



# RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



## **Oh! Happy Day!**

*En route to York, ex-LNER A4 Sir Nigel Gresley crosses Whalley Viaduct with the Clitheroe Parish Church special *The Clitheronian* on the morning of Saturday 9 June 1984.*

*Photo: David Roberts*





### **Final “Fellsman” of 2023**

Above: 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley, in garter blue, passes Horrocksford Jct, in poor weather on 20 September 2023, with the fourth and final “Fellsman” of the season.

*[Note the catch points to the right of signal HJ 4, mentioned on Page 15. Ed]*

*Photo: Graham Dudley*

Below: 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley, running a little late with the returning “Fellsman”, somewhere between Hellifield and its Chatburn water stop.

*Photo: Stephen Moore*



## From the Chair

In 2021 and 2022 the Summer Sundays **DalesRail** service between Blackpool North and Carlisle, via the Settle & Carlisle route, was plagued with cancellations, sometimes at short notice, and had such an appalling performance record that a decision was made to cancel it for this summer. This decision was imposed on Northern Railway by the DfT after issues were identified which Northern was instructed to improve before DalesRail could run again.

These included the fact that a Sunday voluntary working agreement remains in place for train crews, so the service depended on the goodwill and willingness of crews to staff the service. Blackpool depot had, by then, few staff left who were qualified to operate trains over the route, due to retirement or employment moves, and replacements had not been trained. All this came at a time of industrial dispute when weekend strike days were becoming more frequent. In an attempt to resolve the situation, various meetings involving the Ramblers Group and RVR, within our Community Rail Partnership, and in communication with other groups along the S&C route, resulted in correspondence with MPs, national transport groups and, eventually, reached ministerial level and the DfT.

Despite Northern agreeing to train more crews, and a promise to look at the DalesRail operation and revamp it to avoid some of the above problems, results are still not forthcoming. At the time of writing, industrial disputes drag on, so the issues of Sunday operation and unreliability would remain if the service were to be reintroduced any time soon.

So, we still await an announcement from Northern as to the reintroduction of DalesRail.

**Restoring Your Railway** was an initiative announced by the Boris Johnson government for local authorities to submit proposals to re-open closed rail-routes. Working with Community Rail Lancashire, Ribble Valley Rail and our Community Rail Partnership, Ribble Valley Borough Council made a detailed submission for the re-opening of a regular service between Clitheroe and Hellifield to re-establish a rail link, via the Ribble Valley, between Manchester and Lancashire to Skipton, Settle & Carlisle, and North and West Yorkshire.

This bid, sponsored by Ribble Valley MP, Nigel Evans, was among the first ten, nationally, to be accepted by RYR, had then to go through various stages of scrutiny, including a business case. Eventually, it reached final approval by the DfT, which said it was a valid and acceptable case, but funding was not available. The scheme could, however, go ahead if external funding could be found. This was most unlikely in the present financial climate. However, more recently, the current Prime Minister has announced the cancellation of the HS2 project north of Birmingham, and that the money saved would be directed to transport schemes in the North of England. (Electrification of the N Wales main line is to be similarly funded by money saved by the Government not now funding HS2 in the opposite direction between Old Oak Common and into Euston.)

It is reported that at a recent RVBC meeting, Cllr Stephen Atkinson, together with Nicola Hopkins (RVBC's Director of Economic Development and Planning), and others, had a meeting concerning the future of the Hellifield link. The meeting included Transport Minister Huw Merriman's advisor, Ribble Valley MP Nigel Evans, and representatives of Lancashire County Council, and of North Yorkshire County Council. The purpose was to show how re-opening the link could benefit the Ribble Valley and East Lancashire in terms of improved education and employment opportunities, inward migration and retention of young people, and support access to the Dales, Manchester, and Clitheroe. A further meeting has been suggested and the Prime Minister has since made his announcement [*above*] about funding of transport projects in the North.

We wish the Borough Council well with their efforts and give RVR's wholehearted support.

Some good news, announced on 31 October, is that the proposed closure of large numbers of station ticket offices in England has been scrapped. Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, said the “Government had asked train operators to withdraw their proposals.” I know that many RVR Members, and other colleagues, took the trouble to formally object to the proposed closures. Apparently, there was a huge public backlash, aimed at the cost-cutting scheme, which received 750,000 responses, 99% of which were objections.

*Source: passenger watchdog organisations who managed the survey. [For a more detailed explanation of the U-turn, email Transport Focus <communications@email.transportfocus.org.uk> and request a copy of their November newsletter, Transport User Voice.]*

Elsewhere in this RVRN is an extract from a recent performance report from STORM, containing a lengthy list of late and cancelled trains, which doesn't make good reading.

Also in this RVRN is a lengthy report from Richard Lysons who used to attend our Partnership meetings at Accrington as representative of the Friends of Littleborough Station on the Calder Valley Line. At the time, there was no CRP for the Calder Valley Line which, geographically includes part of our Blackburn - Burnley - Todmorden - Man Vic services, within the Clitheroe & East Lancs CRP. About two years ago, after several discussions and disagreements, they managed to have one approved by the DfT. Richard Lysons explains what groups were brought together and which stations the CRP covers.

About 18 months ago, Karen Hornby, now retired from her high-level post in the rail industry, accepted the position of Community Rail Officer for this Calder Valley CRP. We remember Karen representing RailTrack/Network Rail at RVR meetings in the past, where she gave RVR much support and achieved much on our behalf. Richard Lyson's article includes an interview with Karen which includes her rail industry employment history before her retirement.

We already have long-standing good relationships with Karen, Richard, and STORM, and we wish them all every success.

*Peter Eastham*

## **RVR Subscriptions**

If you have received a pink Membership Renewal form with this RVRNews, your RVR Subscription is due. Please return your completed Membership Form, together with a cheque payable to “Ribble Valley Rail”, to:- RVR Membership Secretary, 55 Bank Head Lane, Hoghton, PRESTON, PR5 0AB.

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*Bill Briggs (RVR Membership Secretary)*

## Friends of Stations

### CLITHEROE:

May 2023: Pam Corlett has de-headed the hydrangeas. Paul White has looked after the garden at the front of the station. Planting will take place later, possibly shrubs and perennials. New signs, re planting by RVR, are ready to be erected. David Butterworth has put a poster on the ticket machine relating to strike days. The platform lights have been reported as being on all day.

July 2023: Lauren Hall is now noted on the website as FoCS contact. Alan has suggested liaising with Clitheroe Civic Society regarding planting. Peter Eastam has cut back the briars.

September 2023: The tubs have been planted out by Pam and Peter at a cost of £75.80. The sedum plants have collapsed after, possibly, being sat on by people using the planters as seats. The reworded signs have been re-attached to the posts on both platforms. There is an abundance of weeds on both platforms. The new CIS is much easier to read, but is out of sight in the shelter!

### WHALLEY:

May 2023: Damaged trunking over cabling has been reported as a trip hazard. The Help Line and Tannoy are both working. Whalley in Bloom have put in new sleepers to retain the garden, together with new compost. New plants due from Newlands Nursery, Chatburn. More horsehair troughs are required to replace those damaged by birds.

July 2023: Planting is looking very good. alan has reported various issues but the damaged fencing, electrical trunking, and signs remain unrepaired. *[see page xx]*

September 2023: Fallen brickwork and rubble from under one of the arches, reported by a dog owner, was photographed and reported to Network Rail by Alan, who has now received an official reply say that it is under inspection. RVR has been asked by Whalley PC to apply for a grant for 2024's flowers. Whalley in Bloom have been invited to the NorthWest Britain in Bloom ceremony. Their award to be announced in October. [UPDATE]

P1 lights out - reported by Alan, now fixed. Tannoy etc all working. P1 plaque re station's re-opening needs repainting.

### LANGHO:

May 2023: No news yet on decision re disabled access grant-funded by DfT. Station tidy and garden safe from encroachment. Rain washed mud from the development into the subway.

July 2023: Brian Haworth reported a major flooding incident in the subway due to runoff from the new development, and the mud was jet-washed away later in the day.

September 2023: Step edges have been painted white and yellow. Planting done. Some plants get sat on by people waiting at the south end of P1, as there are no benches and passengers have to board the front two carriages. Perhaps NetR could provide some benches which would obviously be cheaper than longer platforms!

**RAMSGREAVE & WILPSHIRE:**

May 2023: Craig Ward is taking care of the planting per Parish Council. Stn AOK.

July 2023: Station remains quite tidy.

September 2023: All in good order.

**BLACKBURN:**

May 2023: Waiting Room doors which had been incorrectly installed have now been redone and working correctly

July 2023: Planters have been move from platforms to under the canopy.

September 2023: Some platers on the platforms have now been planted, presumably by the Business Development Assoc. adopters.

**DARWEN:**

May 2023: Graham Dudley reports station clean and tidy with no vandalism or graffiti, although one pane of glass is still missing from the B'burn Platform shelter. Other damaged panes have evidently been replaced. PA and CIS working. defibrillator on B'burn platform. Car park little used.

July 2023: One pane of glass is still missing from the larger B'burn Platform shelter. Ticket machine and PA working. Evidence of bush- and tree-pruning by ISS. Weeds and dead leaves removed from both large planters on Bolton Platform.

September 2023: The pane of glass is still missing from the larger B'burn Platform shelter. CIS and PA working, although information varies. B'burn side ticket machine out of action on 19 Aug. Weeds and grass cut back from B'ton Platform. Car park little used.

**ENTWISTLE:**

July 2023: Planters looking good.

**Membership Matters**

My valiant attempt in RVRN136 to try and double the RVR membership engendered six replies, four of which were "early renewals" but two were NEW memberships viz Mrs K Barmby of Bolton (RVR 607) and Mr & Mrs J Wareing of Longton (Preston) (RVR 608). Thank you, to them and to their introducers.

Sadly, I have to report that I was informed, in July, that Mr Aidan Turner-Bishop of Preston (RVR 064) had died on 20 December 2022. Aidan was, if not a Founder Member, certainly one of long-standing. To his widow, Marion, RVR extends sincere condolences.

*Bill Briggs (Membership Secretary)*

**Letter to the Editor:**

Dear Mr Briggs,

Arising from your reminiscence [*concerning Dales Rail*] in the latest issue of RVRNews [*RVRN136*], I attach two articles which may be of interest.

Regards,

*John Barnes* (Hon Secretary Lancashire Rail Ramblers Committee)

[ - to whom many thanks for the following pages. **NB.** These are historical documents , NOT up-to-date commentaries. Ed.]

**Rail Ramblers** excursions began in a modest way in 1974 when British Rail at Preston and the Ramblers Association in Lancashire got together to arrange a programme of rail excursions for country-lovers and not just hardened mountain walkers and ramblers.

In mid-1985 the "Lancashire Rail Ramblers", a new independent organisation closely linked to the Ramblers Association, was set up and, with encouragement from BR, took over the organisation of the Rail Rambler excursions. The Rail Rambler special excursion programme for walkers, ramblers, and country-lovers, arranged by BR at Preston and the Ramblers Assoc. in Lancashire ran until 1990 when the last train ran to Stirling.

Whilst the special excursion trains were still running, in 1980 it was decided to arrange a series of Winter Rail Rambler programmes using scheduled services and not special trains. These winter programmes ran on to 1990/91. From 1991 to the present day, the Lancashire Rail Ramblers have continued to produce a programme of guided walks on Saturdays, fortnightly, throughout the year. The range of walks caters for all levels of fitness and range from "town tours" and special interest walks called "Past Landscapes" covering 3 or 4 miles, to strenuous hill walking upto 16 or 17 miles.

The area covered by these walks ranges over the whole of the North of England, as far south as Shrewsbury, and includes North Wales as far west as Holyhead on Anglesey. All walks are planned on the basis of the Rail Ramblers' commitment to use public transport at all times.

An average of 60 Saturday walks per year are provided free (excepting travel expenses) for anyone who wishes to take part.

In 1991, Lancashire County Council asked the Lancashire Rail Ramblers committee to organise a guided walks programme for the Lancashire Dales Rail Service. The Lancashire Dales Rail Service is organised by Lancashire County Council in conjunction with whichever train operating company has the franchise, and provides a train from Blackpool North to Carlisle, via Clitheroe and the scenic Settle & Carlisle line, on Sundays from Easter to October each year, thus giving access to a large part of the Yorkshire Dales, the Howgill Fells, and the North Pennines.

The Lancashire Dales Rail walks programme is a major undertaking for the Lancashire Rail Ramblers committee involving, as it does, the preparation and planning of an average of 115 walks, the organisation of walks leaders and back markers, stewardship of the trains, and arranging and supervising bus links.

In 1994, a programme of Ribble Valley mid-week and Saturday walks was introduced, all walks starting from stations on the Blackburn to Clitheroe line. This venture ended in 2000 after providing an average of 36 walks per year.

In 2004, Lancashire County Council in partnership with Northern Rail, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, and the Lancashire Economic Partnership, commissioned the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) to review the options for establishing a CRP on the Preston to Colne line. This was completed and resulted in a CRP for the line known as the "East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership" (ELCRP).

Part of this venture is the provision of a guided walks programme with which the Lancashire Rail Ramblers have become involved. This has been running since October 2006.

The ELCRP walks programme provides walks on Wednesdays and Saturdays from the East Lancashire line, between Preston and Colne, and the Manchester to Clitheroe line between Bromley Cross and Clitheroe. Twenty four walks are programmed, each year.

### **The Lancashire Rail Ramblers**

The "Lancashire Rail Ramblers" is a club of "Rambler Association" leaders. The only members are the Rambler Association guided walk leaders. It is not a rambling club. It was officially established in 1978 to provide walk leaders for guided walks using public transport.

*[Its Hon Sec and organiser was the late Howard Hammersley of Ashton-on-Ribble.]*

## Lancashire Rail Ramblers - The Dales Rail Connection

**The Settle & Carlisle Railway** was constructed between 1869 & 1875 to carry traffic from the Midlands and W Riding of Yorkshire to Scotland. It runs through some of the finest fell-walking area in the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP).

**The YDNP** consists of 640 square miles of the central Pennines and includes much of the finest limestone scenery in the British Isles, with one of the most extensive areas of underground potholes and caves in Europe. Much of the area is of geological or botanical interest.

**The origins of Dales Rail.** An extract from DALES RAIL - Settle & Carlisle Line, a guide to the scenic rail journey between Leeds and Carlisle, published by the YDNP Committee 1976.

*“Dales Rail* is a unique co-operation between British Rail, the National Bus Company, Cumbria County and Eden District Councils, and the YDNP Committee who operate the project. The objective of the scheme is to restore local passenger services from certain stations on selected weekends during the summer months, and to use such services, and to use such services on the basis of an integrated bus-rail service for the benefit of both visitors and local people. In addition, certain interpretative services, in the form of guided walks, are provided by the National Park Warden Service.

*Dales Rail* commenced in 1975, with a service between Leeds and Appleby, calling at the following stations which had been restored for “occasional use” viz Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Ribblesdale (S-bound platform only), Dent, Garsdale, and Kirkby Stephen. A special linking bus was operated to/from Hawes and Sedbergh to Garsdale, extended to Dent village and to Keld, in Swaledale, on Sundays.

In 1976, it is planned to open three more stations in the Eden Valley: Langwathby, Lazonby & Kirkoswald, and Armathwaite, and to operate the Saturday trains into and out of Carlisle, thus providing a much better service for local shoppers from the Dales and Cumbria, as well as being able to bring Carlisle people.

The purpose of the service is to provide fast, congestion-free, transport at a reasonable price into and out of the YDNP, both for the benefit of visitors who do not have a car, or who can be encouraged to use the free park & ride facility at certain stations rather than use the often congested road system of the National Park. The service also restores an essential link for local Dales people who can now make regular visits or shopping trips from their local stations into West Yorkshire or Cumbria.

On Sundays, the guided walks help the visitor to understand and appreciate the magnificent countryside of the Yorkshire Dales.”

“Local stopping passenger services ceased in May 1970 and this has meant that, for a large area of the Pennines and Eden Valley, the local community had no public transport services, or bus services that are so delayed along tortuous roads that long journeys are impossible. Equally, much of the finest fell-walking area of the YDNP has been inaccessible to the many people in cities without their own car, at a very time when traffic congestion has become an increasing problem in the southern half of the National Park. It has been the intention of the National Park Committee to try and partially restore this local service through its *Dales Rail* project.”



## The Lancashire Service

The first recorded Dales Rail trip from Lancashire was on Saturday 13 September 1975 under the heading “Lancashire goes by rail to the Dales” from Colne, Nelson, Burnley, Accrington, and Blackburn calling at Hellifield, Settle, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Dent, Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen, and Appleby. A programme of walks led by an experienced National Park guide was provided. Following the very good response to the one train from East Lancashire which operated in 1975, it was decided to operate two Lancashire trains during 1976, one from Preston and Colne, the other from Manchester.

Whilst the reponse to these Lancashire services was again good, it was obvious that both suffered from competition from excursion trains operated by British Rail along the same routes and which called at Dales Rail stations. These excursions benefitted from lower fares than could be charged on Dales Rail. Whereas the Dales Rail fare structure was related to the charter rates which were charged to the National Park Authority, BR’s own excursion fares would appear to have been based on the marginal costs of operating the trains. This raised the question whether, in future, it would be in the best interests of the consumer to leave the organisation of Lancashire services to BR, the National Park Committee’s involvement being to ensure an adequate standard of interpretive and other services from the re-opened stations in the Dales.

*[More in the next Edition of RVRNews. Ed]*

## On The Line

*Graham Dudley came across the following report in Trains Illustrated, January 1951.*

**“Ulster Express” on the Ribble Valley Line** (29 October and 5/12/19/26 November 1950)  
 “A very unusual diversion of traffic is mentioned in a letter from Mr A Wilson; it occurred on the last Sunday of October and every Sunday in November due to track drainage and realignment between Lancaster and Preston. On these days the up “Ulster Express” was worked from Heysham at 7am and Morecambe through Lancaster (Green Ayre) to Hellifield; thence over the old L&Y route through Blackburn and Bolton to Manchester Victoria, after which the Droylsden line was taken to Stockport and onto the main line again at Crewe Banking assistance was provided up the 1in49 to Miles Platting. Camden converted Royal Scots worked right through, with pilot drivers from Morecambe to Hellifield and Hellifield to Stockport.”

From the above report it seems that the operation of the “Ulster Express” was a lodging turn for the locomotive crews; Camden being the London shed for the London Midland Region West Coast passenger services. Diversion over the Ribble Valley Line would be a new experience for them. Unfortunately, 1950 is well before social media/internet/mobile phones, so very few of these unusual operations would be recorded by photographers.

Do any photographs exist of these diversions in the Blackburn area? There was plenty of opportunity over those five Sundays and, even back then, there was the trainspotters’ “grapevine”. Locomotive headboards were not in use on this train at the time (introduced in 1951) so photographs will not be readily identifiable.

*[Does this explain why Graham didn't get a photo? Ed.]*

Believe it or not, there was once a road-rail interchange near Railway View in Billington, called Thompson's Siding. When I was a youngster, I spent many hours at my grandparents' who had an allotment at the end of the terrace. I little realised, at the time, that it was on the site of the interchange. Just about all that remains is the turning into Dale View near the iron bridge in Billington. Until the 1990s there was an unmade access road around the end of the terrace and quite a large area of flat land. To the railway side of the road was a small embankment, gradually rising from the height of the main road to about half that of the bridge, roughly 10 feet. This 1892 map of the area shows the siding in some detail. {1}

From that small embankment road was an area of flat land, then a short track rising quite steeply to the end of the siding area adjacent to the DOWN main line. Parallel to the railway, from the small embankment at the end of the terrace, a road track continued for about 50 yds before gradually climbing to the DOWN main about half way to the viaduct. {2}

Spoil from the excavation of cuttings and the Wilpshire Tunnel was used to construct the embankment leading north from the Whalley Road bridge as far as the viaduct and, within a short time of the main line being opened, Thompson's siding and its associated earthworks were added. Initial use was in connection with the building of Judge Walmesley Mill by Solomon Longworth. The same spoil from Wilpshire could easily be taken by rail to Billington, unloaded at the interchange, and taken by road down to the mill site (past what would soon be Bank Cottages), down "Whitty Brow", to Longworth Road, under the newly completed viaduct and, towards the river, to the mill site. {3}

It is likely that the construction of Railway View and Bank Cottages began shortly after that of the mill. Work on the mill building started in about 1852 and it is known that Bank Cottages were built in 1854.

For many years, raw materials and finished goods could be brought/taken by road/rail to/from both Billington mills. Shortly after the turn of the century, local residents asked the LMS to build a halt nearby but this didn't progress any further. *[Probably for the same reason it was refused some 90 years later; the steep gradient through Billington cutting.]* Although the siding is shown on O.S. maps until well into the 20th Century, it is doubtful if any facilities were used after the second World War.

When the housing at Dale View was built in the 1990s, the construction work also included significant earth-moving. Unfortunately, this caused the railway embankment to slip and piling work had to be done to stabilise the whole thing. During that period, numerous trains were cancelled until the strengthening work was completed. The building of housing totally obliterated all trace of Thompson's Siding and a good imagination would be required to picture it as it used to be. Between Bank Cottages and Longworth Road, housing covers the site of "Whitty Brow".

*If anyone has memories &/or photos of this facility, I would be interested to hear when the siding was last in use. Any information, especially traffic using the siding, would be gratefully received. Contact may be made by using the "Contact Us" form on Ribble Valley Rail website <https://www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk/contact> or via the RVRNews Editor.*

*My thanks to Brian Haworth, for some of the research.*

*Neil Weaver*

*[Neil would appreciate contributions for the RVR Website re on-going works etc. Ed]*

**Road - Rail Interchange for Billington pictures:**

{1}

{2}

{3}

**On The Line**

On the rear of a diesel excursion to Carlisle, C147 D1935 passes the 12.25 departure for Rochdale, headed by RVL stalwart 150150, on 7 October 2023.



The "Midland Pullman" HST set crosses Whalley Viaduct at lunchtime on 14 October 2023. *(repeated at the same time on 28 October)*



*Photos:  
Graham Dudley*

## Traction



47805 heads 1Z34  
 “Statesman” (Cardiff -  
 Carlisle) about to pass under  
 the A59 bridge between  
 Sawley and Gisburn, on  
 Coronation Day 6 May 2023.



60087 heads a southbound  
 infrastructure train, 6F69  
 over Primrose Viaduct  
 on 19 May 2023.



46115 Scots Guardsman,  
 heads 1Z52, Lancaster -  
 Carlisle “Dalesman”, through  
 Whalley on 11 July 2023.

*Photos:  
 Jeff Dickinson*

## Miscellany

47746, with 1Z52 (Chester - Carlisle) passing under Henthorn Park bridge and into Mitchell St cutting on 13 June 2023.



70812, with “The Logs” in tow, has just passed under Bridge 65, and alongside the erstwhile Pendle Hotel at Chatburn on 20 June 2023.



Also at Whalley, 67005 heads 1Z85 “Pride of Planning” tour from London Euston to Carlisle on 17 July 2023.

*Photos:  
Jeff Dickinson*





**The Horrocksford Branch and some of its former branches**

Above: Horrocksford Jct, seen from Pimlico Road bridge, showing the layout and the branch's catch points just to the right of signal HJ 4

Below left: Former quarry tramway rails used for fencing the path above Cross Hill Quarry.

Below right: an example of the simple “automatic” gate-closure mechanism.

*Photos: Bill Briggs*



## The Horrocksford Branch and some of its former branches

- a Sunday afternoon stroll by Bill Briggs which first appeared in *RVRN65, Autumn 2003* (up-dated 21 Oct 2023) **Start/Finish:** Clitheroe railway station **Distance:** 3 miles

Alighting at Clitheroe station (Platform 2), out of the gate, turn right along the back of the station. Cross the road leading under Gasworks Bridge and pass the Royal Mail Sorting Office. Continuing along Chester Avenue, cross Waddington Rd and turn right, under the bridge. At the top of Waddington Rd, turn left into Pimlico Rd, the left hand side of which runs out of footpath for a short distance just before bending to the right when Horrocksford Signal Box comes into view. Take a few moments to walk up the steps on your left up to the railway side and view the Horrocksford Junction signal box.

Carry on up to the bridge over the main Clitheroe-Hellifield line where there is a good view of the rail junction, complete with catch points, [see *RVRNs128/129/130p6*]. Note that there is no direct connection from the DOWN main to the branch so that trains approaching from the south have first to reverse over to the UP line before drawing in. Trains from the north are propelled across the DOWN onto the branch.

About 20 yards further along Pimlico Rd, on the left, an occupation bridge crosses the branch and but for the ivy, would afford a different view of the signal box and junction. The line is doubled to form an almost half-mile loop from about 50 yds from the junction, under the bridge, to about 50 yds from the entrance to the Johnson Matthey (formerly ICI) works.

Return to the road and turn left. Glimpses of the branch may be had through the hedge/trees as it rises from its shallow cutting onto a low embankment. Nearly opposite Moorland Rd is Johnson Matthey's emergency access gate from where a short track rises to cross the railway lines. A little further along, the original entrance to the former ICI "button works" went beneath the tracks but now the only evidence is the gap in the kerbstones.

You are now entering the once isolated hamlet of Pimlico or "Black Horse Village" (nicknamed after the now closed pub). Just past the farm on the left, a railway line crossed the road on a high bridge to connect Coplow Quarry and lime works with the Horrocksford Branch. This was worked by small saddle-tank engines, probably the same ones that worked Lane Head Quarry. After Coplow closed in the late 1940s, the bridge and its rail line remained *in-situ* for many years but both have now disappeared almost without trace.

By the bus stop on the opposite side of the road is a footpath sign. Follow the track indicated up the hill. To the left of the quarry entrance gate a pleasant leafy path then takes you through the woods surrounding the old quarry on the right. It once formed a vast amphitheatre, largely filled in except for the lake in the bottom which can still be seen

Most of the small quarries in this part of the Ribble Valley worked the reef knolls which once formed a coral reef surrounding the northwestern shore of an island, the remains of which form Pendle Hill. This reef or white limestone was burned locally in kilns to produce lime for agricultural purposes and, prior to the coming of the railway, was transported by pack ponies known as "Lime Gals" (Galloway ponies). Horrocksford and Lane Head quarried deeper strata "blue" limestone for roadstone and cement making.

Round a bend in the path, the Clitheroe - Hellifield railway line comes into view, once more. The path here has been reinforced with bricks and stones suggesting that it may become muddy in wet weather. The path emerges between Nos 52 & 54 Moorland Crescent, starts again between Nos 27 & 25, and leads straight over to Pimlico Road down the side of Rock Mount, once the residence of Lane Head Quarry managers.

Turn right to complete the circle and then turn left at the junction with the Pimlico Link Road and West Bradford Rd. [Straight on is the truncated stump of Chatburn Old Rd which used to cross the hill to Chatburn but was obliterated when Horrocksford and Lane Head quarries “coalesced” in the latter half of the 1960s. From the top, the Lane Head Quarry workings could be observed. I remember, in the 1950s watching the little 0-4-0 saddle tanks working the wagons on the temporary railways in the bottom of the quarry. One of the last of these locos was broken up in Clitheroe Goods Yard about 1958.]

At the top of the rise West Bradford Rd crosses the Horrocksford branch by an ungated crossing complete with flashing lights and sirens. The branch then disappears into the Castle Cement works, bending away to the right, while the straight-on line disappears into the nothingness of the lorry park. The northern end of the loop can best be observed from from the adjacent Johnson Matthey level crossing. This end of the loop is controlled by a single lever point.

\*Walk down West Bradford Rd to a point opposite CCL Gate3. It was at this point that the tramway from Cross Hill Quarry crossed the road. Today, there is no evidence to be seen. Leave the road here ( keep to the right of the “pineapple”) and follow the path formed by the original trackbed as far as the the first waymarker. Fork left, up the hill, and turn right at the top. The path here takes you across the top of one part of the old quarry which, 70 years ago, formed a wonderful adventure playground with a pond containing great crested newts. Alas, this part was filled in some years ago and now the rest of the quarry bottom, where cattle once grazed, is totally overgrown, looks like a Lancastrian version of the Corsican maquis, but is used by mountain-bike enthusiasts.

\*The path leads along the top of the quarry face, affording stunning views of the River Ribble at Dangerous Corner and Spike’s Pit, as well as Waddington and West Bradford villages and fells. Notice that much of the fencing on your right is constructed using old light tramway rails. Pass through a small gate, noting its ingenious but simple return mechanism and, just past a bench, bear left and take the path along the field side (ignoring the stile to the right). Pass Moorland School’s Nursery & Baby Unit, through a “chicane”, and cross the road. To your left, Moorland School occupies the former residence known as Knunck Knowles.

Immediately across the road, on the left is the Football Academy. Follow the track until it bends to the left. At this point, pass through the gap immediately in front. Pass through the gate on the left of the barn and, at the top of the slope, re-make your acquaintance with the bridge over the Horrocksford branch. Turn right and retrace your steps as far as Waddington Rd railway bridge. Immediately before the bridge, turn left and return to the station via Maxwell’s and the disused Interchange building.

**Start/Finish:** Clitheroe railway station **Distance:** 3 miles **Stiles:** none to climb (all replaced by kissing gates) **Time:** Route can be walked easily in about 75 minutes, but allow 2-3 hours to enable observation and exploration. **Maps:** OS Landranger 103. **Other transport:** not required. **Suitability:** Equates to Dalesrail ”Easy” but unsuitable for wheeled “vehicles”\*. Stout walking shoes/boots may be advisable after wet weather. **Watering holes:** Wagon & Horses, Pimlico Rd: Maxwell’s Cafe & Wine Bar at the bottom of King Street. **Public toilets:** (NONE on route), Back King St car park; C’oe Market, Station Rd. **Facilities** available at Maxwell’s; Station Hotel; Booths.

*\*An easier route: leave West Bradford Rd immediately after the level crossing. Follow the path all the way through Brungerley Park . Turn left up Waddington Rd. Over the brow, cross into Cowper Avenue, at the far end turn left, go under the railway bridge, and turn right along the bus station.*



**Recent Train Performance***as reported by Frank Salt of STORM*

*Extracted from a long list of list of late and cancelled trains, including C'oe-Rochdale and Tod Curve services, it doesn't make happy reading. Ed.*

**Fri 6 Oct:**

13.17 Kirkby - Blackburn 15 late. 19-18 Kirkby - Blackburn cancelled at Man Vic - no guard. Ran ECS to B'burn as 5N93. 21.10 B'burn - Wigan cancelled - no guard.

**Sat 7 Oct:**

11.01 C'oe - Roch cancelled - trespass. Ran ECS 2T27 via Copy Pit.  
 11.22 Roch - C'oe cancelled to MVic late in. 11.29 B'burn - Roch 14 late. 15.08 C'oe - Roch 11 late  
 16.53 Roch - B'burn 11 late start. 17.01 C'oe - Roch 31 late. 17.10 B'burn - Kirkby 18 late start.  
 17.21 Roch - C'oe 16 late start. 17.29 B'burn - Roch 15 late. 19.11 B'burn - Wigan 41 late start.  
 20.01 C'oe - Roch 16 late start. 21.22 Roch - C'oe cancelled - slow replacement.

**Sun 8 Oct:**

19.20 Southport - B'burn cancelled at Roch - traction fault.  
 20.13 B'burn - Southport cancelled - no guard. 20.20 B'burn - Southport cancelled - traction fault.  
 21.21 Southport - B'burn 40 late.

**Mon 9 Oct:**

05.51 Roch - B'burn cancelled - no driver. 06.17 MVic - B'burn 14 late start.  
 08.10 B'burn - Kirkby cancelled at Vic - no driver. 10.01 C'oe - Roch cancelled - late in.  
 10.21 Roch - C'oe cancelled to Vic - late in. 13.17 Kirkby - B'burn 21 late - cancelled at Accrington.  
 15.10 B'burn - Kirkby started at Accrington - 11 late.  
 22.01 C'oe - Roch cancelled at B'burn - no guard. 22.52 Roch - B'burn cancelled - no guard.

**Tues 10 Oct:**

20.10 B'burn - Wigan 16 late. 20.29 B'burn - Roch 16 late. 21.52 Roch - C'oe 21 late start.

**Weds 11 Oct:**

08.01 C'oe - Roch cancelled at MVic - brakes fault. 08.23 Roch - C'oe cancelled to MVic - late in.  
 14.17 Kirkby - B'burn 15 late. 16.10 B'burn - Kirkby 12 late start. 16.17 Kirkby - B'burn 15 late.  
 17.17 Kirkby - B'burn 21 late. 18.01 C'oe - Roch 28 late. 18.17 Kirkby - B'burn 20 late.  
 18.29 B'burn - Roch 12 late. 19.11 B'burn - Wigan 18 late Accy start.  
 20.10 B'burn - Wigan 18 late start.

**Thurs 12 Oct:**

08.29 C'oe - Roch 22 late. 09.01 C'oe - Roch 11 late. 09.17 Kirkby - B'burn 11 late.  
 10.17 Kirkby - B'burn 14 late. 10.29 B'burn - Roch cancelled at MVic - doors.  
 10.52 Roch - B'burn cancelled - no driver. 11.17 Kirkby - B'burn 12 late.  
 11.29 B'burn - Roch cancelled at MVic - no driver. 11.52 Roch - B'burn cancelled at MVic - no driver  
 12.00 C'oe - Roch 12 late. 13.29 B'burn - Roch cancelled - ran to Copy Pit.  
 15.17 Kirkby - B'burn 17 late. 18.24 Roch - B'burn cancelled - n/k.  
 18.52 Roch - B'burn cancelled - n/k. 19.01 C'oe - Roch 18 late. 19.52 Roch - B'burn cancelled - n/k  
 21.01 C'oe - Roch 14 late start. 22.01 B'burn - Roch 45 late start.  
 22.01 B'burn - Roch 45 late start.

## The Calder Valley Line Community Rail Partnership

*information from Frank Salt, STORM*

The Calder Valley Line runs from Manchester Victoria to Leeds through the borough Rochdale with its five stations along the route (Mills Hill, Castleton, Rochdale, Smithy Bridge, and Littleborough). After Littleborough, the line continues through the West Yorkshire borough of Calderdale (Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, and Sowerby Bridge). Just after Sowerby Bridge the line divides into two routes to Leeds, one via Halifax and Bradford Interchange, the other sharing the TransPennine route via Brighouse and Dewsbury.

Along with the Rochdale Canal, the Calder Valley Line was a the heart of the industrial and economic development of Rochdale. Unlike the canal, the railway line is used, each year, by millions of residents, commuters, students, and visitors, to connect with other parts of Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and beyond. To quote a local councillor, “ [it is] ... vital to our prosperity, our well-being, and our role in the wider region.”

Although the Calder Valley Line reached Rochdale as far back as 1839, with stations opening at Castleton (1839), Smithy Bridge (1868), and Littleborough (1839), history has not always been kind to the route. Around, and after, the Beeching era in the 1960s, goods yards and sidings disappeared from Rochdale and Littleborough. Smithy Bridge station was closed for 25 years, and station buildings in the borough were closed and demolished. Unsurprisingly, passenger numbers declined as car usage increased.

However, things started looking up in 1985 when Greater Manchester Transport Executive (now Transport for Greater Manchester) opened “temporary experimental stations” at Mills Hill and Smithy Bridge. Both stations have been huge successes, each year taking thousands of car journeys off the borough’s crowded roads. In two years’ time, both stations will celebrate their fortieth birthdays!

More recently, Friends of Station groups have been formed at Castleton and Littleborough where volunteers look after their stations, gardening, litter-picking, education work, and campaigns for better waiting facilities and train services. Just under a decade ago, these two FoS groups raised the idea of a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) to link up with FoS groups further up the line in Calderdale. Meetings took place between elected members of Rochdale and Calderdale councils, and a steering group was set up including representatives of both councils, FoS groups, RUGs, and the TOC (Northern).

In March 2022, Karen Hornby was appointed the CVL’s Community Rail Officer and she has been busy, ever since, building relationships with FoS groups and communities along the line. Recently, Richard Lysons caught up with Karen and asked her a few questions.

Richard: Tell me about your background in the rail industry.

Karen: I started in the rail industry when RailTrack was set up in 1994. I have worked in freight, performance, and customer service. I retired in February 2022 after a 28-year rail career which saw me manage Manchester Piccadilly Station, become area Manager Merseyside, and the Head of Performance & Customer Relationship which included managing the teams of Manchester Piccadilly, London Euston, Birmingham New Street, and Liverpool Lime Street stations. I also led customer relationship of our train operating companies. Over the last twelve months, since taking up the role of Community Rail Officer, I have been appointed to the Board of Directors of Community Rail Network.

Richard: What attracted you to the post of Community Rail Officer?

Karen: I have always held Community Rail close to my heart. I managed the Network Rail Community Rail team and liked to get involved as much as I could. When I decided to retire, last year, I wasn't going to do anything except play lots of golf and go on holiday as much as I could. However, I became aware of this part-time position and thought how lovely it would be to stay involved in community rail and have the opportunity to work with local communities, schools, colleges, and to promote the use of rail.

Richard: What exactly is Community Rail?

Karen: Community Rail is a growing grass-roots movement made up of community rail partnerships and groups across Britain. They engage communities and help people to get the most from their railways, promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel, working alongside train operators to bring about improvements and bringing stations back to life. Our key priorities incorporate the four pillars of the Department for Transport's Community Rail Strategy which are: promoting sustainable and healthy travel; bringing communities together; supporting diversity and inclusion; and supporting social and economic development.

Richard: What have you achieved to date and what are your plans for the Calder Valley Line CRP?

Karen: We have:

- published a Calder Valley attractions booklet and walks map to encourage people to travel by train to all our local attractions, and to experience the brilliant walks we have.
- also, taken a number of families on the train to visit Eureka in Halifax, something that most of the families we have worked with would never have been able to do.
- delivered a new community space at Rochdale Station, along with artwork at the bottom of the steps to the disused platform where Rochdale Council plans to open a Platform Park for the local community.
- established a good working relationship with Rochdale Hornets and will be involved with their "health & wellbeing" project, alongside Network Rail's rail safety promotion.

Future plans are to:

- install community noticeboards at all our stations, allowing us to promote local events.
- working with a local historian, to develop an app about the history of the line.
- work with schools and communities to encourage the use of rail travel. There are so many beautiful places to visit on our line and we want people to use the train rather than get in their cars.

Richard: What do you like most about your role as Community Rail Officer?

Karen: I love what I'm doing. I'm living my best life doing something that I absolutely love, working with local communities and delivering on projects that actually make a difference.

*Richard Lysons (Published in Style Magazine) with thanks to Karen Hornby and the Friends of Castleton and Littleborough Stations.*

*To find out more, visit: [caldervalleylinecrp.com](http://caldervalleylinecrp.com)*

*The above comments may contain nuts and are not necessarily those of STORM.*

*Frank Salt, STORM*

*[Many thanks, Frank. Ed.]*

## Not just a pretty face!

*Info extracted from RVRN82 Winter 2008 shows just how lucky the CVL CRP is.*

Karen Hornby attended the RVR December 2007 meeting and updated on the progress of RVL infrastructure work:

- with planned completion work on all but two, continuing work to remove the TSRs has allowed reinstatement of 2C87 "The Morecambe". It's cancellation on that day was caused by a one-off track circuit failure near Blackburn. Preston PSB has been asked to monitor the performance of the Morecambe. Karen undertook to inform RVR of any TSRs as soon as she was informed.
- Standen Hey overbridge will be replaced during a 29-hr possession on 8 December.
- though rail-replacement work was planned as far ahead as 2010/11, data from the Track Recording Vehicle indicate that the diversions and heavy infrastructure trains have caused more rapid track deterioration than expected. 2008 will see heavy maintenance brought forward at Clitheroe, Whalley, and Langho.
- the planned work will allow line speed to be reviewed.
- on the question of poor quality replacement bus services, RVR members were urged to report any instances of poor service.
- single-line working would take place between Gisburn and Newsholme every Sunday during June and July. Dalesrail alone would be affected.
- Equipment, known as "tremblers", to detect attempted copper cable theft, was being deployed locally, and scrap-dealers targeted.
- BTP and civil police were both encouraged to prosecute following bridge strikes.
- the poor condition of the A666 bridge at Langho was to be investigated,
- she would support action to reduce damage problems at R&W which should be actively reported to both Network Rail and BTP.

Karen was thanked for Network Rail's removal of graffiti from various places on the permanent way in the Clitheroe area.

## Ed's Jottings *[replaces Press Cuttings which would have filled the whole magazine!]*

Well, it seems like world events have sounded the death knell of HS2, at least beyond Birmingham. Maybe, some of the taxpayers' money can now be spent on completing the platform extensions at Langho, Whalley, and Clitheroe, with, of course, new stations at Chatburn, and Gisburn when Restoring Your Railways gets into gear (I hear you laughing!). Milton Keynes has a query, "Where's Gisburn?" Upto the announcement, letters to the Press were all against HS2. All, that is, except from those intimately involved with it. They all thought that, because it had already gone "a 100 yards up the road", it really must go the rest of the "100 miles". To mis-quote the late Mandy Rice-Davies, "Well, they would say that. Wouldn't they." From an industrial estate in the Middle of Nowhere to a field in the Middle of Nowhere just about sums it up!

Likewise, 750,000 of Joe Public (including, I suspect, quite a few railwaymen) have risen up against the mass closure of station ticket offices. The "Disadvantaged 12%" have at last had a say. Strangely, around 2000 supported the move. I suspect not many of them have ever had to do battle with a machine, in adverse weather, and no Railcard discounts. This time it's the TOCs who are up in arms. They need to visit the Leyburn chip shop where the sign on the wall ends with the words ..."The Customer is ALWAYS right!" MK asks, "Is Leyburn that station just south of Preston?"

Finally, regarding the "temporary" cessation of DalesRail, those of us who can remember RVR in the time between 1989 and 1994 will remind you all that PERSISTENCE PAYS!

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

*Bill Briggs*

**DalesRail - not to be consigned to history!**     *David Pack (RVR 048) writes*

I was sad and disappointed to read that the Lancashire DalesRail has been cancelled. When I was a teacher at Darwen Vale High School, I helped to run a Rambling Club and, between July 1977 and July 1985 we used the service twelve times. In those early days there was no direct service from Blackburn as it was only a Leeds - Carlisle service.

So, at 08.15 on 3 July 1977, 29 pupils and 10 staff left the school in a hired coach, arriving at Hellifield 09.05, catching the 10.00, and arriving at Garsdale 11.00. After climbing Wild Boar Fell, we returned to Garsdale at 18.30 for the 19.00 train back to Hellifield and return coach to Darwen. I still have the YDNP Railway Excursion ticket from Hellifield to Garsdale for 10 adults and 29 children. It cost £22.50. It was an 8-coach train and we were in Coach D.

Our next DalesRail day was 6 May 1978, when the first direct train from Lancashire enabled our party of 27 pupils and 5 adults to catch the 09.46 from Blackburn to Dent. After climbing Whernside, we returned to Ribbleshead for the 08.36 but it was late and we arrived back in Blackburn at 22.00.

On 5 May 1979, we left Blackburn in snow, hoping to travel direct to Garsdale to climb Great Knoutberry. However, a goods train had derailed at Settle Jct so we had replacement bus to Settle and train from there. Our walk ended at Dent to catch the 18.57 direct to Blackburn, as the line had been cleared.

On 2 Oct 1982 we walked Attermire, when my notes say, "...arrived back at Settle 6.45pm to catch the train due at 7.15pm. It arrived at 8.15pm, having broken down. It reached Hellifield, where it was filled with water from a tea urn, which must have worked, as we arrived at Blackburn at 9.30pm instead of 8.09pm."

After these school trips, I went with family and friends on a total of 32 DalesRail trips. Sunday 5 July 1987 saw the first Lancashire Sunday service. There used to be two trains in each direction and, each year between 2008 and 2012, we caught the early train from Blackburn, and the early return from wherever we had been walking. We got off the train at Settle, and had two hours to enjoy a superb meal in The Golden Lion, before catching the later train back to Blackburn.

When, in 2014, the service was reduced to one train in each direction, my friend and I would have a day's walking in the Dales, whilst our wives went through to Carlisle where they would buy food and wine from M&S. My friend and I would catch the return train at one of the stations lower down the line, and meet our wives who had laid out the meal and wine on the table. We would dine in splendour, much to the envy of our fellow passengers.

Those were the days!

*Hopefully, those days will return. Ed.*

**Whalley Station** Page 23

*A selection of photographs and info submitted by Alan Scholfield*

**Top row: Left:** P1 trip hazard. **Centre:** P1 edge repairs look a mess but do their job. These slabs should have been replaced by NetR after the platform extension. **Right:** Paint job - long overdue.

**Middle two rows:** selected examples, from both platforms, of defective fence palings: missing; painted on one side only; and botched repairs.

**Bottom row:** P1, two examples of “repairs” to cabling after criminal damage following poor installation. It is believed that this is the connection to the CCTV equipment from Openreach.

*Photos: Alan Scholfield (all taken 31 October 2023)*

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES**

**RVR bi-Monthly meetings will be held at The New Inn, Parson Lane, Clitheroe, 7.00 pm on the second Monday of alternate months. Next meetings: 13 November 2023, Provisional dates for 2024, 8 January, 11 March. If in doubt, check the RVR website.**

**RVR WHO'S WHO & OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Hon Life Vice-Presidents: Alan & Sheila Kay	
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FoWS: Alan Scholfield	01254 823140
FoCS: Lauren Hall	07788732663
BT Police: Railwatch Freephone	0800 40 50 40
Network Rail National Helpline	08457 11 41 41
Network Rail NW Press Office, Square One, 4 Travis Street, M/c, M1 2NY	0161 880 3142
Northern Rail customer helpline	0845 600 1159
Train running information	0870 602 3322
RVR website:	www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk
<b>Community Rail Partnership Website:</b>	<b>www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk</b>

**RVRNews copy dates**

**Start now, and keep contributions coming! RVRN138 needs to be ready by February.**

If submitting photos for publication, please send **unreduced** material (if necessary, 1 email per pic) each with **caption** containing information as to **Who took What, Where, and When**. Photos, taken on a mobile phone and reduced for email don't reproduce very well. *Ed.*

*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.*

**Tailpiece - or should it be “Headpiece”?**

In STORM Matters, Frank Salt reports that a new station is to be built for Kirkby called, would you believe? “Headbolt Lane (Kirkby)”. [*Headbolt? Shades of Lurch? Ed.*]



**Whalley Station**  
*see captions opposite*





**Whalley - from the sublime *[above]***

Whalley in Bloom welcome and access ramp to Platform 2.

**to the ridiculous! *[below]***

Mytton Rd Bridge (Br 41), which effectively forms the first/last arch of Whalley Viaduct.

The height warning sign (which should be accompanied by a metric version) is filthy and there is no lamp working on either side of the bridge.

This is a Highways responsibility which has now been reported.

*Photos and info: Alan Scholfield*

