

# Rail North West



*A service to Buxton awaits departure at Manchester Piccadilly. Travellers into Piccadilly from Buxton face increased fares on early evening services. Photo Arthur Thomson*

## Off Peak Fare Limits “Worse Than London.”

Travelwatch NorthWest is calling on Northern Trains to revisit the recently introduced change to off-peak fare times because of the effect it is having on evening leisure travel, especially leading up to the busy Christmas period. Northern Trains passengers travelling into Manchester on weekday evenings for theatre visits, nights out, sports events or late night shopping are facing having to pay a massive increase in train fares.

In September 2014, Northern Trains, under instruction from the Department for Transport, were forced to apply

peak fares for train travel in Greater Manchester departing between 16.00 and 18.30 which were previously priced at “off peak” prices. It is understood that this was to improve revenues from commuters travelling home like in London, but unlike London (and other cities) the policy has also been applied to train fares for travelling against the commuter flow **into** the city. This has caught leisure travellers visiting Manchester City Centre for nights out who now have to pay an extra 20% to 50% for their train journey.

Chris Dale, Chairman of TravelWatch NorthWest said, "As we approach the Christmas holidays thousands of extra passengers will be travelling into Manchester for shopping, the Christmas Markets, and nights out. If they catch a train from a station within Greater Manchester between 16.00 and 18.30, as many will, they will face paying a supplementary fare. This is totally unacceptable and we call on Northern Trains to review its policy. Manchester's evening economy relies heavily on public transport and visitors could not be blamed for turning to other means, such as cars, trams and buses."

Examples of return fare comparisons:

Journey to Manchester from;	Fare before 1600	Fare after 1600
Wigan	£4.20	£9.10
Stalybridge	£3.30	£5.80
Handforth	£5.50	£7.70

"There are numerous inconsistencies in fares," added Mr. Dale, "and you could not blame passengers for looking at alternatives."

## **The future for Railfuture; Branches and Groups Day 2014**

On 11th October this year, your branch Chairman, Trevor Bishop represented our branch at the annual Railfuture Branches and Groups Day, which this year was held in Birmingham and this is his report.

"Unlike previous years, the plan was not to sit and listen - we were organised into table groups for

brainstorm and workshop sessions. The challenges and opportunities for Railfuture are clear: our core of active members will shrink unless we campaign and recruit new members, whilst the current popularity of rail travel gives us the unique opportunity of an independent voice to represent rail users.

We found a lot to agree on - we are a nationwide organisation that also delivers successful national and local campaigns, we are well-informed and well-respected in the rail industry, and that we successfully deliver high profile campaigns. We are independent and open minded, campaigning on the issues that affect rail users. We stand for better and more integrated rail travel.

The national groups, for example the Passenger, Freight and Infrastructure & Networks Groups, can help us to campaign locally - they have a wealth of experience of what makes a campaign successful which we can draw on. If you would like to help Railfuture campaign nationally, volunteers are always welcome!

Through the workshop sessions we identified our stakeholders, the people and organisations that can benefit from our activities. We need to interact with them so that they appreciate the value of what we do; for example we must engage with MPs, councillors and council officers to help them understand transport issues. The branch does have some contacts, but in some areas we don't, so if in your area, you (or a Rail User Group you may be a member of), do have those contacts; we would be very grateful if you could pass those on so that we can

build our relationships to make our collective voice heard.

We also brainstormed our hopes and fears for the future, identifying the issues that we have to address as an organisation and the areas where we can grow. These formed the basis of a 90 day action plan to which I and all the other delegates committed.

My immediate actions are to brief you, the branch members, on the outcome of the meeting and to set you the target of each introducing a friend, colleague or relative to Railfuture as a new member by 31st March 2015. As part of the normal budgeting exercise at this time of year I will also identify our objectives and the campaigns we plan

to run next year. Then with the branch committee we will identify whether we need any training to help us campaign effectively, and re-engage with the stakeholders that we identified in the workshop.

You may have seen the related article in Railwatch 142 which tells you more about the day. My thoughts are that it will help Railfuture focus on the things we need to do in the short and medium term and the day was a thought-provoking, rewarding, enjoyable and successful experience. Our job now is to inspire you as members to help us with our campaign for a bigger better Railfuture and a bigger better railway. Thank you for your support”



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

## **Mid Cheshire’s 2 trains/ Hour Plan Gains Support.**

We reported in the last edition of a draft proposal by the Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association (MCRUA) for a 2

trains per hour service along the line from Manchester to Chester. 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.

Cheshire & Warrington Local Transport Board (LTB) discussed this at a meeting in June with a number of the MCRUA group present to answer questions. With Network Rail having confirmed that the paths were available, the LTB decided to fully support the proposal, seeing the benefit for the local and the North West economies.

In early July, MCRUA persuaded Alex Hynes, Managing Director Northern to join them on one of the busiest services, the "Sardines Express," 0717 Piccadilly to Chester which loads to over 270 into Knutsford, and often leaves people behind when it's a class 142 rather than

the diagrammed 150. Although it was quieter than normal, Alex nevertheless saw how busy the train was and some regular passengers talked to him about trains needing to be longer. On seeing this, Alex has committed to Northern working up a business and resource case to see if two trains an hour service can be introduced before the end of the current franchise in February 2016 and the group are hoping that there will be some news in early 2015.

## **STOP PRESS: Lakes Line Electrification confirmed**

As this edition was going to press, it was confirmed by the Government that the line from Windermere to Oxenholme on the West Coast Main Line would be electrified at a cost of £16million.



*Views of the old railings and work being undertaken to renew them at Glossop Station. Photo courtesy Neil Williams, Friends of Glossop Station*

## **Friends of Glossop Station Secure Improvements**

Glossop station has recently seen further enhancement of its surroundings with the recent replacement of perimeter railings by Network Rail and its contractors Haywood and Jackson. The 37 panels of railings, which were 102 years old, were replaced by robust modern day equivalents exactly matching the style and fittings of the originals. The railings

were pre-painted red and green to match the house colours of the station. The original railings had been painted externally in 2007 in a long voluntary job undertaken by Friends of Glossop station (with the permission of Network Rail). In recent years the group had been politely campaigning for their replacement. The group is delighted with the new railings, which enhance the two gardens maintained by FOGS, and thank Network Rail for their investment and the quality of this work.

## **ITT awaited as FLAG Sees Commons Debate on Their Line**

In August, The Furness Line Action Group (FLAG) submitted their response to the DfT's franchise consultation document on the renewed Northern and TPE franchises. This threatens to move Furness from the TransPennine to Northern franchise and places the remaining through Manchester services in jeopardy. In October the two local MPs, Tim Farron and John Woodcock, debated the future of the line with Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport Claire Perry in the House of Commons. Ahead of the debate, Tim Farron (the MP for Westmoreland and Lonsdale) pledged to push for electrification of the Furness Line. He said "we need to protect the through trains to Manchester and work to increase capacity on the line. I want to improve the service and the trains in the short term and look at a direct route from London to Barrow in the long term". The DfT's decisions are now awaited, which will determine the content of the Invitation to Tender (ITT), due to be issued in December to the short-listed bidders.

Both the local MPs got back on track with a debate over "significant failings" on the Furness Line in the House of Commons on 28th October. This was a further opportunity to push the findings of the 90-page Furness Line Study. John Woodcock, (the MP for Barrow and Furness) had already asked Transport Minister Patrick McLoughlin the previous week if he had read the document. The Minister confirmed he had, but that he would read it again. Mr. Woodcock said "this debate comes at a crucial moment, with ministers considering the responses to the consultation on the future shape of the local rail franchises, which will determine whether Furness retains a

frequent, high-quality and fast direct link to Manchester and its airport, so vital to our local economy. Having secured a commitment from the Secretary of State to study the Furness Line Study, I'm looking forward to setting out in more detail why the direct Manchester trains must be retained and improved and how damaging it would be if Furness was to be relegated to the end of a branch line."

Speaking after the debate, Mr Farron said, "the Minister's comments were encouraging. It seems as though her department have listened to our concerns and know that something needs to be done if we are to protect and enhance the long term future of the line, along with the social and economic benefits that would bring." Mr Woodcock said "the Minister will have heard the arguments loud and clear today, as well as from the Cumbria Better Connected campaign's study of the line, as to why improving the Furness line is so vital for the area's residents and the local economy and I hope she will take those on board."

## **LASRUG Grills Bidders About Better Services**

LASRUG (Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group) is bringing to the bidders for the new Northern franchise the urgent need for a better weekday timetable on the Leeds-Lancaster/Morecambe line. There has been no improvement to the service of five daily trains each way since privatisation. We still have no trains at times that allow people to travel to and from work in Lancaster, and the last train from Leeds is 16-39. Despite the poor timings, passenger numbers have grown steadily, and would increase considerably more if the trains made commuting possible to both Lancaster and Leeds/Bradford.



*The unveiling of a board detailing the Bentham Heritage trail and a plaque marking 60 years of the station building at Bentham station Photo courtesy Rod TicknerFoBS*

## Celebrations at Bentham Station

Around 30 people gathered at Bentham station recently to celebrate not one, but four events! September 12<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Bentham Station (FoBS), a group of volunteers that have been working on the station since 2011. Guests were treated to light refreshments and a buffet lunch courtesy of the volunteers.

Two unveilings also took place, the first to mark the official launch of the newly extended Bentham Heritage Trail, which now starts at the station. Pete Myers, Northern Rail's Client & Stakeholder Manager and local resident Jim Mundy were on hand to unveil the colourful board at the entrance to the Morecambe bound platform.

The party then moved back over the footbridge to the Leeds bound platform where Brian Barnsley, Operations Manager of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) unveiled a plaque to mark the sixtieth birthday of

the current station building. The building completed in September 1954 holds the record for a station being built. The time of fifteen weeks to demolish the old buildings and complete the new is outstanding, allowing for how long it takes these days!

The final celebration of the day was to mark the birthday of Gerald Townson, Chair of both FoBS and the Leeds - Morecambe CRP. A cake with a battery operated model railway running round it was the order of the day and Gerald managed to blow out the candles in one go!

Meanwhile there was success for the group at the tenth anniversary National Community Rail Awards and Dinner which were held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in Scarborough Spa. This was organised by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) with over 350 guests from Friends Groups, Community Rail Partnerships and rail bodies, located all over England, Scotland and Wales, gathered together to celebrate the best projects, developed over the past year, in the world of Community Rail.



FOBS members at the awards ceremony in Scarborough. Photo courtesy Gerald Townson

The Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS) and Bloomin' Bentham were nominated by Northern Rail and Community Rail Lancashire in two categories this year. Representatives from the two Bentham groups, Brian and Margaret Cowling, David Alder and Gerald Townson, headed off excitedly to Scarborough where they were hosted by the nominees.

FOBS and Bloomin' Bentham were placed first in the Small Projects (Under £500) Award for their innovative 'Annual Planter Sponsorship Scheme and Gerald Townson came second in the 'Essence of Community Rail' Photographic Award for his image 'The Platform Entertainers'.

FOBS administers the promotion and funding of the planters scheme and the hard-working volunteers of Bloomin' Bentham, naturally, take charge of the two major planting sessions each year. All of this is possible thanks to the generosity of the members of "We Are Bentham" who sponsor the planting and upkeep of the scheme. Their contributions are acknowledged on the planters and in one of the station windows.

The judges felt that this initiative 'is a simple yet innovative, self-financing scheme which has brought together new groups within Bentham. It has created a valuable resource which has enhanced the rail gateway to this small town and enriched the journeys for passengers on the Bentham Line'. The Bentham Line links Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe.

Gerald's photograph, 'The Platform Entertainers' was placed second following a ballot of everyone attending the Awards. The photograph was taken at the station on Carnival Day this year.



Gerald Townson's "Carnival" photo.

# To All Members,

The North West Branch's AGM in 2015 is to be held on the 7th February at the Savoy Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool. FY2 9SJ starting at 11-00 am, with coffee/tea available from 10-30 am and a 2 course lunch at 1-00 pm. There will be a speaker from Peel Ports, Peter Nears, who is going to give a talk about the Liverpool Gateway project; this session will be after lunch at 2pm. Do please make every effort to attend; as you can see elsewhere in this issue, Railfuture is looking to its members to get more involved in activities.

Lunch and tea/coffee will cost £14-50 per person. This must be booked in advance by 12 January 2015. You can use the form below or there is a separate form sent with this newsletter

If you have special diet needs can you please advise me when booking. Money with the booking please and cheques should be made payable to RDS North West and returned to myself.

Yours Faithfully,  
Malcolm Conway.  
58 Greengate Lane,  
Kendal.  
Cumbria. LA9 5LL.

(Hon Treasurer and Vice Chairman, Railfuture North West)

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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NUMBER OF PEOPLE @ £14-50 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS \_\_\_\_\_

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## **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 2015 North West Branch AGM is on 7<sup>th</sup> February and is at the Savoy Hotel in Blackpool (see separate booking form included with this newsletter) however there are engineering works on the Bolton-Preston line which may mean extra travel time for members from the Manchester area, do consult travel planners in advance.

The following committee meetings open to members will be on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at one of the following venues (confirmation should be obtained from the Chairman or Secretary); Ship & Mitre pub Liverpool, **or** the Patten Arms, Warrington **or** the Railway Hotel Preston, then on 20<sup>th</sup> June, at the Golden Pheasant in Plumley.

Both the latter meetings will start at 1300, but for those that want lunch, we will be there from 1200. Confirmation and details should 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

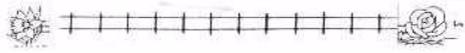
## LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group  
[www.llmr.co.uk](http://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.

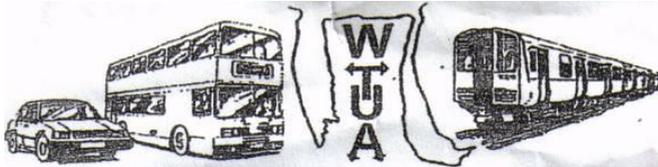
We encourage the fullest use and development of the Wrexham Central– Birkenhead–Bidston Line, to promote the Line's development and safeguard its future.

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*

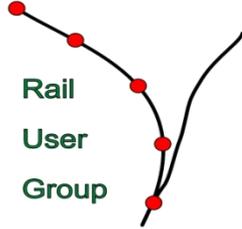
Brian Grey, 56, Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 4US.

# 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

## Railfuture North West Branch Officers

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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](mailto: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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