



THEN The remaining abutments of Belman Bridge, looking towards Chatburn, a few days after it was destroyed by an out-of-gauge lorry on 23 March 2022.

Photo: B Haworth

The deckless tramway bridge perpetuates the right of way between Belman Quarry and the Hoffman lime kilns adjacent to the railway.

NOW Looking towards Clitheroe, the recently restored structure.

Photo: W Briggs (14 February 2023)



RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



Marjorie Birch

28 August 1945 - 10 December 2022

**RVRNews
135**



**Winter
2023**



Marjorie Birch in early days of RVR

Posed in the doorway of S J Moore & Sons premises in York Street, Clitheroe is a group of RVR volunteers manning the “Ribble Valley Rail Tea Room” at some town occasion around 1990. L-R Bob Greenwood (V-Chmn), Alice Greenwood, Peter Moore (Chmn), Marjorie Birch, Marian Butterworth, Ron Birch (Treas), David Butterworth (Sec), Bill Briggs (Memb Sec).
[If anyone can remember the occasion, date, or photographer, please let me know. Ed.]

Still working in 2022



[As seen in RVRN133]

Having well-earned rest after planting up the planters at Clitheroe Station in 2022 are:

L-R

Marjorie Birch
 Pamela Corlett
 Peter Eastham
 Brian Haworth

Photo: David Butterworth

*Front Page photo:
 Courtesy of Lauren Hall*



Contrasting weather conditions

Above: Ex-LMS Black 5, 44932, hauls the northbound Cumbrian Mountain Express towards Horrocksford Link Road Bridge on a wintery 21 January 2023.

Below: In the same location but opposite direction, Colas Rail 66842 hauls the Chirk -bound “Logs” on 28 January 2011.

Photos: *Graham Dudley*



Unacceptable replacements for Telephone Boxes

BT has submitted planning applications for the installation of three advertising panels in the centre of Clitheroe, claiming that they are a sensible, progressive replacement for the traditional phone box. However, to all intents and purposes, they are merely advertising hoardings for which BT will gain income. Clitheroe town centre is a Conservation Area so, under normal circumstances, such panels would be automatically banned, but BT think otherwise. If you care for the appearance of the Centre of Clitheroe, please submit an objection to each of the three separate submissions. There is a petition, but personal objections carry more weight. **The planning application references are 3/2023/0002 (outside the White Lion), 3/2023/0006 (on King Street), and 3/2023/0008 (in front of Boots on Castle Street).**

Please submit your objections by email to planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk, quoting the reference numbers.

David Butterworth

** from p16. The selfsame spade may well have been used by the Mayor of Ribble Valley, Cllr John Travis, to "cut the first sod" for the reconstruction of Clitheroe Station on 5 January 1993. See RVRN 22]*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES 2022

**RVR bi-Monthly meetings will be held at The New Inn, Parson Lane, Clitheroe,
7.00 pm on Mondays Next meeting: 13 March 2023**

RVR AGM Saturday 25 March 2023

RVR WHO'S WHO & OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Hon Life Vice-Presidents: Alan & Sheila Kay	
Chairman: Peter Eastham, 79 Rogersfield, Langho, Blackburn, BB6 8HD	01254 240830
Hon Sec: Pam Corlett,	pamcorlett@msn.com
Hon Treasurer: David J Butterworth, 72 Fairfield Drive, Clitheroe, BB7 2PS	01200 425750
RVRNews Compiler &	
RVR Membership Sec: Bill Briggs	01254 854474
55 Bank Head Lane, Hoghton, PRESTON, PR5 0AB	e-mail.bill.rvrnews@gmail.com
FoR&WS: Peter Eastham	01254 240830
FoLS: Brian Haworth (FoS Co-ordinator)	01254 247844
FoWS: Alan Scholfield	01254 823140
FoCS: Marjorie Birch	01200 441549
BT Police: Railwatch Freephone	0800 40 50 40
Network Rail National Helpline	08457 11 41 41
Network Rail NWPress Office, Square One, 4 Travis Street, Manchester, M1 2NY	0161 880 3142
Northern Rail customer helpline	0845 600 1159
Train running information	0870 602 3322
RVR website:	www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk
Community Rail Partnership Website:	www.communityrailancashire.co.uk

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.

From The Chair

The RVR Officers and Committee were shocked and greatly saddened to hear of the sudden death of Marjorie Birch, on 10 December, after collapsing while travelling back from the Midlands to her home in Chatburn.

Marje's late husband, Ron, was a founder member of RVR in 1986, becoming a Committee Member, Treasurer, and for a time Acting Secretary. Soon after Ron's death in 2005, Marje continued his legacy and dedication to RVR by joining the Committee, being elected Vice-Chairman when Brian Haworth stepped down following his appointment as Community Rail Officer with Community Rail Lancashire. Following the death of Chairman Peter Moore, Marje was elected Chairman at the 2012 AGM and served diligently in this position until retirement at the 2021 AGM, remaining a Committee Member thereafter. It was a great pleasure to serve as Secretary under Marje's chairmanship for those nine years; she was always positive and constructive, and we never had a disagreement.

Her friendly, cheerful character, dedication, hard work and good relationships were not confined to RVR, as she also became greatly involved with volunteering in Community Rail Lancashire, our Clitheroe & East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, and was highly respected within our local Network Rail and Train Operating Companies, but more of that elsewhere in this RVRN.

Unless something radically changes, the on-going series of programmed rail strikes looks like continuing into the Spring. On non-strike days, however, Ribble Valley Line train services are performing well, certainly in comparison with others in the North. In the three analysis periods between mid-September and mid-November 2022, over 80% of RVL trains arrived at their destination within 3 minutes of their scheduled arrival time, and over 95% within 15 minutes, with cancellations in low single figures %.

Lancashire County Council, in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire and the Local Councils, have commissioned Northern Railway to look at the scope for improving three of the services that run through Blackburn, including the Clitheroe - Rochdale service, together with looking at options for development of services north of Clitheroe (following the RVBC submission to the Government's *Restoring Your Railway* scheme being handed back with recommendations to that effect).

Over the past two years, the summer Sundays-only DalesRail service (Blackpool North - Carlisle via the Ribble Valley Line) was badly affected by the impact of COVID and is being looked at afresh. *[see p8]* "Access for All" bids, for funding schemes to make stations more user-friendly and accessible for less mobile passengers, have been submitted by LCC for Ramsgrave & Wilpshire, Langho, and Whalley stations (as well as Rose Grove, Accrington, Church & Oswaldtwistle, and Rishton). Decisions are expected in April.

The serious derailment of five wagons of the Clitheroe - Mossend (Scotland) cement train at Petteril Bridge Jct [see RVRN134] closed both the S&C and Newcastle - Carlisle lines for seven weeks, stopping freight services and requiring bus-replacement for passengers. This was cleared up in early December and all the regular freight services have resumed. A new service, carrying small limestone loaded at Ribblehead siding for dispatch to Tuebrook (Liverpool), appears to have become a regular, also.

Peter Eastham

Marjorie Birch

28 August 1945 - 10 December 2022



“... just a’ waiting for a train!”

The above photograph of a Lancashire Evening Telegraph newspaper shows 11-month-old Marjorie being held aloft by her father above the packed crowd waiting on Blackburn Station for a Wakes Weeks special in July 1946.

Blackburn was still part of the LMS. The train’s arrival must be imminent as the platform clock (top of photo) and train indicator (slightly below and to the right) appear to show the same time. The glass case containing the model of the IOMSPCo’s ship, *Viking*, is hidden by the crowd.

Reliability

On 30 Jan 2023, ORR called on train operators to implement the system that notifies passengers when their booked trains are cancelled or timetables change. It has also told the industry to stop the inappropriate use of “P-coding”, whereby trains are “pre-cancelled” before a 10pm deadline, and before they are included in the following day’s timetable, so that they don’t appear in the official statistics. The worst (*D Express 24 Jan 2023*) was Avanti West Coast’s cancellation score of 18.9% of the four weeks to 7 Jan. Southeastern was second worst with 12.2% followed by Govia Thameslink and Transpennine Express (TPE) with 11.9%. These stats did not include “P-coded” service removals. ORR has called for the practice of “P-coding” to be outlawed. [*Info: Rail User Express Feb 2023 and DT 18 Feb ‘23.*]

Here’s one to make you laugh (or groan!):

“Oversized trains in Spain have sent E258m [£230m] down the drain”

Daily Telegraph (7 Feb 2023) reports that two Spanish transport bosses have been fired for ordering trains that are too big to go through the tunnels! The 31 trains, designed for the narrow gauge lines in the northern regions of Asturias and Cantabria are, fortunately, still in the design phase. RENFE, the operator, is quoted as saying, “The problem is that the “official” measurements do not correspond to reality.” Cantabria’s President has called it “an outrageous botch-up”. [*What’s “botch-up” in Spanish? “Has ta any Bisto?” Ed*]

Timetable changes [*Info: Northern Stakeholder Update 9 Feb 2023*]

The next TT change takes place on Sunday 21 May 2023. Northern services will remain broadly the same as current, with some slight re-timing. On some routes there will be some key changes which are listed on Northern’s timetable change webpage to be widely publicised over the following weeks. Northern has developed a TT checker which shows new or withdrawn services and any journey-affecting changes. You can find it at: <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/december22>. and type your local station into the matrix.

Fare-Dodgers beware! [*Info: Northern Stakeholder Update 9 Feb 2023*]

Fare-evaders have been warned that, from Monday 23 Jan 2023, the new £100 Penalty Fare has come into effect. Anyone caught travelling on-board one of Northern’s 2500 daily services without a valid ticket or “promise to pay” notice will be issued with the £100 Penalty Fare (reduced to £50 if paid within 21 days). The £100 penalty forms part of The Railways (Penalty Fares) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 and brings the increase in line with TfL and Manchester’s Metrolink. Rail Delivery Group estimates that £240m is lost annually through fare-evasion.

The free *Railway Guardian*

No, it’s not a free paper like Castle View but an all-in-one safety app, devised by British Transport Police, which allows you to report crimes or concerns on the rail network, share your journeys with trusted contacts, and access news, guides, or support for you to feel safe and empowered when you travel. It can be downloaded on Android or iOS devices. <https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/campaigns/Download-Railway-Guardian/> Dawn McGough would welcome email feedback from users on dawn.mcgough@cumbria.gov.uk or on 07767 007 101.

Pressing Matters

compiled by Bill Briggs

Apart from the on-going rail (as opposed to flange-) strikes, rail interest in the national papers appears to be concentrated on HS2 and the proposed fares restructuring.

HS2 or H₂S [more poisonous than cyanide (HCN) and which, apparently killed off the dinosaurs in the space of a fortnight!] Depending on its final specification, HS2 is officially estimated to cost between £72bn and £98bn. (*DTBusiness 10 Feb 2023*)

Plot to cut HS2 services in half in race to save money (*DTBusiness 10 Feb 2023*) Fewer trains and slower speeds as part of measures to rein in spending on £72.3bn [vanity] project. “Why do you have to get to London 30 minutes quicker when you have wi-fi and your laptop on the train?” is a question asked. It is also rumoured that HS2 services will terminate, not at Euston, but at Old Oak Common! A High Speed Rail Group spokesman says, “...we desperately need the growth and productivity benefits that HS2 will bring in order to fight the cost of living crisis.” Huh? As the late Mandy Rice-Davies once famously said, “Well, he would say that, wouldn’t he!”

HS2 is costly “because we are careful”, Sir John Thompson, the new chairman of HS2, claims (*DTBusiness 10 Feb 2023*) in 21 column inches of outright jingoism. Apart from those with a vested interest, most of the letters to the paper appear to be against the project. HS2 told to fix potholes blamed on its lorries. (*Sunday Telegraph 26 Feb 2023*). Buckinghamshire County Council has had to divert £5m from crucial services to fix an eight-fold rise in pothole damage caused, in large part, by HS2’s lorries, 207 dangerous potholes being reported in January 2023 compared with 27 in Jan ‘22, plus non-emergency ones from 1260 to 3142 for the same periods. HS2 says, “We have made a £3.9m road safety fund available.”

“Rail chiefs plotting to scrap buffet cars ...” (*DTBusiness 9 Feb 2023*)

On-board catering across the entire network is to be reviewed. The 12-page framework document also confirms plans to cut large numbers of station ticket offices. In September 2022, it was reported that ticket office closures were being written into new TOC contracts.

Rail fares - Returns

Daily Express (6 Feb 2023) reports that “single-leg pricing” is to be trialled with a view to making Return tickets redundant. **Q.** With current Return ticket prices in mind, does that mean that the Single-leg ticket will cost half the Return fare or the Return fare half the price of the single? No need to answer that one! A 1960’s Boy Scout (*DT Letters 19 Feb 2023*) recalls that a Single from Glossop to Manchester Piccadilly was 2/4, whereas the Return was 2/-. Guess which was bought! A Cumbrian gentleman questions (*Sunday Telegraph 11 Feb 2023*) “How can buying two Single tickets be “simpler” than buying one Return ticket?”

DT (16 Feb 2023) reports that Govia Thameslink is offering commuters up to 15% discount on Advance tickets on Mondays and Fridays. After what is described as “a sea change in travel habits”, Southern is releasing a limited number of Monday and Friday peak-time Advanced tickets up to 15% cheaper than a standard Anytime Day Return, available up to 12 weeks in advance.

Mileage-based fares seem like a good idea until you remember all the places between which there used to be a shorter route e.g. Wennington to Lancaster/Morecambe/Heysham, Preston to Southport, Blackburn to Chorley/Wigan, Colne to Skipton, Clitheroe to Hellifield. It would make it interesting if people started insisting on the rail fare being based upon the distance the crow flies between stations. *WB*

Marje - “in her own write” - and a tribute from the Chairman

As the picture on page 4 shows, Marje’s connection with railways began at an early age. At 11 months old, she featured in a photograph in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* being held aloft by her dad above a packed crowd on the platform at Blackburn Station. Below: Marje tells the story of her lifelong rail journey, in her own words featured on a display, produced by Community Rail Lancashire, on Platform 2 at Clitheroe railway station.

“July 1946, at the age of 11 months, I embarked on my first train journey. My family was travelling from Blackburn to Fleetwood for their annual holiday. The event was the annual Wakes Weeks when the cotton mills of East Lancashire closed for two weeks in the summer. Our holidays over the years were always at seaside towns, initially Blackpool and Fleetwood and, as my sister and I got older, Ilfracombe and Paignton. We always travelled by train, as we didn’t have a car. Our holiday started the moment we got on the train with *I-spy* colouring books and spotting buildings from the carriage window. Train travel has always been part of our lives. My late husband and I travelled through France and Italy by train, appreciating the wonderful views and ease of movement within countries. When driving, detours in France often resulted in arriving at a preserved railway or a small village station for a supposedly “unplanned” train journey. Latterly, my involvement with Community Rail Lancashire has given me the opportunity to pass on my enthusiasm for train travel and the excitement of that first rail journey to over three thousand young children in Lancashire.”

As recorded in *From the Chair*, Marje’s contribution to Ribble Valley Rail itself extended well beyond into community rail, education, and local society. She became involved in CRL, working with Brian Haworth on many projects on our local railways and, especially, putting her working knowledge of education (from her earlier career) into the various classroom workshops and train trips for youngsters, to give a new generation the experience and knowledge of railways, train travel, and safety. This involved not only workshop sessions in the CRL classroom at Accrington station, but travel to schools, and many organised walks and train trips with youngsters. As with several other aspects of her work with CRL, this was recognised nationally in the National Community Rail Awards and involved her and the team making journeys to Awards ceremonies in Plymouth and London, amongst other cities. Another award came by way of an organisation she helped to form in 2016: Women in Community Rail. With membership across a wide range of community rail groups, its aim is to support colleagues in the community rail family to work toward a more inclusive, tolerant, and diverse membership and for them to have a voice at all levels.

On top of this, Marje was a Parish Councillor in Chatburn, latterly Vice-Chairman, a Churchwarden, and School Governor. She will be sorely missed. This year, someone else will have to deal with ordering the stations' flowering plants, their collection from the nursery, and organising the planting sessions at the stations by our willing band of volunteers. Despite all her commitments, she still found time for holidays and, with granddaughter Lauren, watching Wales in the Six Nations.

Marje's funeral took place on Friday 23 December 2022 at Christ Church, Chatburn. It was very well attended. RVR was very well represented not only by Committee Members but other members, including several surviving Founder Members, Women in Community Rail, former colleagues from Education and the Rail Industry, friends of RVR, and people from the village.

Peter Eastham

Obituary

Marjorie Birch (RVR 004)

After collapsing on her way home from visiting friends, Marjorie died suddenly but peacefully on 10 December 2022 in Royal Stoke University Hospital. Formerly of Daisyfield, Blackburn, she and her late husband had lived in Chatburn for many years.

Marjorie and her younger sister, Eileen, grew up in Blackburn where she attended Blackburn Girls' High School. She went on to teacher training college at Alsager where she met her future husband, Ron. Her first teaching post was at St Paul's, Blackburn. She also taught at Daisyfield Primary School before embarking on a career in Special Education which eventually took her to an advisory role in County Hall.

Following her retirement, she continued her involvement in supporting children's education as a director of The Big Wide Talk Children's Project, and Sure Start, Hyndburn. More recently, she became a foundation governor of Chatburn CoE Primary School. In retirement, she led an extremely active life which included carrying on Ron's legacy with Ribble Valley Rail, taking the Chair following the death of Peter Moore in 2012, as well as being a parish councillor, church warden at Christ Church, Chatburn, a director of Community Rail Lancashire, Chair of the join Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire Line Community Rail Partnerships, and was always involved in some community project, latterly Women in Community Rail..

Marje also enjoyed spending time with her family and was extremely proud of her granddaughter, Lauren, who accompanied her to Wales Rugby Union Internationals, after Ron's death in 2005.

[info: Lauren Hall and Bill Briggs]

In *Blackburn's Railways in the 1950s and 60s*, by Stuart Taylor (published by Foxline), the railcar slipped and slithered all the way up the bank, struggled on into Sough Tunnel, then disaster struck the cardan shaft [*of the rear car*] came adrift and ruptured the fuel tank.

The train was a two-car Class 112 mechanical Cravens unit, M51505/24. The fire was so intense that the solebars in the middle of the unit melted, causing the unit to sag. The vehicles were cut up at nearby Spring Vale by April 1968. (*railcar.co.uk*)

Although a MoT accident investigation was not carried out, Sough Tunnel and another fire at Bay Horse (south of Lancaster) on 19 January were reported in the 1967 Annual Report and were referred to in a MoT accident report on a further fire at Sandridge (near St Alban's) on 12 June 1968, in which two passengers died and a further ten were injured. This report describes the Class 112's transmission system:

“Each car has a single Rolls Royce 238hp engine driving the inner axle of the bogie at the end remote from the driving cab through a transmission system including a fluid flywheel, free-wheel mechanism, air-operated 4-speed epicyclic gearbox, and an axle-mounted final drive unit. The drive is carried from the gearbox, which is secured to the underframe by a three-point suspension, to the final drive by means of a cardan shaft passing through what is, in effect, a tunnel formed in the main fuel tank, which is of saddle formation with legs descending on each side of the shaft.

Whatever the circumstances, a failure of a part of the mechanical transmission of a diesel multiple unit powercar should not lead, as in the present case, to a serious fire involving fatal casualties. That it did so on this occasion must be ascribed to the bad design of the vehicle involved.”

The report concludes: “On this particular design of powercar, fitted only with one engine and transmission, there seems no justification for this location of the main fuel tank, requiring as it does a complicated design of tank, when there was enough space at the other end of the underframe, between the engine and the non-driven bogie, for a simple rectangular tank of adequate capacity. The British Railways Board have accepted the need for those fuel tanks to be relocated in a less vulnerable position, and by August 1969, this modification had been completed on all except one of the powercars of this type to be retained in service.”

<https://www.railcar.co.uk/images/15782> is a photo of a 112 passing Waltons Sidings.

Acknowledgements:

Lancashire Telegraph, *Blackburn Fire History*, *railcar.co.uk*, *Blackburn's Railways in the 1950s and '60s* (Stuart Taylor. Pub: Foxline), verbal reports of that time by my mother, and the MoT report on the accident involving the Class 112 fire at Sandridge, 12 June 1968.

John Harrison (RVR 257)

More Letters to the Editor

The UPs and DOWNs of Entwistle Station

Bill,

Re: “Why Entwistle?” (RVRN 133), the present platform was, prior to the 1904 quadrupling, the DOWN Blackburn platform, made into an island platform in 1904. The UP platform would have been where the UP Fast line was, the DOWN Fast previously being the UP line. When the line was singled, around 1972, the UP line (from Blackburn) was slewed into the DOWN (from Bolton) immediately south of the platform, so straightening out the curve created back in 1904.

I’ve prepared a short article about the fire involving a CI 112 Cravens DMU in Sough Tunnel. The article may also appear in *Branch Line News* sometime in the future. If a full accident investigation had been made it would probably have prevented the fatal accident referred to in the text.

Regards,

John Harrison (RVR 257)

Sough Tunnel Fire, 4 October 1967

The 2015 yds-long Sough Tunnel is situated on the line between Blackburn and Bolton on the northern approach to the line’s summit at Waltons Sidings. The gradient from Blackburn starts at 1 in 100, increasing to 1 in 75 around Hoddlesden Junction. With an exception through Darwen Station, the 1 in 75 gradient continues through the tunnel to the summit. Although you could see through the tunnel from an old DMU, it is not straight but has a kink. Light from the distant portal would veer from side to side somewhere north of the halfway point. I remember being told that the kink was due to a surveying error when the tunnel was constructed.

In 1967 my mother was a student at a teacher training college in Manchester and commuted daily from Nelson to Manchester Victoria. On 4 October 1967 she was travelling in the front car of the 08.30 Blackburn to Manchester Victoria train which caught fire shortly after entering Sough Tunnel. My mother recalls that the fire started in the rear car, passengers in the rear car escaped into the front car, and all escaped at the south (Waltons Sidings) end of the tunnel. She and other passengers spent some time in Waltons Sidings signal box and were eventually rescued by another DMU, which had arrived from the Bolton direction, and took them on to Manchester.

Blackburn Fire History and *Lancashire Telegraph* report passengers escaping at the north (Spring Vale) end of the tunnel, being bussed back to Blackburn. Eight people, four of whom were railway staff, were taken to hospital suffering from the effects of fumes. “Firemen had to lay three-quarters of a mile of hose from the water supply to the burning DMU. They worked in waist-deep mud to quench the flames and wore breathing apparatus because of the heat and flames.”

Membership

“10 December 2022

Dear RVR Member

This morning, I received the devastating news that, yesterday, RVR’s previous Chair, Marjorie Birch, collapsed and died on the way home from visiting friends in the South.

Our deepest sympathy goes to her daughter and son-in-law, Vicky and Craig, and her granddaughter, Lauren.

Bill Briggs (RVR Membership Secretary)”

The above was, undoubtedly, the most distressing email I’ve ever had to send out to all the RVR Members whose email address I have, RVRNews recipients, and RVR’s Rail Industry contacts. Getting in-touch with some of those last was extremely difficult and time-consuming. It may not have been 100% accurate as it was rushed out immediately following the Chairman’s phone call, relayed by the Secretary.

Bill Briggs

Recent RVL Train Performance

as reported by STORM

Compared with the Calder Valley services, the Ribble Valley seems to get off quite lightly as far as cancellations and lateness goes.

Wednesday 7 December 2022

05.53 Rochdale to Clitheroe (cancelled) No driver

13.39 Leeds to Wigan cancelled at Man Vic due to “disorder”.

14.04 Clitheroe to Rochdale (cancelled at B’burn due to “Driver being taken ill”)

14.18 Rochdale to Clitheroe (cancelled) No driver

Monday 9 January 2023

05.51 Rochdale to Blackburn (19 mins late start)

14.01 Clitheroe to Rochdale (20 mins late at Man Vic)

Tuesday 10 January (flooding caused some late running)

12.00 Clitheroe to Rochdale (12 mins late at Man Vic)

15.01 Clitheroe to Rochdale (38 mins late at Moston)

15.21 Rochdale to Clitheroe (27 mins late in)

15.29 Blackburn to Rochdale (24 mins late at Man Vic)

From the notes:

Salford Central is to have a major rejuvenation in 2023.

Hoverboards, e-boards and e-scooters are now banned from all Northern stations.

A wise decision - just hope it will be policed.

Many thanks to Frank Salt (STORM) for the information.

PE

Ribble Valley Rail

The User Group for the Ribble Valley Line

PRESS RELEASE

The Ribble Valley Rail Service

Ribble Valley Rail, the User Group for the Ribble Valley stations of Ramsgreave & Wilpshire, Langho, Whalley, Clitheroe, and also Darwen stations, greatly welcomes the news that Lancashire County Council, in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Ribble Valley Councils, and Community Rail Lancashire, has commissioned Northern Trains to look at the scope to improve East Lancashire's rail services, including the Clitheroe-Blackburn-Manchester-Rochdale service.

Since the Blackburn to Clitheroe section was reopened in 1994, after over 30 years with no passenger service, the line has gone from strength to strength. From an initial weekdays-only service, a Sunday service was added later, platform lengths extended to accommodate longer trains and later evening trains were added to the timetable. All this was achieved with ever-growing passenger numbers and the co-operation of the local authorities, the different train companies over the last 30 years, Network Rail, Community Rail Lancashire and Ribble Valley Rail. Ribble Valley Rail hopes that this project will continue this steady improvement and development of the rail service.

The study will provide a technical assessment of future demand for rail services in East Lancashire, laying the foundations for any potential future enhancements with the rail industry.

The options for the development of services north of Clitheroe to Hellifield and beyond are also included in this initiative. This is also a development from the *Restore Your Railway* bid submitted by Ribble Valley Borough Council, which was referred back by the Government for possible agreement and funding at a local level. We also welcome this aspect which, if progressed, would unlock an existing through rail route from Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley onto North Yorkshire and potentially beyond.

Peter Eastham (Hon Chairman, Ribble Valley Rail) [Issued 7 February 2023]

STOP PRESS

Since the above Press Release there have been discussions following the withdrawal of the 2023 **Dalesrail** service. Further discussions, which cannot be published at this time, are underway with the earnest hope for restoration of the service in 2024. Watch the website www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk for up-to-date news. *Ed.*

RVRNews copy dates

Start now, and just keep contributions coming! RVRN136 needs to be ready by June

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.*

between 1859 and 1871 (and which would be famously visited by Gandhi, and Fred Dibnah). James Kay, cotton spinner, who lived at Turton Tower, and William Henry Hornby, who lived in King Street, Blackburn, owned Brookhouse Mill and would become MP for Blackburn, and its first mayor. The shares were scrip or subscription shares with a down payment and a promise to pay the balance in instalments. The two rail companies (BDB and BC&NWJct) were therefore amalgamated into the Bolton, Blackburn, Clitheroe and West Yorkshire Railway. It received its parliamentary assent on 27 July 1846 and work was quickly underway on the Bolton to Blackburn section where the first public trains ran on 12 July 1848.

Back in November 1846, tenders had been issued for the construction of the line to Clitheroe and Chatburn. Lord Ribblesdale, Third Baronet, only 18 years old, would perform his first public appointment by enthusiastically cutting the first sod, using a new spade*, off Chatburn Road, Clitheroe. This was an important day in Clitheroe and warranted a public holiday. Shops closed and the Mayor and Corporation made a public appearance. The Clitheroe Temperance Band played for the crowds. At 3pm more than 200 guests repaired to the Swan (now the Swan & Royal) for a sumptuous meal paid for by the contractors who had won the contract to build the railway. [**see page 22 Ed*]

Work had already started on the Clitheroe line but in 1847 the enthusiasm for investment in new railways was collapsing following failed schemes, fraud by some promoters, and some schemes which were becoming apparent as never earning a profit. The "Railway Bubble" had burst. Some shareholders began to default on their payments and for a time it looked like the Company might go bust, so that the section beyond Blackburn towards Clitheroe and Yorkshire would not be completed. It was mainly due to the firm action of Chairman, William Henry Hornby, who threatened to publicly expose defaulters and who put in more of his own money, that construction continued, albeit only as a single track, with shacks at stations, and being truncated at Chatburn. The line opened through to Chatburn on 22 June 1850.

This third of our licensed premises, the Swan & Royal on Castle Street, Clitheroe, which had hosted celebrations for the start of construction of a railway into the town, did not finish its association with railway development in 1846. It had been the starting point for the Hellifield Royal Mail road coach for many years. It is thought to be the reason for the addition of "Royal" to its former "Swan" name. That service finished with the later extension of the railway through to Hellifield.

In 1986, like the thirty individuals in the pub at Darwen, twenty individuals would hold a meeting in the Swan & Royal with the idea to open a railway. This was the inauguration of Ribble Valley Rail, whose aim for a passenger service to Clitheroe again would be achieved in 1994. After the first opening to Clitheroe in 1850 it took another thirty years to get to Hellifield. We are now approaching 29 years since the second opening, and still working on it with our authority and industry partners.

Peter Eastham

While all this was going on there was another meeting in another pub - this time, the Greenway Arms on Duckworth Street, Darwen, chaired by James Greenway. On a Friday afternoon, in late 1844, a group of thirty locals met and listened to a proposal, and a survey by John Watson, a surveyor from Lancaster, to build a railway to connect Blackburn and Darwen with Bolton and the already-built railway to Manchester. Although this would involve inclines and construction of the long Sough tunnel, it was eagerly agreed to issue shares of £25 each to raise capital of £213,600, and seek the necessary Parliamentary Act for its construction. The shares were rapidly sold out.



As this was in progress, news came of another projected cross-country railway from Liverpool to Preston, up the Ribble Valley, to Richmond and Newcastle. The committee of our proposed Blackburn, Darwen & Bolton Railway now thought they should get in first and extend the line from Blackburn to Clitheroe and into Yorkshire. If the other line was ever built its company would then have to pay them to run trains through the Ribble Valley. The submission to Parliament was therefore changed to add a Blackburn, Clitheroe, and North Western Junction Railway. The committee of twenty-three was guided by J F Hindle of Woodfold Park, Blackburn, High Sheriff of Lancaster, and would issue more shares for this additional line.

Amongst the original proposers and supporters of the project were prominent businessmen manufacturers. James Greenway was a calico printer who had built the Darwen Dob Meadow Printworks in 1808. He was moving into paper-making as the bleaching process was a natural progression from cloth. Brothers Charles and Harold Potter had taken over the Hollins Paper Mills in 1844 which were the largest in the world at that time. Charles was James Greenway's son-in-law and had adapted calico printing into wallpaper manufacture by 1840. He took over Belgrave Mills for this process. Later, he would be awarded a gold medal for this at the 1869 Paris Exhibition and the company would later become Walpamur Co. Eccles Shorrocks would later build the India Mill in Darwen (with its massive ornate chimney)

Ribble Valley Rail

www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 36th Annual General Meeting of Ribble Valley Rail will be held in
The Trinity Hub, Trinity Church Hall, Parson Lane, Clitheroe
on Saturday 25th March 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm
Refreshments will be available from 1.30 pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 28th May 2022
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts
6. Membership Secretary's Report
7. Other Reports
8. Election of Officers and Committee
9. Any other business
10. Date and venue of the 37th Annual General Meeting 2024

Members are asked to note:

1. Any member can put forward his/her name to serve on the Committee. Please write to the Secretary at least 7 days prior to the AGM if you wish to serve as an active Committee Member. Places not filled by prior nomination may be filled at the AGM.
2. Nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer will not be accepted on the day of the AGM. Please send nominations at least 7 days before the meeting.
3. Any Member wishing to propose a motion for discussion at the AGM should notify the Secretary, in writing, at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Matters for discussion, not otherwise notified, will be considered at the discretion of the Chairman under Any Other Business.

Pam Corlett, Hon Secretary

Advice from the Membership Secretary

Bill Briggs

My decision to trawl the subscription defaulters in February has borne fruit and the extra expense of repeat requests was worth effort. Unfortunately, among the returns were two (so far!) that have cost RVR £2.50 each, and me approximately £1 each in fuel for the journey to to the Sorting Office to recover them! One had a First Class stamp which the franking machine had recognised as a fake. The other, on a different day, carried a previously-used stamp stuck on with sellotape! That is quite frankly, unacceptable. The fake stamp is unfortunate but avoidable. My information is there is a large number of fakes in circulation and they are difficult to distinguish.

So, the advice is:

BUY STAMPS ONLY FROM THE POST OFFICE.

Letter to the Editor

Hello Bill,
Re: *Princess Margaret Rose - almost a match, but not quite.* (RVRN134), two pictures of 46229 *Duchess of Hamilton* with *The Red Rose* excursion on another day of “wrong line” working on 24 June 1991.

(Upper) at Wilpshire Crossing



Photos: David Roberts

and (Lower) on the same rather dull day, climbing through Sough.

Regards

David Roberts (RVR 394)



The Pubs Where It All Began

Taverns, alehouses, inns or public houses have existed since Roman times when *tabernae* (taverns) were constructed every 20 miles along the Roman roads to provide food and drink for passing travellers - mainly on foot. Some local pubs were to play a part in beginning the construction of our local railway system in the 1840s.

In much earlier times Blackburn consisted of little more than St Mary's church (site dating from AD 596), an Inn with a cluster of dwellings, including the Lord of the Manor's house, around the market place cross (dating from the time of Henry I), a well, and a set of stocks. The origin of this Inn certainly dated back 500 years and, quite possibly, 700 years. It would carry the names Black Bull, Old Black Bull (when a rival New Black Bull was constructed), and finally The Old Bull.

During its long history the building suffered much destruction. It was taken over and wrecked by soldiers of both sides in the Civil War when Royalists and Roundheads successively occupied Blackburn and used the inn (and sometimes the church and also the school) as barracks. On four occasions it was attacked, windows broken, and sometimes stripped following elections, as in 1841 when it was the Conservative Party headquarters and the candidate, Mr Hornby, won by one vote. The supporters of his rival, Mr Turner, attacked the building in a violent manner. Each time, the landlord was left to literally pick up the pieces and start again.

At other times, the inn served as a courthouse for judges visiting the town to hear cases, and by the Lord of the Manor for his annual hearings. It became a recruiting centre in wartime and was very much a social and administrative centre until the mid-1850s when Blackburn received its Charter of Incorporation as a borough and a Town Hall and other civic buildings were erected.

It is not surprising, then, that this was the venue, in late 1840, where a meeting was held following the recent successful opening and performance of the first railway between Manchester and Liverpool. The railway system had already spread to Preston but it was felt too ambitious a project to build a railway to Preston. Three years later, however, the feverish “Railway Mania” had taken hold and so local residents and businessmen decided to put Blackburn on the railway map.

The authorising Act of Parliament was granted on 6 June 1844, the first sod cut on 3 August, and the line to Preston opened quickly on Whit Sunday 3 June 1846. With this successful conclusion of the project, the Company Directors of the new Blackburn and Preston Railway, and other guests, had of course to retire to The Bull to celebrate.



Freight on the RVL

Above: Sporting Regional Railways livery, 37425 hauls 6K05 through Clitheroe on 19 January 2023.

Photo: Jeff Dickinson

Below: From the archive: 70006 hauls a long train of loaded coal hoppers south, seen from the Pimlico Link Road bridge on 20 May 2005.

Graham Dudley



Loco-hauled on the RVL

Above: 66721 *Harry Beck* 6Z84 with a long train of cement tanks at Horrocksford Jct on 15 November 2022.

Below: In a filthy condition, 66427 hauls the first 6K05 since the Petteril Bridge derailment through Clitheroe Station on 12 December 2022.

Photos: Jeff Dickinson





Loco-hauled on the RVL

Above: With Clitheroe Castle in the background, 47812 hauls a special, 1Z07 south through Mitchell Street cutting on 15 December 2022.

Below: Same location, opposite direction, 66972 hauls cement empties 6M90 on 12 January 2023.

Photos: Jeff Dickinson



Freight on the RVL

Above: Colas Rail 60047 hauling 6F69, consist not identified, just south of Primrose Viaduct on 12 January 2023.

Below: Seen from the footbridge just south of Henthorn Park on 19 January 2023, 66793 hauls 6M28, a new stone service from Rylstone Quarry to Leyland.

Photos: Jeff Dickinson

