

Rail North West



Metrolink tram 3048 awaits departure to St Werberghs Road at Rochdale Railway station. Photo Arthur Thomson

Rochdale Fares

Support The Oldham Rochdale and Manchester line group (STORM) is pressing for an answer as to why rail fares from Rochdale to Manchester are more expensive per mile than from any other area in Greater Manchester.

A comparison with fares in both other PTE areas and non-PTE areas shows that no other fares are more expensive than the Rochdale to Manchester fares for a similar distance - except for one solitary fare - that from Bristol to Bath. By way of example, although the distance from Bolton to Manchester Victoria is further than from Rochdale, the fares are 25% cheaper.

STORM would also like to see inter-availability of return fares between rail and Metrolink on the Rochdale-Manchester, Eccles-Manchester, Altrincham-Manchester and (when it opens) Ashton to Manchester lines.

Meanwhile the group notes that this coming autumn, engineering works on the Copy Pit line will mean there will be no trains between Halifax and Rochdale on Sundays, but trains will continue to run Manchester to Rochdale and Leeds-Bradford-Halifax. However timetable leaflets covering the period are less than clear and would no doubt defeat even experienced rail travellers. The Northern Rail timetable leaflet 36

(Calder Valley) for Sundays from 27 October to 1 December 2013, is ambiguous and confusing. The West Yorkshire Metro timetable booklet ignores the period altogether although claiming to run to 7 December.

Thanks to David Stopher, despite what some people have said to the contrary the correct position is:-

Sundays 27 October to 1 December 2013 Trains run Leeds and Bradford to Halifax but with some early and late services replaced by a through bus to/from Manchester/Leeds and in one case Bradford. One wonders why there is a bus provided from Rochdale to Halifax, Bradford and Leeds calling at 2328 at Todmorden and 2349 (set down only) at Mytholmroyd but not calling at Hebden Bridge?. Trains run between Burnley Manchester Road and Blackpool. Buses run Halifax to Rochdale and Halifax to Burnley Manchester Road.

Victoria Works Concerns

Meanwhile, Richard Greenwood from STORM wrote to TfGM expressing concern about the planned temporary closure of Victoria station stop from approximately January to September next year as a result of refurbishment works there. He was concerned that with the closure of the stop, passengers wanting to get on or off at Victoria to connect to or from Piccadilly station would have worse choices than at present and that the advice from TfGM that passengers could change at St Peters Square

would only apply to those already on trams when they passed through Victoria.

TfGM responded that this work was necessary to expand the facilities at Victoria and that the temporary closure was necessary "in the interests of safety and logistics" but Richard questioned the need to close the stop completely whilst Metrolink services were reduced to single line operations through the station, comparing the much bigger works being undertaken by Network Rail at London Bridge station whilst that still stayed open, and thought that a similar solution could have been found to do that at Victoria. TfGM said replacement bus services would run from Victoria to Piccadilly but Richard asked for assurances that these would run throughout the day up to at least 2330.

TfGM maintained that the closure was in order to maximise the number of services that run through Victoria and that keeping the stop open would have reduced this by up to half and this would inconvenience and disrupt more passengers.

TfGM also said that for customers who would like to travel between Victoria and Piccadilly a replacement bus service would be provided, which would run during Metrolink operational hours. Metrolink services currently operate up to approximately 11.30pm, Monday to Thursday (albeit varying slightly depending on the line / specific stop), later on a Friday and Saturday and earlier on a Sunday."

News from Friends of Reddish South

April saw FoRSS members on Edgeley Station, Stockport for the first part of a survey of Stockport passengers, judging support for a service to Manchester Victoria from Stockport via Reddish South & Denton Stations. They carried out the survey on a weekday (7.30am - 10am) and a Saturday (10am-2pm). Definitive results are not available yet, but, it was felt by group members they got, in general, a positive response from the rail travelling public, especially when they realised where Manchester Victoria actually was!

They plan to be on the station again on August 4th this year when Virgin Rail host a charity day on Platforms 3 & 4 and its hoped a steam train will visit again – group members may remember last year was a very successful day.

The members were welcomed by Lesley Ross, Station Manager and all

the staff at Stockport, who were friendly and very helpful while the group were there.

The South East Manchester community rail partnership (SEMcrp) has given £100 towards funding the Campaign group's stationery costs - which included printing 500 leaflets plus the survey sheets.

Visitors from Network Rail View station Mural at Reddish South.

On May 2nd the group were very pleased to welcome Sheila Chester & Laura Stronge from Network Rail who came onto the station to view the recently completed artwork. They seemed very impressed with the mural and thought the theme 'Second Chances' was very appropriate! They also were pleased with the group's efforts (mainly from Jacqui & staff at Arts for Recovery in the Community) to maintain the artwork despite the dreadful weather last year. Noel outlined our plans for landscaping of the station site and was able to show samples of materials



pictured L to R :Theo McLauchlan, Don Jary, Laura Stronge, Dot Ashworth, Sheila Chester, Tom Grundy, Noel Henry

Both Sheila & Laura commented that it was good to see committed community groups progress in this way - so thank you all!

They were accompanied by Don Jary who the group were pleased to meet with as he has recently taken on the role of Client & Stakeholder Manager at Northern Rail, Theo McLauchlan, our station Manager, David Huber, SEMcrp/Stockport Council & Craig Wright, Marple councillor and member of TfGM.

Meanwhile the group have been fund raising since last year for the largest landscaping project undertaken so far. Local funding has been very generous especially in consideration of our current economic state, and just over £1500 has been raised towards the total estimate of £2,500 to enable screeding of the slope directly in front of the artwork at the station.

The idea arose when it was realised last year all that was being done on 'station days' was weeding and re-weeding the slope! It is the practically the first feature people notice when coming onto the platform and despite concentrated efforts to clear it and plant, there has been no success whatever.

The problem is of course that the 'soil' at the station is mainly rubble and the only things that can grow on it are weeds that will pervade no matter how bad the ground is! Unfortunately, it is unsightly too and really needs a face lift.

The group has a solution, the only

worry being raising the funds but thanks to the committee - particularly Chair Tom Grundy & Treasurer Dot Ashworth who is really on the ball- we are able to begin work. We plan to cover the slope with stone, and then be able to grow trailing plants over it to soften the edges (topsoil doesn't sit well on slopes, especially here!!) as the ground can be fortified at the top. The edge of the station platform will have a picket fence, in keeping with the style of the station.

The group has no doubts that this will be hard work - Noel Henry is in charge of the project and will probably be doing most of it too (!)- but the group would appreciate help, especially in the first week of August when they hope to take delivery of most of the materials. If you can help please contact the secretary of the group for more details - any time you can spare would be appreciated. Contact them at forss1@ntlworld.com

Middlewich Campaign Update

Dave Roberts reports in the latest Mid Cheshire Report from MCRUA on the campaign to re-open Middlewich line to passengers and the building of a new station to serve Middlewich and the surrounding area. "Our MP Fiona Bruce is still working tirelessly on our behalf, and presented the Parliamentary petition calling for the re-opening of the line and station on the 20th March. She followed this up by writing to the Rt. Hon. Simon Burns, the Railways Minister, making

him aware of the tremendous support the re-opening scheme has, both among the people of Middlewich and councillors and officials at town, borough and regional levels.

These representations were backed up by letters making similar points from Cheshire East Council and from the Middlewich Rail Link Campaign. Our main concern at the moment is still the perceived reluctance of Network Rail to talk about the scheme. That organisation's assertion that 'the proposals have been looked and there is not a sufficient business case' needs to be challenged and corrected. As far as we are aware NR have not looked into the proposals at all, and their attitude remains that they will not do so until enough money has been put on the table to enable the scheme to progress through the GRIP process.

We are heartened by the fact that the Department of Transport has offered to provide advice to Cheshire East Council, whose responsibility as the local transport authority it is to progress this scheme. This is something that Cheshire East has stated that it is very keen to do, as the benefits for Middlewich and the wider area of the re-instatement of this link make it of vital importance for the regeneration of the town and a considerably wider catchment area.

Our hope is that the Middlewich proposals will be considerably more advanced when the Government decides to make more money available for schemes such as ours.

Recently Network Rail's Director of Network Strategy and Planning published consultation documents on the long-term planning of the network in order to achieve: 'economic growth, reduced carbon emissions and improved quality of life for communities and individuals'.

Fiona Bruce immediately identified this as an opportunity to raise the campaign's profile within Network Rail and she has written to NR's Director of Network Strategy and Planning reminding him of the existence of the Middlewich proposals, which will do all this and more for this area, and asking for his help in getting NR to look at the plans and talk to Cheshire East about them. MRLC will also be writing a letter supporting what Fiona Bruce says. To sum up, we are more confident than ever of the eventual success of our campaign and will continue to do everything we can, in conjunction with our very enthusiastic local MP and Borough Council, to ensure further progress."

Conference on Bentham Line Community Rail Partnership

Since the 'service designation' for the Bentham Line was granted by the Department for Transport in October 2012, the Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (LLMCRP) has been working with North Yorkshire County Council and Craven District Council to develop the Partnership and

establish vital and beneficial links with the town and parish councils which have stations on the Bentham Line within Craven.

Linda Brockbank, Craven District Councillor (Bentham Ward) and representative on the CRP, David Smurthwaite, Strategic Manager at Craven DC, Lynn Whitaker, Development Officer at Craven DC have been working with Gerald Townson, a director from the CRP to establish these links over the past few months.

Whilst Lynn has worked hard on the preparation of a timetable for the parish visits and arranging the main final event, Linda introduced the important role of the CRP to the full Craven District Council Meeting in April 2013. In recent few weeks, Linda, David and Gerald have been touring the local councils to give an introduction to the CRP, outline its aims and ideas and to stress the importance of taking an interest and playing a part in the building of a good '*community line for the future*'. They also took the opportunity to highlight the forthcoming LLM - CRP Craven Area Conference and Workshop to be held at the Victoria Hall in Settle on 22nd July 2013 between 6pm and 8pm.

The Conference is designed to bring together all the rail bodies and council officers, with an interest in the Bentham Line, (LLMCRP, LASRUG, FOBS, the Train Operating Company, Northern Rail and the infrastructure company Network Rail), with representatives from all the parish,

town, district and county councils which cover Craven to discuss ideas and establish a way forward. It will also be used to introduce the widely successful ideas of developing the stations within the communities and station adoption. The Conference is to be opened by Julian Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Skipton and Ripon.

Sponsored Tubs Brighten Bentham Station

Passengers arriving at Bentham station recently must have been delighted to see the platforms aligned with flower tubs with blossoms in full bloom. Those arriving on Monday evening on June 17th would have seen a party enjoying a strawberry tea on the Leeds bound platform.

The party was to thank the local traders and businesses each of whom have sponsored a flower tub to brighten the station. Attached to each tub is a small plaque advertising the individual sponsors.

The scheme was the idea of Gerald Townson Chairman of Friends of Bentham Station a group set up to improve the station environment. The group have already erected community notice boards at the station and are working to improve the station approach as well as the platforms. The friends are affiliated to the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership who are working to improve rail services and community involvement at towns and villages along the line.

News from SELRAP (Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership)

New High Profile Patron and new financial supporter.

SELRAP announced their delight that Richard Faulkner, Baron Faulkner of Worcester has agreed to be a patron of their campaign. On Friday the 24th May Lord Faulkner met members of SELRAP's executive committee in Skipton and later visited parts of the track bed between this town and Colne which the group are working to have re-instated. At the end of the meeting he declared the project to be 'very viable'. Baron Faulkner has a keen interest and knowledge of the rail industry.

Meanwhile members and prospective members are invited to the next open meeting on the 8th July to hear how the campaign is progressing. This will be at 7pm on the 8th July at Herriots Hotel in Skipton

SELRAP has also been given continued financial support from a national company called LUSH cosmetics whose stores include 13 in the North of England. They have agreed to display information about SELRAP in order to raise awareness amongst their customers about the economic and social benefits the re-opening of the line would bring.

For more information visit www.selrap.org.uk

Jane Wood

Media Officer

SELRAP jvwood@hotmail.co.uk

LASRUG seeks better services from Northern Franchise extension

The Joint Chairman of the Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group, Hugh Turner, has written to David Morris the MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale, regarding the extension of the Northern Rail franchise from 2014 to 2016

"I write as joint Chairman of the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group ("LASRUG") at the request of the Committee.

As I am sure you are aware, the original Northern Rail franchise was structured by the DfT on the assumption that there would be no growth in passenger numbers over the period of the franchise. In fact passenger numbers have grown by between 30% and 40% over that period, far exceeding the growth in Northern's rolling stock fleet. Complaints about inadequate and overcrowded services have become endemic.

Under the cascade of new rail franchises following the recent franchising review the franchise to include the services currently run by Northern Rail is not due to start until 2016 with the result that the DfT will negotiate an extension of Northern's existing franchise from 2014 to 2016. We are therefore asking you to make representations to the DfT for the funding of this franchise extension to allow modest improvements in the services to passengers, i.e. not merely a "steady state" extension.

Our specific interest is in the Leeds to Lancaster and Morecambe service which has only recently been granted Community Rail status. This service serves inter-regional travellers between North Lancashire and South Cumbria to Yorkshire and beyond, tourists and a number of rural towns and villages whose road access is relatively difficult. The service comprises 5 weekday trains whose timing in at least some cases owes more to operational convenience than to customer requirements. For example because the last westbound train leaves Leeds at 16-39, opportunities for eastbound day return journeys, particularly to places beyond Leeds, are very restricted.

This service has been largely unaltered for well over 20 years. In spite of this annual passenger numbers have increased from 335,000 to 449,000 over the period of the Northern Rail franchise, a 34% increase. The population of the various towns and villages served by these trains is projected to continue to increase significantly such that the increases between 1993 and 2027 are between 25% and 66%. We believe that a limited improvement in the service during the franchise extension period is justified. One additional service each day, depending on its timing, has the potential to produce a greater than proportional increase in patronage. It would challenge the Community Rail Partnership to secure such an increase and I am sure the Partnership would relish the challenge. Another possibility is to divert and extend the current evening

train from Leeds to Ribbleshead to Lancaster, a possibility which we have discussed with our colleagues in the Friend of the Settle to Carlisle line and which we believe is consistent with their ambitions. We understand that such a change is not one which Northern Rail can make of its own volition but that it requires the specific sanction of the DfT.

Please therefore press for scope for passenger improvements to be incorporated in the Northern franchise extension, in particular those outlined above.

Letters to Rail North West

"I live and work in the Lake District and travel almost exclusively by public transport. I discovered the R.S.P.B. reserve at Silverdale and found that they admit cyclists free, also rail and 'bus users enter gratis on production of a valid ticket. Further discounts are offered in the excellent restaurant. I wondered how to improve marketing of these offers as access is very close to 'bus stop and rail station. Northern Rail's website has loads of travel based offers and their e-mail bulletin is another useful tool for marketing. Stagecoach derives revenue from passengers from Carnforth and beyond, so how much would a 'bus cost to paint? It is hard to choose which of load of leaflets to promote at stations but Silverdale reserve has such a strong shout. Graham Lund, Cumbria.

Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association (Incorporating South Fylde Line Users Association)

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

Vice – Malcolm Richardson
Chairman 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."**

Future meetings.

The next two North West Branch meetings will be on September 7th at the Waldorf Hotel, 12, Gore Street, Manchester, M1 3AQ or at The Globe Inn, 8 Market Place, Kendal LA9 4TN if the first is unavailable. The next after that is on 23rd November at the venue not chosen for September.

Both meetings will start at 1300, but for those that want lunch, we will be there from 1200. Confirmation and details can be obtained from the Chairman or Secretary closer to the time, details on the back page.

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

Shrewsbury Chester Rail Users Association

SCRUA has been promoting the Shrewsbury-Chester line for over 20 years since it was formed at Gobowen in 1986. Compared with the basic train service then provided, today's trains offer an hourly frequency and extended destinations. The need to continue to represent rail users' interests remains and we welcome support from new members to help convey the message about trains along the Welsh border

A quarterly newsletter *Severn-Dee News* provides up to date information about trains, stations and activities, not only on the mainline, but also for the heritage lines associated with it.

Regular meetings are held at venues in Gobowen, Chirk and Wrexham when speakers from the associated rail industry are invited to make presentations and take questions and answers. Membership details can be had by contacting:

Chris Jenkins, 1 Perry View, Gobowen, Oswestry, Y10 7UF



LASRUG

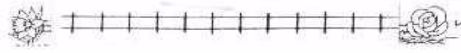
Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

www.llmr.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 £5-00 annually. You will receive a Newsletter twice a year and we invite a speaker from the Rail Industry to the AGM each September.

North
WalesThe
Wirral

WREXHAM – BIRKENHEAD

Rail Users Association / Cymdeithas Defnyddwyr Rheilffordd

WRECSAM – PENBEDW

The Association Supports the Electrification of the Wrexham Central – Birkenhead–Bidston Line.

We Support New Stations at Beechwood, Prenton / Woodchurch road Interchange, Well Lane, Little Neston / Ness Botanic Gardens and Deeside Industrial Estate.

We encourage the fullest use and development of the Wrexham Central– Birkenhead–Bidston Line, to promote the Line's development and safeguard its future.

Regular newsletters give full details of the Association's Activities.

It's your line—help secure its future by joining us today!

Individual membership £4.00 Family £6.00, Corporate £10.00

Send your subscription to our Membership Secretary to receive our latest newsletter
Brian Grey, 56, Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 4US.



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

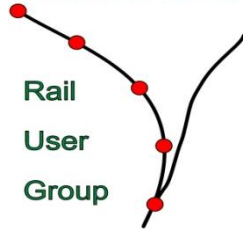
*Send your subscription to our Membership Secretary today
and receive a copy of our latest newsletter*

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

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LA9 5DA

Membership: £5.00 Individuals,
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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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