Ed.



THEN In January 1960 two passengers and the Guard pick their way carefully through the snow along the “Wigan bay” at Blackburn station whilst, on the main line a Stanier Black 5 and a Standard 4MT wait for the signal to proceed, probably to Lower Darwen MPD. Photo: Ken Roberts

NOW Snow but no platform! On 2 February 2009 a Fastline OTM DR77325 occupies a line adjacent to the “Wigan bay” whilst a Network Rail track gang attends to potentially frozen points. Photo: W Briggs





NOVEMBER BLOCKADE

Above (L-R): Rail Replacement Bus poster at Blackburn station; Nigel Kirby's next-door neighbour boards at R&W; Messrs Large and Little, First Bus co-ordinators, at ClTF. Photos: W. Briggs
Below 1: Sleeper-placing machine, Bawdlands bridge; laying rail on the DOWN road at Henthorn; Pandrol-clipper in action south of Low Moor LX. **Below 2:** Night time behind Booths: the tamper (L) in action, working "wrong line" followed by the ballast plough (R). Photos: P. Bleasdale. **Below 3:** (L) Low Moor Level Crossing with the UP road removed. (R) RVR "Official" inspection on 24 November, showing the relaid UP road and the bottom stone of the DOWN compacted ready to receive ballast, sleepers, and rails within a few hours. Photo: S. Clarke.





NOVEMBER BLOCKADE

Looking south from a footbridge towards Langho station, two road-rail machines are seen working northwards, lifting old track panels from the UP road at Mytton Fold Farm.

Photo: S. Clarke.



RVR "Official" Inspection

Close-up of a road-railer at rest on the newly-laid UP track between Clitheroe station and Bawdlands bridge.

Photo: S. Clarke.



RVR "Official" inspection

Primrose viaduct looking northwards towards Clitheroe. Hardwood sleepers, a necessity on viaducts to allow the fitting of guard rails, give way to steel sleepers. The rails on the wooden sleepers will be fastened with the familiar style of Pandrol clips (the blue ones seen on the right) whilst the new-style of insulated clip can be seen ready to receive rails onto the steel sleepers, ahead.

The signal in the centre of picture is HJ7R and, just visible beyond the bridge, HJ7 which controls Low Moor level crossing.

Photo: W. Briggs

A DalesRail precursor

Once again, despite gaps in the service due to track maintenance work, the 2008 DalesRail service proved to be popular and passenger numbers increased.

The DalesRail leaders, led by the effervescent Howard Hammersley, have once again planned and presided over an excellent and varied walks programme which has catered for all ages and abilities. Their professionalism in arranging and leading these walks cannot be faulted and their commitment is vital to the continuing success of DalesRail.

Whilst the original DalesRail (from Yorkshire) was the brainchild of Colin Speakman, and the *current* DalesRail format can be traced back to Lancashire County Council initiatives, I have recently uncovered a document printed by BR in 1957 which is uncannily like the DalesRail experience.

This ramblers' train, advertised to run on the 12th May 1957, did not run over RV metals but the formula, with guides provided and graded walks, is remarkably similar to the current operation. As can be seen from the handbill, the train ran from Blackburn to Hellifield via Colne and Skipton before heading off up the S&C. Top price was four shillings and sixpence from Blackburn to Garsdale.

Interestingly, the 09.40 departure from Blackburn almost mirrors the current departure of the first DalesRail service and gave an arrival time of 12.31 at Garsdale compared with the current 09.30 departure from Blackburn which gives a 11.08 arrival at Garsdale. Currently the latest departure from Garsdale is 18.40 giving a 20.14 arrival at Blackburn. In 1957 the departure time from Garsdale was 19.20 pm with a 22.11 arrival back at Blackburn – a much longer journey making a much longer day!

It would seem that the development of the DalesRail service has followed on from the organised rambles of the '50s and carried forward their ideas. There is, however, one aspect of the handbill, which has definitely not been brought forward – imagine the outcry if next year's DalesRail cover featured a gentleman smoking a pipe!!

Brian Haworth

DalesRail 2008

2008 was another successful year despite a repeat of the wet weather of the previous summer with only three completely dry Sundays. Engineering work on the Settle-Carlisle Line resulted in three Sundays in July being missed but regular passengers were able to observe the efficient replacement of the Up track between Chatburn and Hellifield and then enjoy the smooth and speedier running on it later in the season.

Despite the weather, a total of 5202 passengers (10404 passenger journeys) used the DalesRail trains. This gave an average loading of 236 across both trains – the third best average since records began in 1991. The average number of walkers was 133 but only 39 children in total used the service, reflecting the low patronage by family groups. One noticeable aspect was the state of the rolling stock – decidedly tired and dirty, especially the ex-Arriva units.

On a positive note both Whalley and Clitheroe showed encouraging increases in passengers joining DalesRail services. Whalley is becoming an important park & ride location for passengers travelling from NE Lancs whilst Clitheroe is used by a significant number of tourists to the area as well as locals. It is important that Ribble Valley hotels and tourist offices have a supply of DalesRail brochures to tap this market.

Responses to a passenger survey carried out by Simon Clarke and Brian Haworth on the October 5th train revealed the importance of the DalesRail website, www.dalesrail.com, and a high positive rating for the service.

Passenger numbers joining at Ribble Valley stations were as follows:

Ramsgrave & Wilpshire	296
Langho	84
Whalley	664
Clitheroe	829

Clitheroe's total was the highest of any station used by Dalesrail.

The 2009 season isn't so far away and commences on Easter Sunday, April 12th. There will be more disruption in the coming year due to engineering works, with no trains on July 12th, 19th & 26th. There is currently (Dec '08) some uncertainty about August 30th and whether DalesRail will run after September 6th.

However, there will be the usual comprehensive programme of guided walks as well as some new themes for town tours. The Wensleydale bus link will run again but with variations in route and destinations. Likewise, the regular Dentdale bus has been replaced in part by a service giving access to the northern Howgill Fells. Other destinations for connecting coaches will include Killhope in Weardale, the Lyvennet Valley and Middleton in Teesdale and the Upper Tees. So there is much to look forward to in the coming year and, if the sun shines, many delightful days in the Dales.

Craig Ward

Apology to customers

Info: L.T. 29.12.08 & Northern Rail

Northern Rail's Lancashire and Cumbria punctuality figures for the four-weeks to early December dipped to 84.9% compared with a 91.3% average for the year. Lee Wasnidge, Area Director (West) has apologised to customers, citing signalling cable thefts, bad weather and unexpected train crew shortages. No-one can blame this on the trains between Blackburn and Clitheroe because for three out of the four weeks there weren't any!

Kathryn O'Brien says that the new timetable, introduced on the 14th December, has largely been well received. We are aware of the performance issues particularly during the first couple of weeks, but we are hopeful that these have been resolved. The line is now showing a steady improvement and currently performance is averaging 91.11%. Since the start of the new timetable, the 07-07 Clitheroe to Manchester Victoria has had 4 cancellations, due to crew illness, crew availability, overrun of a possession at Bamber Bridge, and the unit being late off Blackpool. Cancellations can be caused by a variety of problems including cable theft, points failure, track circuit failure, flooding, possession overrun, traincrew shortages and unit problems.

Executive executions

Marjorie Birch

Chair and Vice-Chair attended the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership meeting on 12 January 2009. Items discussed included the Pendle Connect – which is “buy your ticket on the bus and include rail travel” - and the East Lancs Day Ranger, which includes rail and bus, covers Clitheroe, Skipton, Preston, Burnley, Nelson and Colne, and outlying areas for a very reasonable cost of £10.

In light of the recent much-publicised Pennine Lancashire agreement, which was signed by the Prime Minister in January 2009, the opportunity has been provided to look at the possibility of doubling parts of the line between Blackburn and Bolton.

On the “domestic front”, we have revisited the Aims of RVR that were last used in 2003 and improved them to take account of changes since that time. If any member feels that we have omitted anything, or need to be more specific in some areas, please e-mail me at: rjm.raydale@tiscali.co.uk

Looking at spreading the word re RVR and hopefully encouraging new members, we have received an application form to attend Chipping Steam Fair on 23rd, 24th and 25th May 10-00am till 5-00pm. We are planning to book an indoor stall, with electricity, and PM is taking his caravan across for the 3 days. The raffle, this year, will coincide with Community Rail Day/Clitheroe Festival and the Steam Fair.

The RVR Power Point presentation needs updating and we have set up a working group, comprising David Butterworth, Brian Haworth, Simon Clarke, Ken Geddes and Dean Weaver, to look at this.

In dealing with the Press, it has been agreed that if anyone is approached for comment they should direct the person to the RVR Press & Publicity Officer (*viz*: Chmn M). The response will be in the form of an e-mail, which will be approved by the Executive before being sent to the relevant newspaper or publication, to ensure that the views of RVR are represented accurately.

Level crossing ‘risk-runners’ targeted in campaign

Info: K Lumley and Bill Briggs

Motorists and pedestrians who put lives in danger by flouting traffic laws at level crossings are being targeted in a new information campaign by Network Rail. Taking a random week towards the end of Nov '08, the crossings at Birkdale, Ainsdale and Freshfield were monitored between 7am and 7pm each day. Network Rail was staggered at the amount of misuse. At Birkdale, 133 vehicles and 83 pedestrians were involved in ‘near misses’, 144/114 at Ainsdale, and 62/68 respectively at Freshfield.

Nationally, there are about 7,600 level crossings and in 2008, 13 people were killed on them as a result of collisions between road vehicles and trains. Such incidents pose the biggest risk to railway safety, which is why Network Rail re-launched its national TV and radio adverts towards the end of last year and is following them up with localised campaigns.

Nationally, between January and September 2008 there were 2,636 recorded incidents of level crossing misuse. The true figure is much higher. Of nearly 900 incidents involving a vehicle, 128 were categorised as a ‘near miss’. Pedestrians were involved in over 200 near misses.

The work on this campaign is running in parallel with other Network Rail and industry initiatives to minimise the safety risk at level crossings. These include:

Network Rail’s dedicated community safety team which aims to reduce railway crime and provide young people with positive activities to fill their time. Development of solutions which could lead to the replacement of some crossings. Development of obstacle-detection systems. Developing better and cost-effective ways of detecting and recording level crossings misuse. Working with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service to improve the prosecution of offenders.

Statistics/ Scale of the problem

Total number of reported incidents

Year	Near miss	Misuse	Grand Total
2003	421	1737	2158
2004	380	1968	2348
2005	414	2425	2839
2006	378	2843	3221
2007	376	2520	2896
2008	365	2271	2636 (Jan to Sept)

Jan-Sep 2008, 14% of all misuse incidents resulted in a near miss. Vehicle Incidents. 34% (885) of incidents involved a vehicle. On average three vehicles were involved in a near miss every week (128 total) and there were 13 collisions between a road vehicle and a train (Jan-Sept 08) .

Fatalities (not including suicides): 12 people have been killed on level crossings in 2008 30 people have been killed on level crossings since 2006. Highest yearly total in recent years was 14 (excluding 2004 when the Ufton Nervet incident occurred where a person, apparently intent on suicide, deliberately drove his car onto the tracks).

Pedestrians: There were 1751 incidents involving a pedestrian (Jan-Sep 2008) 237 pedestrians were involved in near misses.

General: Level crossings are safe if used correctly. There are over 7,600 level crossings both on public and private land that cut across the UK railway network and deaths at UK level crossings are low by international standards – amongst the lowest in Europe and worldwide.

The culprits: 95% of accidents at level crossings are caused by misuse or error – i.e. drivers ignoring red signals, barriers and klaxons.

The dangers: Road vehicles misusing level crossings are the single biggest risk to the railway of a major train crash. Misuse is predominantly by deliberate violations. Between a car and a train there will only ever be one winner but, a collision between a lightweight rail unit and a heavy road vehicle poses a greater danger to train passengers and crew.

Recommended reading: *Level Crossings* by Stanley Hall and Peter van der Mark. 290x215mm 128pp, 117 colour and 82 b&w photos. Ian Allan Publishing Ltd, Horsham, Surrey, KT12 4RG 2008; ISBN (10) 0 7110 3308 0, ISBN (13) 978 0 7110 3308 5. Publisher’s price £19.99.

Manchester Transport Extravaganza

Info: P Dawson

The Manchester Museum of Science and Industry is planning a Transport Week from Saturday 8 August 2009 until Sunday 16 Aug 2009. Transport present throughout the week will consist of buses, trams, steam road vehicles, cars, lorries, and military vehicles. On the first weekend the museum will also be the start for the “A6 Rally”.

The museum’s own railway, standard gauge and main line connected, will be much in evidence with its own working locos and hopefully a big main line steam locomotive coming in. Vintage bus shuttles will operate throughout, linking the ‘Heaton Park Tramway’ and the ‘Manchester Transport Museum’ to this event.

The ‘Garratt 100’ celebrations will be a major part of the week’s events, especially between Friday the 14th and Sunday the 16th. This part of the event will seek to reunite former Beyer Peacock employees with their products etc. and, served from the museum by a vintage bus, guided tours of the quite extensive remains of the BP Gorton Works are planned. It is hoped that ‘Garratt 100’ will have 100 many and varied Garratts on display, running from small ‘N’ gauge models right up to the size of those running on the Welsh Highland Railway.

Change and (anything but) decay in all around I see.

Bill Briggs

[with apologies to Revd. Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)]

As mentioned on p6, Easter Saturday, 11 April 2009, will be the 20th anniversary of the reprieve of the Settle & Carlisle and Blackburn – Hellifield lines. TWENTY YEARS!! What a difference those twenty years have made. I decided to have a look back at the RVRNews of the time.

The 12-page Feb 1989 edition, RVRN7, edited by the late Paula Donaldson, concentrated on the gloomy political machinations of the closure proposals.

I well remember that Tuesday afternoon (11.4.89) when Peter Moore, Bob Greenwod, Ron Birch, and myself crowded into the upstairs committee room of the Clitheroe Conservative Club to hear Michael Portillo announce that the lines not only would **not** close but would see significant investment. Within hours, work began on waterproofing and relaying Ribblehead viaduct!

8-page RVRN8, which appeared in May was, obviously, a totally different kettle of fish! Paula perfectly summed up the Settle & Carlisle Joint Action Cttee and RVR: “It is clear that talking to Local Authorities, British Rail, and other interested parties in an informed and reasoned manner will achieve more than shouting the odds” and looked forward to a renewed battle for a train service.

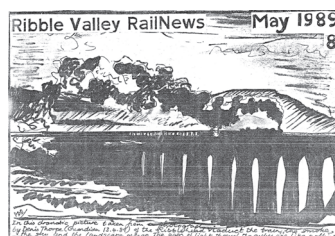
Yours truly, wrote a letter to RVRNews, *[Thereby sealing my fate for the next 20 years! Ed.]* saying that it was a Red Letter day and a victory for common sense but that the previous 11 months had been a set-back and we were only just ahead of the position on 16 May 1988 when ex-MoT Mitchell was “minded to close”. A restored passenger service still had a long way to go.

We still had only the one station, Clitheroe (fit for occasional use for DalesRail and the odd specials), but 1990 saw the Summer Sats-only Shopper services from Preston and, later, a winter extension in the form of the RVR Santa Specials. The Leeds University study resulted in a restored service as far as Clitheroe. 1993 saw the rebuilding of the stations and 1994 the reintroduction of the service from Manchester. Blackburn station has been totally rebuilt - not to everyone’s satisfaction.

Since reintroduction, the service has had about four changes of “ownership”, the latest definitely the best. In 1989 we had a track barely fit for purpose. This year we expect the line speed to be lifted to 60mph on beautifully relaid modern track.

We have four well looked-after stations in the Ribble Valley itself and have extended our Friends of Stations activities as far south as Entwistle. The trains, including Sundays, are well patronised.

What more could we wish for? Well, 23.00 ex-Vic through to Clitheroe would be a start, and Clitheroe-Hellifield, of course, remains our ultimate aim.



RAILWAY CUTTINGS*assembled by Kathleen Sharples**[extracts are from The Daily Telegraph unless otherwise stated]*

Rail fare rises. *[Sunday Telegraph 14.12.08]* ATOC denied misleading customers by advertising cheap advance tickets which are only available to the first 10% of customers. London to Leeds on 22 Dec – cheapest £16, peak price £206. *[19.12.08]* First Great Western charged their passengers 70p a mile for walk-on tickets - more than twice as much as six other operators. FGW declared the average price of all tickets sold by them is 21p per mile. *[What a totally useless statistic! Ed.] [16.12.08]* Record breaking rail fares are accompanied by increased car parking charges. VAT cut should mean a fall of 2.5% but “too complicated to pass on”. East Midlands Trains increase their charges by an average of 11.7% and South West Trains by 9.5%.

Misery for West Coast Line Passengers *[16.12.08]* After a 9 million upgrade to WCML a track circuit problem caused delays and cancellations. *[18.12.08]* Passengers still experience the world’s most pungent on-board lavatories, a failed reservation system which causes Friday night fisticuffs, and deficiencies in the buffet car. *[8.1.09]* An estimated 250,000 passengers were adversely affected by a series of mishaps - power failures at Wembley, Watford, Rugby, and Bletchley plus the light plane crash at Stafford which killed three.

Scrap the Buffet Car *[17.12.08]* National Express plans to axe the award winning restaurant cars on its East Anglia line. The food is excellent, staff hardworking but National Express declares the service to be loss-making. Cancellation is delayed until early March 2009.

Train leasing enquiry *[DT Business 17.12.08]* Attempts by Ministers to bring the train leasing industry to heel have found that the Government’s own policies have caused most of the competition problems. *[Surprise! Surprise!]* The key recommendation is that the DfT adopts franchise terms of twelve to fifteen years. A DfT spokesman said that the too high prices set for older rolling stock mean there is less to spend on delivering improvements for passengers.

Fighting Talk from Lancashire Resident. *[3.1.09]* A Parbold resident, only able to access his home by car for 15 minutes in every hour because of the trains using the level crossing on the access road, is prepared to take *[unspecified]* direct action to halt the Wigan to Southport service which uses the crossing.

Oyster cards in use later this year. *[10.1.09]* Oyster cards *[cheaper than cash]* will be used *[additionally]* on the overground services around London.

Passengers cause major disruption to our rail network. *[Sunday Telegraph 11.1.09]* Many public servants forget that the public, on the other side of the counter, is their bread and butter. Disrespect for the general public is ingrained in the system e.g. a “ghost” bus without any passengers - so no tension between driver and passengers. Several sections of railway are closed to passenger trains and the replacement bus service arrives at a regular time and departs empty a moment later. How perfect the system could be, as long as no-one had the temerity to use it. *[Yes, Minister!]*

Heathrow Rail Hub. *[5.1.09]* Lord Adonis supports a move to create a £4.5bn rail station at the airport if the third runway is built. Hilary Benn is leading opposition against building the third runway.

Railways not runways should be our priority *[The Observer 11.1.09]* The prime minister speaks of the need to make environmental investments. A new high speed rail link, built before the third runway at Heathrow is completed, would be a good start.

Search or no Ticket *[14.1.09]* Rail passengers may have to agree to be searched in order to buy a ticket. Police legal codes will not allow most passengers who set off a metal-detecting arch to be searched unless prior consent has been given.

ON THE LINE

times at Langho unless otherwise specified

The period under review has seen major track renewals and a major timetable change introduced. The new timetable brought the promise of additional freight traffic but reliability of the passenger service took a massive dip and is only now showing signs of recovery. The track renewals prompted many infrastructure trains and brought some brand new diesel locos to the line.

On 26/9 66089 worked the cement into Horrocksford and the first train of the day saw 150146 paired with 156471. 66100 headed the cement on 29/9. The following day saw 37667 work 0Z25, a Carlisle/Carlisle working. Several locos traversed RVR metals on the 1/10 with 66056 6L92, 66113 4M00, 66548 6Y25, 37667 0Z25. The following day saw 66182 head 6L94 from Carlisle. 66102 worked the cement on 3/10 and again on 8/10. On 9/10 66112 was in charge.

The start of major track renewals saw numerous workings. Noted were: 17/11 66597, 18/11 66529, 66620, 66520, 66952, 66546; 19/11 66531, 66957, 66107; 20/11 66952, 66546, 66596, 66531, 66614, 66605, 66608, 66953, 66952, 66957, 66551; 23/11 66596, 66531, 66614, 66605, 66608, 66953; 24/11 66952, 66957, 66624, 66953; 25/11 66551, 66624, 66953; 26/11 66620.

Also on 26/11, 66099 worked the cement into Horrocksford and repeated the diagram on the 28th. 66120 worked the cement on 1/12 and 66114 on the 3/12. On 1/12 2N53 was cancelled at Man Vic along with its return working 2C87 for Morecambe. On the same day the first train of the day had RVR celebrity unit 150149 paired with 156444.

The following morning saw more service cancellations with 2N55, 2N59 and 2N57 all in trouble due to either faulty point-heaters or crew issues. On 3/12 2N55 was cancelled due to non-availability of a driver. The following day saw 2N53 cancelled at Blackburn, due to flooding in Billington cutting, and 2N51 cancelled at Man Vic due to staffing issues.

37604/37611 worked a Carlisle/Carlisle trip on 5/12. Later in the day 66027 brought in the cement tanks. On the same day 2J54, 2N59, 2J54 were all cancelled due to rostering problems. 6/12 saw 37602/37611 work a Carlisle trip and 47815/47805 head 1Z76 a Shrewsbury/Carlisle special. Unfortunately, 2N55 and 2J58 were cancelled due to non-availability of staff. The RVR/Northern Santa Service ran with 156482/156481 in charge. On 7/12 37602/37611 worked the Carlisle trip, with 37604/37602 in charge on the 9,10,11/12. On 8/12 156483 worked the first train of the day and sister units followed: 156421 9/12, 156480 10/12, and 156498 11/12. 66112 worked the cement in on 10/12 as did 66099 on 12/12. Also on 12/12 2N55/2J50 was cancelled due to unit failure. On 13/12 a pair of 156s worked the Santa Service. On 15/12 2J54 and 2N50 were cancelled due to an engineering overrun. The first service out of Clitheroe was 2J56 strengthened with 150150/150141 in charge.

An Infrastructure working 6K05 has become the first regular extra freight running from Carlisle to Basford Hall, due into Clitheroe at 15.41 and Blackburn 16-08, running Mon /Friday. On 15/12 66102 was in charge. On 16/12 66144 worked a Carlisle trip. The following day, 17/12, saw more cancellations, 2N55, 2J54, 2N59 and 2J50 all failing to run. On 17/12 2N53, 2J56, 2J57, 2J52, 2N59, 2J58, 2N52, 2J52, 2N54 and 5N53 were all non-runners on what was a very bad day for the line. 66168 headed 6K05 on 18/12 and sister loco, 66007, worked North on 0Z51.

A rare breed in recent times, Class 60 60028, ventured onto RVR metals on 18/12 working down from Carlisle. On 19/12 2N58 was cancelled at Bolton with a unit fault resulting in its return working 2J58 also being cancelled. On the same day 2N55, 2J62, 2N53, 2J54, 2N54, 5N53 were all non-runners. 66007 worked 6K05 to time on 19/12. The following day saw 2N55/2J54 cancelled and 2N59/2J58 cancelled on 21/12. 66096 worked 0Z50 and sister loco worked 6K05 on 24/12. 2N53, 2J50, 2N59, were all cancelled on 27/12 with 2N54 cancelled at Blackburn.

It was nice to see a class 56 on RVR metals again when, on 29/12, 67022 was paired with the rather brashly liveried 56312 on 1Z37, a Derby/Carlisle charter. Later in the day 60068 was in charge of 6K05. Cancellations continued with 2N53, 2N57, 2J52, 2N58 and 2J54. On 30/12 66080 worked 0Z50 and 66113 headed 6K05.

On 1/1/09 150145 worked the first service out of Clitheroe at 09-40 but cancellations reared their heads later with 2N57/2J52 failing to run. On 2/1 66086 worked 0Z50 and 66192 6K05. On 5/1 2J54 was terminated at Bolton, running 46 late, due to train crew problems at Buxton (the starting

point for this service). Its return working from Clitheroe, 2J58, was started at Bolton. 2N54, and its return working 2J58, was cancelled due to unit failure. Virgin route-learners started running again with 57303 noted on 5/6/1. 66715 worked 0Z47 on 6/1. On 7/1 2N50 was cancelled along with its return working 2J54. 156420 had worked the first train solo and there was a large number of workings during the day with the following noted: 66715 0Z47, 66548 6C16, 57310 0Z57. 66144 6M00, 66094 6K05. On 8/1, unfortunately, 2N50 was again cancelled. The unit arrived at Blackburn at 06-56 and started the service from there. 2N51 was also cancelled making 2J50 (08.26), with 156481 in charge, the first service out of Clitheroe. Track machine 73105 worked north later in the afternoon.

On 9/1 66715 worked 0Z47, 57310 0Z57 and stone- blower DR80213 was noted. On 11/ 1 2N56 was cancelled and 2J50, 2N52, 2N53, 2J54 suffered delays and short running due to signal failure in the Bolton area. 66093 worked 0Z50 on 13/1, 57302 0Z57 and 66095 6K05. On 12/1 66144 worked the cement traffic and 66172 6K05. Interestingly, sleepers were worked over the RVR line early that morning with the following noted:

1S25 67003/67022/90018 Euston/ Inverness
 1M11 66187/90036 Glasgow/Euston
 1S26 66187/90019 Euston / Glasgow
 1M16 67003/67022/90035 Inverness/ Euston.

On 14 /1 66053 worked 6K05 and track machine DR73109 worked south. On 15/1 a single class 153, 153363, was turned out for the first train of the day, resulting in passengers being turned away after Blackburn. The guard's attempt to ask travellers with cycles to detain was met with stout refusals and this episode further delayed the already late-running service. Later in the day 66147 worked 0Z50.

On 16/1 57308 worked 0Z57, 67027 0Z50 and 66147 6K05. On 17/1 2N57/2J52 was cancelled with no guard available to work the service. 66039 worked 6M00, and 66122 6K05 on 19/ 1. 67027 headed 0Z50 on 20/1 and was followed by 66134 on 6K05 and 66708 on 0Z46. On 21/1 150138 worked the first service solo with 66122 noted later in the day on 6K05, 66708 0Z47, and 67027 0Z50.

Brian Haworth

Statesman Rail Ltd

Info: Peter Watkinson

In a joint promotion with Northern Rail, Statesman Rail Ltd, which operates its own private train on Network Rail, will operate six steam-hauled trains, to a repeat itinerary every Wednesday from 29 July to 2 Sept 2009 over the S&C. Pick-up points are Lancaster, Preston, Bamber Bridge, Blackburn, and Clitheroe. 08453102458 e-mail: operations@statesmanrail.com Web: www.statesmanrail.com

Cheap tickets

P. Dawson

An easy ways to reduce ticket prices is via voucher-code sites such as Myvouchercodes.co.uk, which is currently giving visitors access to a discount code that cuts fares booked through TheTrainline.com by £5. There is also a code that allows you to upgrade a standard fare bought through the same website to first class for a flat fee of £15.

BOOTHS

Supermarket

Station Road

CLITHEROE

BB7 2JT

Tel: 01200 427352

Dawson's
DEPARTMENT STORE

54-56 King Street

Clitheroe
 BB7 2EU

Tel: 01200 424151

Open:

Mon-Sat 9am - 5 pm

Sunday 10am - 4 pm

www.DawsonsDepartmentStore.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES 2009

Mon 2 Mar RVR Meeting, New Inn, Clitheroe	19.30
Sat 21 Mar RVR AGM, RVB Council Chamber, Church St, Clitheroe	13.30 for 14.00
Mon 6 Apr RVR Meeting, New Inn, Clitheroe	19.30
Mon 27 Apr RVR Meeting, New Inn, Clitheroe	19.30
Sat/Sun 16/17 May Community Rail Weekend, Clitheroe	
Sat/Sun/BHolMon 23/24/25 May RVR at Chipping Steam Fair	
<i>Sat 3 Oct Final day for trains on the Oldham Loop</i>	

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FoCS: Gordon Wilson	01200 426214
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Northern Rail Stations Manager (Lancashire): Jane Lennaine	07734540812
Network Rail National Helpline	08457 11 41 41
Network Rail North West Press Office, Square One, 4 Travis Street, Manchester, M1 2NY	0161 880 3142
Clitheroe Integrated Transport Facility Control Room	01200 429832
Northern Rail customer helpline	0845 600 1159
Train running information	0870 602 3322

RVR website:www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk

D. BYRNE & Co.
FINE WINE
&
SPIRIT MERCHANTS

12 King Street
Clitheroe
BB7 2EP
Tel: 01200 423152

**BURNLEY**

Prestige Retail Park, Active Way
Burnley, Lancs, BB11 1BS

BLACKBURN

Whitebirk Retail Park
Jct 6 M65



IT'S TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN!

Monday 2 February 2009. Chaos as two inches of snow paralyses London! No buses, no tube trains! Meanwhile, the first two morning services to Clitheroe are terminated at Blackburn because of frozen points at Daisyfield but, in near blizzard conditions, 150270 pulls into Langho, on time, with the 08.36 to Manchester Victoria.

Photo: Brian Haworth

"Christmas card" conditions later the same day as 66039 propels its rake of empty tankers down the Horrocksford branch towards the Cement Works.

Photo: Simon Clarke





POSTIVELY THE LAST WORD ON THE NOVEMBER BLOCKADE

A privileged view of the track relaying work taken from the top of the scaffolding surrounding Clitheroe Castle keep on Wednesday 12 November 2008.

An unidentified Freightliner-liveried Class 66 heads a rake of wagons containing spent ballast past the site of the former Clitheroe Station signal box. Behind the loco, the rear of the white van stands roughly on the spot that the siding entered the Gas Works and the overhead electric loco took over

Photo: Courtesy R. Kirkby