

Rail North West



A special train awaits departure from Colne station taking the long way round to Skipton. Could trains once again be running from here on the old direct trackbed to Skipton? Photo courtesy SELRAP

SELRAP AGM brings good news

SELRAP's (Skipton – East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership) guest speaker at their AGM on 10th March was able to bring good news to members. Lancashire County Councillor Mr Azhar Ali confirmed that the Council would be providing £10,000 towards the GRIP 3 (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) study needed to progress the line's re-opening.

SELRAP committee members attended a meeting earlier at County Hall in Preston on the 26th February with Senior Lancashire County Council Transport Officers, County Councillor Azhar Ali and representatives from consultants and engineering company ARUP and the offer of £10,000 was made then by the Council. SELRAP believes it has secured a further £6,000 from Pendle Borough Council and will seek more from other partners. This would /cont.

lead to a full GRIP 3 study involving Network Rail.

Chairman of SELRAP Derek Jennings thanked the ARUP team, in Leeds for their help and advice whilst they produced earlier GRIP stage reports and thanked members for their huge support for the appeal so far. Another appeal will be made to progress the engineering study so that the line can be re-opened as part of a major 'Cross Pennine Line' connecting Liverpool to Hull.

Liaison officer Andy Shackleton spoke about the 1B study undertaken by ARUP and completed in February 2014, from which the costs/benefits ratio (BCR) was found to be very promising and if the number of passengers is greater than calculated, for every £1 spent there could be benefits worth up to £6.50 – that is if initially the number of passengers increased by 30% after being opened for 10 years. (Passenger footfall has always been far greater than numbers estimated when recent railways have re-opened; therefore benefits could be even higher than this.)

Councillor Azhar Ali spoke in support of funding to progress this next GRIP feasibility study and stated that the Skipton- Colne line, whilst benefiting the local economy was also of regional and national importance. He reminded the audience too that the track bed is protected. He also acknowledged the importance of gaining the support of Craven

Council and North Yorkshire County Council. Lancashire County Council are already working with these authorities on the proposed bypass.

Derek Jennings read out his chairman's report which included the following statement *"I think I can say that today we are nearer in achieving our goal than we have ever been."*

At an Open Members Meeting on Monday 12th May 2014, they received the latest stage 2 feasibility study from the engineering consultant firm ARUP which confirms that the benefits of re-opening the Skipton to Colne line could be up to 6.5 times the cost of building it.

The study also stated that there are key towns at each end of the route and smaller towns/villages along the track bed that would benefit from the increased connectivity (including with Leeds and Manchester) that the proposed scheme offers.

The study states that initially there would be 414,000 new passenger journeys - rising to 620,000 within 10 years of re-opening this line. Re-instating the line would also offer new opportunities for freight movement.

Lancashire County Council has begun the process of contacting appropriate partners to begin to establish the formation of a Project Development group to oversee the Skipton-Colne project GRIP 3 study. Following broad based discussion, the County is to formally invite

SELRAP to act in a consultative and advisory capacity to the group that when finally formatted, will work to re-open the Skipton-Colne line as recommended by the Jonathan Roberts Consultants report in 2010.

SELRAP members and others responded magnificently for funding to undertake the stage 1 and 2 studies so is asking individuals and organisations if they are able to make a contribution to the full GRIP 3

study. Cheques, made payable to SELRAP can be sent to:
Peter Nowland Treasurer, SELRAP 3 Iveygate, Colne, BB8 9BN Tel 01282 871659

For more information, visit www.selrap.org.uk, Jane Wood, Media Officer SELRAP.

Tel 01282 815787
jvbwood@hotmail.co.uk



*A large number of passengers crowd onto a Manchester bound evening service at Knutsford on the Mid Cheshire line.
Photo Arthur Thomson. MCRUA wants more services on this line*

MCRUA wants 2 trains/hour on Mid-Cheshire line.

The Study of the Mid Cheshire line commissioned by funding partners Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and carried out

by JMP Consultants is still awaiting publication. In the meantime, rather than waiting what seems an age for it to eventually come out, /cont. MCRUA (Mid-Cheshire Rail Users Association) members have produced a draft proposal for a two trains an hour service throughout the day along the Mid Cheshire line. The proposal is that as well as the all stations stopping service, there is

also a semi-fast service from Piccadilly to Chester and back, stopping only at the more heavily used stations of Stockport, Altrincham, Knutsford, Northwich, Greenbank and then Chester.

They have worked out this could be operated by the same number of units that were used along the line up to last December, though it would need more train crew and, of course, the paths. Interestingly, in the TfGM Rail Strategy published in 2012 it states that for stations with a footfall of over 50,000 there should be at least 2 trains an hour. All the above stations fall into that category. Even more interestingly, it states that for stations with a footfall of over 500,000, this should be at least 4 trains an hour. The official figures show Knutsford at over 450,000 and MCRUA know from their passenger counts, that the figure is higher than this. Yet, Knutsford only has 1 train an hour. Quite an achievement to have over ½ million passengers with only one train an hour. MCRUA suggests people imagine how many more passengers would be generated and taken off the A556 with a more frequent “turn up and go” service. The draft proposal has been provided to all the Community Rail Partnership partners, including the Department for Transport.

STORM snippets

- Rochdale tickets

Any person holding a rail ticket to a Manchester City Central Zone issued

from a Greater Manchester station can travel without further fare on the Central Zone of Metrolink (Bounded by Victoria - Holt Town - Deansgate/Castlefield stops). STORM is pressing for a similar arrangement that anyone holding a rail ticket to Rochdale issued from a Greater Manchester station can travel without further fare from Rochdale Railway Station to Rochdale Town Centre on Metrolink.

- Where's the station

STORM thinks that the National Rail Enquiries Service (NRES), run by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), don't seem to have taken account of the opening of the Greater Manchester Metrolink to Rochdale Railway station. If a passenger enquires as to the fare from, say Todmorden or Littleborough to Milnrow (between Oldham and Rochdale, now a Metrolink station), the fare quoted is based on the premise that the passenger will go all the way into Manchester by rail and out again by Metrolink, instead of the natural way of changing modes at Rochdale Railway station saving something over an hour's journey time

- Moston loses services

Despite Transport for Greater Manchester having a policy that every rail station within Greater Manchester with footfall greater than 50,000/year, should have a service of at least two trains per hour, in the new timetable (May 2014) Moston, which is four miles from Manchester Victoria has had its service reduced from two trains to one train off-peak. The

next station out is Mills Hill and trains are allowed the same time from Mills Hill to Victoria whether they stop at Moston or not! There is a local petition about the changes online at;

<http://www.stormrail.info/moston-station-petition-to-reinstate-services>

- ELR expansion

Plans are being progressed to extend the East Lancashire Railway line from its present terminus, Heywood, to Castleton where a connection will be possible for passengers onto the Calder Valley line. Land issues and financial constraints dictate that for the present, the ELR will have a temporary station on the west side of the Manchester Road overbridge at Castleton whereas the mainline station is east of the bridge only a short walk away. ELR are hoping that there will be similarities to Bluebell Railway who opened an extension to East Grinstead in spring 2013, and passenger figures since are reported to have been over 40% up over 2012.

Furness Line In Relegation Zone as Downgrade Accelerates.

FLAG (Furness Line Action Group) was set up in 1985 to fight for improvements when the local rail service reverted to a Lancaster/Preston shuttle in the hands of diesel multiple units over 25 years old. Over the next 25 years however they saw massive

improvements, trains to Manchester Airport started in 1993 and brand-new multiple units introduced in 2000 and 2006. Although the Northern services were still in the hands of Sprinters, at the time they still proved a reliable workhorse for the rest of the Cumbrian Coast services.

But over the next three years, if the Department for Transport has its way, there will be a departure of modern rolling stock from Furness with total takeover by the now-ageing Sprinters. By 2016, and possibly even sooner, the Furness line will once again revert to a Lancaster/Preston shuttle in the hands of diesel multiple units over 25 years old. To add insult to injury, as virtually everyone else in the North West starts to benefit from the "sparks effect" of electrification, the Furness line will take a step back in time.

A solid case for electrification is currently being made for the Windermere branch following pressure by Tim Farron MP and it was announced on 27th June 2013 that Network Rail will be progressing a feasibility study. This will be a relatively easy and cheap investment, being only ten miles of track with few problematic bridges in the way of the overhead lines. Electrification of the Furness line, the best (and increasingly the only) way out of this crisis would be a far tougher proposition. Passenger numbers are greater than the Windermere branch with 1.5 million a year total station footfall between

Carnforth and Barrow (plus benefits for another 1.0 million passengers on the stretch to Whitehaven), compared to 0.65 million on the Lakes line. However, the 28 miles, three tunnels and numerous overbridges makes for a much larger initial investment and therefore the group has its work cut out to provide a robust business case.

They have established that they therefore need Barrow MP John Woodcock's Cumbria Better Connected campaign to move up another gear with all the support they can get from MPs, Councils, local industry, enterprise bodies and tourist organisations. They plan to convince the Department for Transport that this important inter-urban route deserves electrification, not relegation to a rural community rail line. In mid-April, John Woodcock reported he was seeking an urgent meeting with the rail minister Simon Burns after his parliamentary question revealed that the Government will not commit to preventing cuts to services on the Barrow to Manchester Airport route after 2014. The group is aware of these warning signs, so is working on keeping up the momentum.

Already, the Department for Transport has opened negotiations on the Passenger Service Requirements specifying the minimum number of trains to be run by the Train Operators. Indications are that the 5 through trains to Manchester the group thought they were retaining (already halved from previous levels) could be reduced to 2 through trains from August 2014. The 2016 franchise change and completion of the North West electrification schemes threaten to reduce this to zero in three years' time.

Friends of Reddish South

The group (FoRSS) has been in the news again recently (early May) in both the Manchester Evening News & the Stockport Express because the passenger usage figures have been published for 2012/3. It seems the station has now slipped behind Denton, and is bottom of the Greater Manchester 'League' with a footfall count of 122. However this is double the count for the previous year when the figure was 56. As you may know, the group dispute these figures - in an article in the Stockport Express, the local MP, Andrew Gwynne said 'the figures are completely meaningless because Northern Rail does not sell tickets to most of the passengers who use the service at Reddish South' and as was pointed out by one of the Friends in the same article, there were 3 excursions stopping at Reddish South last year which would not be counted.

It is interesting to note that all of the stations that have less reported footfall than Reddish South, all of them have more trains! As there is only one train a week that goes one way with no return, it would seem to argue that there is more reason for a service at Reddish South than those with one who don't actually use it!!



Passengers enjoy the music on the folk train on Good Friday. Photo courtesy FoRSS

Station	Services	Footfall
Coombe (Cornwall)	4/d M-Sat	48
Shippea Hill (Cams)	1/D M-F 2 Sat	50
Kildonan (Scotland)	7 per day, M-Sat, 1 Sun	62
Buckenham (Norfolk)	2 Sat 8 Sun	72
Tees-side Airport	2 on Sundays!	8

The Good Friday Folk train alone had 74 passengers and for the Retrorail excursion in June, at least 30 were expected to board, and those who board at Denton can be added to the line’s numbers.

FoRSS have looked in detail at the stations around the country with lower footfall than Reddish South

(see table left) and were particularly interested in those that have a more frequent service, as that will help in making the case for services on the line.

Halton Curve campaign moves on

A bi-directional curve at Halton could be reinstated in 2016 to link the Chester-Manchester and Liverpool-Crewe lines. It would clear the way for new train services between Liverpool, Runcorn, Chester, Wrexham and Llandudno for which North Cheshire Rail Users have long campaigned. Merseytravel have just refreshed the GRIP 3 study, and are now /cont.

going ahead with GRIP 4, which they are funding with the Welsh Government and local authorities. Network Rail says the cost could be cut from an estimated £16 million to £10 million by combining work with maintenance planned for Weaver Junction to Wavertree Junction. STOP PRESS: In early July, the Government approved funding for this scheme.

Northern and Trans-Pennine franchise renewals

Members may have heard that the Department for Transport has issued a consultation document to hear stakeholder views on the future shape of both the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchise and the northern Railfuture branches involved have decided to join up to work on a co-ordinated response.

Your chair has attended meetings of the Yorkshire branch and in turn, their chair Nina Smith attended our last branch meeting. We are looking at much of the detail in the proposals but will be meeting again soon to flesh that out. One thing that arose from our branch meeting however was an overwhelming desire to make the replacement of Pacer trains, through a consequent cascade of replacement electric trains, a key part of what we think new franchisees should concentrate on.

The consultation closes on 18th August when we as branches will be submitting our response and we would be happy to hear any thoughts you have, contact the branch chair at;

trevor.bishop@railfuture.org.uk. You

can of course send in your individual views, the link is at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-northern-and-transpennine-express-rail-franchises>

Letters

Over the years I have seen people voicing a demand for more car parking spaces at stations. Not so long ago 30 new spaces were created in Penrith at a cost of £2,500,000 or expressed another way, over £80,000 per car parking space. In view of global warming, health damaging pollution from vehicles in our cities, the benefits of regular exercise to reduce the level of obesity, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes etc, surely we as the rail lobby should be campaigning instead for infrastructure for walking, cycling and the use of public transport by spending on radial safe pedestrian and cycle routes to all our stations with secure cycle parking once there, for 20mph limits and shared space in the centre of our towns and cities and for connectivity between buses and trains.

The benefits of encouraging people out of their cars are those health and environmental benefits listed above, a reduction of cars on the roads with reduced congestion especially beneficial for our buses and a freeing up of car parking spaces for those who have to use the car because of reduced mobility or because they live in isolated rural areas.

I would like to commend Northern Rail for their proactive response by investing in cycle parking, cycle hubs and hire bikes at stations.

Roy St Pierre, Colne, Lancashire, roy@rovstpierre.com
Member, Northern Rail Cycle Forum

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."**

Future meetings.

The next Railfuture North West England committee meeting open to members will be on 6th September 2014, at the Town Crier pub Chester, then on 15th November, at the Waldorf pub in Manchester.

Both the 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.

The 2015 AGM is marked in the diary for 7th February but due to possible engineering works on the Blackpool line, we have not yet confirmed this as being at our normal venue, the Savoy Hotel, but details will be posted with the next bulletin.

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

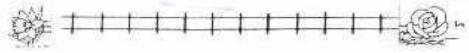
LASRUG

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*

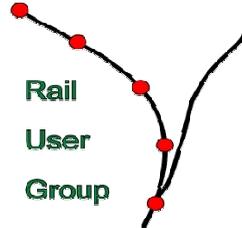
Brian Grey, 56, Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 4US.

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.

Lakes Line

Rail
User
Group



Join Today!

Contact: Mr. P Bell 9, Vicars Hill,
Kendal,
Cumbria
LA9 5DA

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.

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