

Rail North West



*A Northern Class 319 at Manchester Oxford Road station on a Liverpool – Manchester Airport service
. Photo courtesy Arthur Thomson.*

Two More 319 Flex Trains to Retain Through Southport – South Manchester Services

The Ormskirk-Preston-Southport Travellers Association (OPSTA) campaign to retain direct services to the south side of Manchester from Southport remains their biggest issue at present and OPSTA are making the case that adding just two more Class 319 Flex trains to Northern's fleet would mean through services could be retained all day, every day of the week.

Following a meeting with the Rail Minister Paul Maynard along with the 5 MPs along the route in March, the Minister stated his

clear support for a solution; however, he directed this was a matter for the Rail North and Dept for Transport Partnership to resolve.

Currently Northern are proposing that for May '18 timetable, a direct service would only run between Wigan and Piccadilly via Bolton, with stations west of Wigan to Southport getting just two inbound morning and outbound evening peak commuter trains to the south side of Manchester. The plan is based on the development of the bi mode Class 319

Flex trains which will have diesel powered alternators fitted under the driving trailer cars to provide power for the existing DC electric motors and on-board systems; these units offer a very cost-effective solution that makes full use of electrified lines and yet permits direct services to destinations which have not been electrified.

OPSTA met with Northern and Rail North on May 8th, opening the consultation on the May 2018 timetable change, and during a constructive discussion, Northern committed to working with OPSTA to develop the business case for two more Class 319 Flex trains that would allow more through services, though they think that this would not be deliverable before Oct 2018. There's disappointment that this will not deliver a Sunday service which Northern stated was a consequence of how the Franchise Train

Service Requirement was specified, with both Northern and Rail North sceptical of the need.

OPSTA plan to conduct some further passenger surveys and data analysis which OPSTA thinks would demonstrate a strong benefit case (revenue and economic) for the full 7-day service and given the Class 319 Flex trains will displace diesel units on the route, OPSTA thinks the incremental cost is limited. OPSTA have backing from the local councils and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

In the meantime, Northern has invited the campaign group to make a formal response to the timetable consultation that will reflect passengers' needs and concerns.

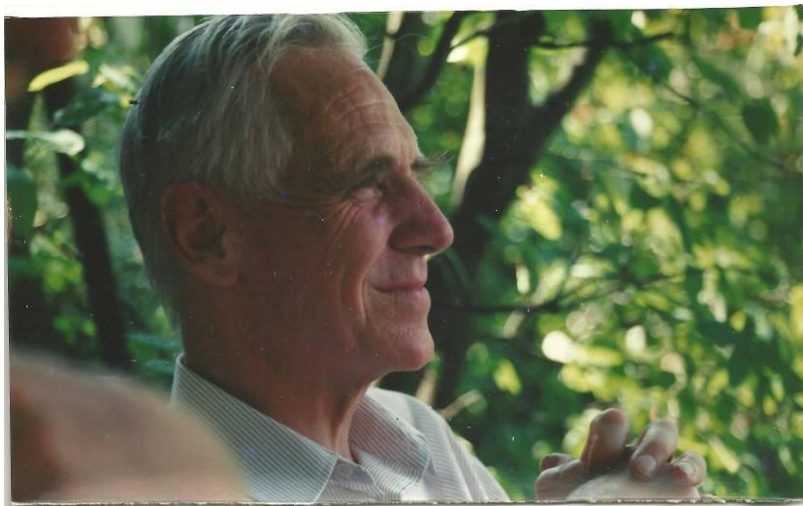
New Northern Rail Project “Will Pay For Itself in a Few Years”

Campaign group SELRAP has warmly welcomed the publication of a 93-page report, “Central trans-Pennine Corridor East West Connectivity: an Economic Study” by the Lancashire LEP, partnering with two other Yorkshire Local Authorities.

This independent report, prepared by economic and transportation experts Cushman Wakefield and Systra, studied improving all transport links across The North. A key part of the report was studying SELRAP's proposal to extend the successful Airedale Line services from Leeds and Bradford all the way into Pendle and Burnley, via a new rail link built between Skipton and Colne. The expert's new report has conclusively shown that building the Skipton to Colne “Missing Link” will have massive economic and social benefits. Key points of this report are that extending this modern train service into Lancashire will:

- Give residents of East Lancashire much improved access to high-value jobs in Yorkshire.
- Boost many key existing advanced manufacturing and aerospace industries, including the biggest local employer, Rolls Royce at Barnoldswick.
- Attract new many businesses into the region.
- Provide an all-new trans-Pennine rail freight link, as viable alternative to the M62.
- Open up many education opportunities and also improve access for tourism.
- If built early, it will benefit other rail schemes, including other proposed trans-Pennine upgrades.

The total economic benefits of this scheme are estimated at staggering £43.5M per annum and the report concludes by noting that there will be more “economic bang” from investing in the Skipton to Colne “missing link” rail line than from investing in any other road or rail scheme.



Picture courtesy of Ronald's son Thomas

Ronald Schwarz 1930-2017

Trevor Bishop, Chairman of Railfuture North West writes; I am very sad to report the death of long-time Committee member and member of the former International Committee, Ronald Schwarz.

Ronald was also our Minutes Secretary and acted as our Returning Officer for elections and even though with his limited mobility in later life, he struggled sometimes to get to our meetings, he always made every effort to do so.

In all our deliberations Ronald always brought the point of view of the passenger to our campaigns and many of you will know that Ronald in his later life was still a fairly frequent traveller by rail, and so his point of view of the passenger was borne of that experience.

Ronald kept our branch meeting minutes up to date with exemplary accuracy and was also a member of the former International Committee of Railfuture. This entailed travelling to London or elsewhere around the country, to meet up with

colleagues, and in this, he also used his own experiences of travelling by train across Europe to inform the debate about what aims we pursued. He was also our voice of a traveller on Metrolink which meant we could tackle them about poor services or whatever with a grounding in reality.

Above all though, I think all in our branch and elsewhere in Railfuture would be honoured to call Ronald our friend.

Often at our meetings, we organised time to have lunch before the meeting proper started, and we often used this as an informal way of talking through our issues, and through being the friend that he was, Ronald made the business of our campaigns all the more pleasurable.

Three committee members were able to attend Ronald's funeral, and at the request of his family, I gave a short tribute to Ronald and was able to extend our condolences to the family at his passing.

Friends of Reddish South Meeting with TfGM

Following a meeting between the Friends of Reddish South and Denton stations and TfGM executives, (organised by Reddish South & Denton MP Andrew Gwynne), to discuss the possibility of getting more than the present one train a week on the line, a further meeting has been arranged by both Jason Prince from TfGM and Andrew Gwynne, where both Northern and Network Rail would also be invited. The meeting was expected in late May so they would extend an invite to the newly elected Mayor of Greater Manchester.

New Station Plans

The prospects for a new station being built on the Wirral at Town Meadow (Moreton) on Merseyrail's West Kirby line have improved. The Wirral Transport Users Association (WTUA) report that the plan is being re-examined, partly because improved

performance of new rolling stock to be introduced from 2020 will create sufficient extra time within the existing timetable to accommodate an additional stop. Rail Minister Paul Maynard visited the site in April with local councillors to back calls for the station.

Halton Curve Update

The North Cheshire Rail User Group (NCRUG) note that progress on the work to reintroduce regular services on the using the Halton Curve continues with a slight slippage in start time for the main work but, they were assured, it would not affect the December 2018 start time for the service.

Work continues on selection of which Train Operating Company would run the service and the timetable details but they have been assured these issues will be closed out in good time for service commencement in December 2018.

NCRUG have just received

Future meetings.

The next two committee meetings, open to members, will be on 2nd September 2017 at, and on November 11th 2017, as with all arrangements, these are subject to confirmation so do please check with Chairman/Secretary details on the back page.

Both meetings will start around 1300, but for those that want lunch, we will normally be there from 1200.

E-Mail of the bulletin

You can opt to receive this bulletin by e-mail, which has the advantage of full colour photos and receipt before the main publication date. If you'd like to receive the bulletin by e-mail, let us know your name and membership number. We have already sent editions of the bulletin to members this way. Contact Arthur Thomson, e-mail address on the back of this newsletter or via the Chairman. **Please note** that this will mean you will **NOT** receive a printed copy, if you still wish to receive that, please let us know when you get in touch

confirmation that any track renewal will be done in such a way as to permit future doubling with minimum disruption and cost.

The timetable of work is: - Frodsham junction Crossover – November 2017, Frodsham Junction Signalling – February 2018, Halton junction Crossover – April 2018, Halton junction Signalling – early May 2018 and Halton junction OHLE – late May 2018.

NCRUG have had preliminary talks with Merseytravel regarding publicising the new service. They will contact them shortly regarding an event Merseytravel are considering to be held on Frodsham station during the summer. Readers will be kept advised on this matter as, and when, more information is available. Meantime further options for after the line opens are being worked on.

The Merseytravel Halton Curve Team have just had a meeting with the local

community in Runcorn to keep them informed about work which will take place on and near the line. The Team were not sure how they would be received as removal of trees etc was one the topics. However, they need not have worried because the locals were delighted to hear that trains will be returning to the line in 2018.

Meanwhile a provisional date for this year's Parliamentary train over the Halton Curve has been published, its Saturday 22nd July,

This annual trip from Chester to Liverpool South Parkway has still to be confirmed by Northern and Network Rail, NCRUG will keep us informed on this subject but please make a note in your diaries. NCRUG notes timings should be the same as in previous years with departure from Chester at 0756.

Off Peak Fares up for the Third Time in a Year

From the May Timetable change, some off-peak fares in the North West increased by up to 10% on Northern Routes.

Railfuture North West and a number of the Rail User Groups have already been in touch with Northern to protest about this increase, which along with the recent introduction of new evening peak time fare restrictions, and another increase back in the autumn (along with the annual increase in January), is

likely to have a negative effect on passenger traffic in the off-peak.

New Advance Purchase On the Day (APOD) fares are being introduced at the same time and Liam Sumpter Northern's Regional Director is quoted in the Lancashire Evening Telegraph; "The new advance fares are significantly cheaper than walk-up equivalents and also give greater flexibility as customers can save time and skip queues by having an

electronic version of the tickets sent direct to their mobile phone.”

The fare rises should only affect services in the Lancaster and Kirkham areas of Lancashire and parts of Cumbria, including Barrow and Kendal, but will not directly affect East Lancashire passengers

Neither the East Lancashire or Clitheroe to Manchester lines, via Blackburn and Darwen, will be affected by the 50p rises by the May 21 changes whilst the start time for off peak tickets availability is being eased

at Ramsgreave and Wilpshire, Langho, Whalley and Clitheroe stations, with these set to be available from 9am, instead of 9.30am, in line with other Lancashire locations

Mr Sumpter said any income raised as a result of the increased fares would be used to improve services through their 'ongoing modernisation programme'.

He repeated a pledge to phase out ageing Pacer trains by the end of 2019.

Delayed Cascade Slows Sunday Service Extension

Tony Potts of the Copeland Rail Users Group (CRUG) notes that the much-heralded introduction of Sunday services south of Whitehaven (on the line from Carlisle to Barrow), promised as part of the new franchise for this December, is now delayed until May 2018 due to the slowing down of the Great Western electrification scheme. This has meant that diesel units (DMU) which were meant to come north to supplement services are to be kept down south pro tem. This doesn't ameliorate the disappointment felt when, after years of campaigning, Sunday trains south of Whitehaven are being put back again.

Meanwhile the Furness Line Action Group (FLAG) notes that the service improvements to eight through Manchester trains and Sunday services north of Barrow are still on target for the revised schedule of May 2018, with the December 2017 timetable little changed from the current one. By April 2107, Northern

planned to have the list of local station improvements; the aim is that all should have CCTV, ticket vending machines and passenger information systems. There are plans for waiting areas at Carnforth and Grange-over-Sands; the access problems for stations including Ulverston and Arnside are still being investigated, separate funding being available.

It is hoped that shortly there will be a 10- minute video on the Community Rail website including excellent air-view drone footage of the line. The Furness Line and Cumbrian Coast Line websites at www.furnessline.co.uk and www.cumbriancoastline.co.uk also contain links to local train operating company sites/timetables, other companies and organisations connected with transport and tourism plus suggestions for days out and local attractions/places to visit.



A DMU working the line back in the 80s (photo courtesy John Matthews' collection)

Ormskirk-Preston Services

Since the new franchise, Northern has consistently stated it will increase Monday - Saturday services to 17 a day between Preston and Ormskirk thus delivering regular, hourly trains from May 2018. Subject to formal industry sign-off, this has been confirmed with the proposed timetable circulated as part of its consultation.

New timetable

The first service will leave Preston at 06.26 then at the same time past each hour until 22.36. Duration of the southbound journey is 30 minutes.

The first service from Ormskirk will depart at 07.01 and then at the same time past each hour until 23.01. The north bound journey is scheduled to take 31 minutes.

The train for Ormskirk will be the unit that has arrived from Colne and the train to Preston will

form a Blackpool South service. Although

they may not be shown in the timetable as such, it will give us through services that should reduce journey times considerably for many passengers in one direction at least.

Consultation Response

OPSTA will be replying to Northern's consultation on the timetable changes proposed and any feedback is welcome. Please email opstasurveys@gmail.com.

Unsurprisingly, having seen this already, the Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers Association (OPSTA) are delighted to see this major step improvement in service level (and when it happens it will be credit to them, OPSTA having taken the lead on this by ensuring all of the franchise bidders understood the evidence based case built on their passenger counts and surveys).

However, OPSTA feel it's still far from perfect, and have shared concerns.

Although timings and connections at Preston appear to work well, ironically, despite the more frequent service, it may not work out so well for connections with Liverpool trains. This takes us to the question posed in the last edition of OPSTA's newsletter, which is how to ensure the management of the lines as a rail corridor. Based on the current Merseyrail timetable, reliable connections at Ormskirk for northbound travel would be 17 minutes and in the evening, this would increase to 24 minutes, however, we know the timetable will change with the opening of Maghull North station in late 2018. Roger Bell from the group is pursuing this.

OPSTA have always been conscious of the travel needs of the students and staff at Edge Hill University which is why they previously suggested to Northern that the evening schedule need not slavishly follow the daytime pattern. As this is written, Edge

Hill University is considering this matter and will be giving them their comments.

The final area of concern for us is over service resilience. The timetables allow very little recovery time for the 5 train units that will be interworked over three services between Preston, Colne, Ormskirk and Blackpool South. Northern deserve credit for maximising the schedule this way but will one delay have a knock-on effect for the rest of the day? We will be seeking an assurance that the recently replaced passing loop at Rufford will serve as an operational contingency to help prevent this.

Alas still no Sunday service which is why OPSTA pursue the one-off operations in order to market test and prove the need (see below for the Northern special service in August).

August 27th Ormskirk Motorfest

	Arrive	Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive	Depart
PRESTON		1045		1205		1405		1522		1645
ORMSKIRK	1116		1236		1436		1553		1716	
ORMSKIRK		1122		1242		1445		1605		1722
PRESTON	1153		1313		1516		1636		1753	

Northern are planning a special Preston – Ormskirk Sunday service on the day of this year's Motorfest in Ormskirk and subject to final confirmation, the timetable is as above.

All services will call at all stations and measures are being taken by Northern to ensure the operation runs more smoothly than last year. It is an unsubsidised service being run at their cost.

OPSTA will again be conducting passenger counts plus a short survey and learning from last year's experience, the intention is to have a presence through the day on platforms and trains. If you are interested in being involved please contact OPSTA.

The measures of success are this:

- Less than 200 passengers: Northern unlikely to bother again
- Circa 250: it is credible but Northern unlikely to be enthused
- Above 300: it is viable
- 400: it must have been profitable and we will demand a further one off (s).

OPSTA and Railfuture are asking for the backing and support of members, which will be immensely important whether it be helping out, using the service, or promoting the event within your personal circles.

New MP Shows Interest in Keswick-Penrith

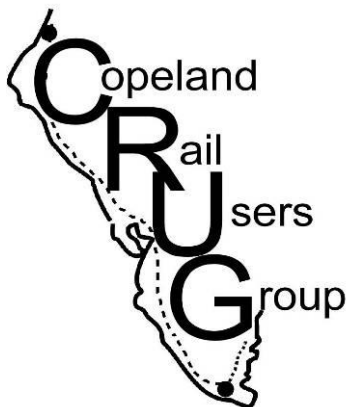
The Copeland by-election back in February resulted in a new MP, Trudy Harrison, and she has met Cockermouth-Keswick-Penrith (CKP) Railways to discuss plans to reopen the Keswick-Penrith rail line. A series of prepared technical and financial questions she had about the project to re-open the line were answered.

Mayor calls On Mancunians to Use Tram to Reduce Air Pollution

The new Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham has appealed to residents to do their bit in reducing air pollution by taking the tram into work at least once a week.

As part of the first Greater Manchester Clean Air Day that took place on Thursday 15 June, the mayor has pledged to use public transport to get into work at least once a week in an effort to improve air quality in the city and he's appealing to others in Manchester to do the same.

Short and long-term exposure to air pollutants can affect people's health, but simple everyday changes like travelling by public transport, such as the tram in Manchester instead of driving can greatly decrease the amount of pollutants in the air. It is predicted that around 2,000 people die prematurely in Greater Manchester every year due to air pollution, with road transport, particularly diesel vehicles, accounting for a huge proportion of dangerous pollutants including 65% of nitrogen oxide and 79% of particulate emissions like soot



Promoting the Cumbrian Coastal Railway

If you'd like to join a group representing the interests of rail users in West Cumbria, and particularly on the Cumbrian Coast line from Carlisle to Barrow, Copeland Rail Users' Group would welcome your membership.

See www.crug.org.uk where you will find all the details about us, our aims and aspirations, and how to join.

Fees, £5 for individuals, £10 for organisations.

We can make a difference, and with your help, our voice will be stronger.

Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association

(Incorporating South Fylde Line Users Association)

Chairman: Paul Nettleton
8, Balham Avenue,
Blackpool,
FY4 3QP

Vice-Chairman: Malcolm Richardson
135, Branstree Road,
Blackpool,
FY4 4SR,



Join us; it's only £1/year, £1.50 for family membership.

**Contact Membership Secretary,
"Hamlet" 2B, Meadow Park, Wesham Preston PR4 3DN.**

**Download our online form from:
<http://www.bafrua.org.uk/> click on "Join Our User Group."**

LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group
www.llmr.co.uk www.lasrug.btck.co.uk

The group was formed in 1989 to support and improve the Lancaster to Skipton railway. This links the towns and cities of West Yorkshire with the city of Lancaster and the seaside resort of Morecambe. It also gives access to the Yorkshire Dales, Forest of Bowland and Furness.

If you would like to help us promote the 'Little North Western' line, please contact our Membership Secretary, Lakeber House, Robin Lane, High Bentham, Lancaster. LA2 7AF.

Membership costs £7-00 annually. You will receive a Newsletter quarterly and we invite a speaker from the Rail Industry to the AGM each September.

Wrexham-Bidston**Rail Users' Association***Cymdeithas Defnyddwyr Rheilffordd Wrecsam-Bidston*

Representing rail users, potential rail users and the rail transport interests of communities along the Wrexham-Bidston rail corridor.

The Association seeks to identify, justify and promote:

- Opportunities to improve current service performance, passenger satisfaction and passenger numbers;
- Opportunities for an improved service frequency and an extension to current operating hours between Wrexham and Bidston together with improved interchange with other services at both Shotton and Wrexham during the course of the new franchise;
- The case for the introduction of a new station, Deeside Parkway, on the route adjacent to the Deeside Industrial Park and the A548. This new station would enable employees to get to the Deeside Industrial Park by train and at the same time provide easy access from the network of dual carriageways to park and ride facilities for rail services to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Wrexham and beyond;
- The introduction of a through service between Wrexham and Liverpool, if and when suitable rolling stock (such as IPEMUs) becomes available;
- A case for full electrification of the route.

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[facebook.com/WBRUA](https://www.facebook.com/WBRUA)**WIRRAL TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION**

We believe in modern, public transport systems for the Wirral and Merseyside and keep our members up to date with public transport developments

We support the campaign for electrification of the Wrexham Central–Birkenhead–Bidston Line

We support new railway stations at Ledsham, Town Meadow, Beechwood Estate, Prenton/Woodchurch road interchange, Well Lane, Little Neston or Ness Botanic Gardens and Deeside industrial Estate

We wish to see more bus/rail and car/rail interchange for the benefit of passengers

We are affiliated to Railfuture, Passenger Focus, Travelwatch North West, Bus users UK & represent Campaign for Better Transport in the area.

We publish a newsletter twice a year and run coach excursions

Why not join us? Join today

Annual individual subscription £6.00; Family £8;

Corporate Bodies £25.00, representative bodies £12.50

Send your subscription to our Membership Secretary today and receive a copy of our latest newsletter

Brian Grey, 56, Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 4US.

THE LAKES LINE RAIL USER GROUP

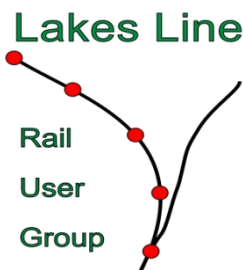
Formed in 1984 to promote and support Cumbria's only branch line for locals and tourists alike. Travel the lakes line into scenic Lakeland.

Join Today!

Contact: Mr. P Bell

9, Vicars Hill,
Kendal,
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Membership: £5.00 Individuals,
£7.00 Family, £13.00 Corporate



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Rail North West is the newsletter of the North West branch of Railfuture, campaigning by the Railway Development Society. Contributions in the form of articles and letters are welcomed. Please send them to Arthur Thomson at arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk or by post via the chairman as above. Text files e-mailed are particularly welcome. The opinions expressed in *Rail North West* are those of any individual contributors and not necessarily those of Railfuture.

www.railfuture.org.uk

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