

Rail North West



A class 769 at Wigan Wallgate station, these trains no longer go through to Alderley Edge. Photo Arthur Thomson

Cross Manchester Trains Lost In Timetable Change

With the December 2022 timetable change, two through services per hour that connected Stockport to Bolton were lost, meaning passengers now have to change at Piccadilly, adding to the congestion on Platforms 13/14 there.

The services ran from Alderley Edge to Southport and Hazel Grove to Blackpool and offered much less congested connection stations than Piccadilly from a range of stations across the south and northwest of Manchester. In the new timetable, these services now only run to Oxford Road in the case of the Southport service and

Manchester Airport in the case of the Blackpool ones.

These service changes are the result of work by the Manchester Recovery Task Force group, which was a combination of industry and government officials who's remit was to reduce the number of trains transiting the Castlefield corridor (from Deansgate to Manchester Piccadilly) in order to bring more reliability to the overall timetable.

Railfuture branches in the North of England objected to these changes at the time of the public consultation on these changes, based on this lost connectivity. Rail User Group

OPSTA (Ormskirk, Preston, and Southport Travelers Association) is also concerned about the loss of through connectivity for passengers and has previously had to campaign for re-instatement of through services, beyond Manchester Oxford Road. The group is presently focusing its

campaigning energies elsewhere though as its now seen that the key issue (of services beyond Manchester Oxford Road being re-instated) is on the agenda for Transport for the North and others, but they will continue to press MP's and TfN to ensure it is prioritised.

Community Rail Awards

At the Community Rail Awards ceremony in Manchester in October 2022, Northwest Rail User Groups and volunteers received awards in eight out of the thirteen categories, with a special recognition award from the Community Rail Board for Richard Watts' long-standing work with Community Rail Lancashire.

First prize in the Community Creative Projects and Station Art category was awarded to South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP) for their 'Wigan Mural Project.'

The project aimed to transform a large area of Wigan North Western Station via a piece of community art that would represent a sense of pride in the local area and improve the appearance of the station,

SELCRP chose local professional lettering artist Jess Riley to lead on the project, with her idea of an A to Z of 'Wiganese', a series of words and phrases commonly used by people of Wigan past and present. Through a local campaign, she got people to nominate their favourite Wigan words and phrases, as well as local landmarks and things they loved about Wigan and the finished mural was unveiled by the Mayor of Wigan in November 2021.

Third place in the "Most Effective Communications Campaign" was awarded to Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership and the 2021/22 Year in Industry Students at Northern for 'Access for All to the Bentham Line'

Both groups worked together on the project, which has seen 'Accessibility for All' promoted along the Bentham Line. A survey was conducted of the line's stations and facilities, looking for practical solutions to problems such as a lack of handrails, accessible parking spaces, and dropped kerbs and these were used to produce a colourful and detailed 60-page 'Access for All' booklet, to make it a source of accessibility information for travellers along the Bentham Line.

The students also created a series of three-minute 360-degree tour videos of each station, which can be accessed by QR codes.

In the category of Influencing Positive Change & Sustainability, second prize was awarded to Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) for 'Dementia-friendly Signage for Rail Users'

With a funding award from Northern, FoBS worked with Mark Wilson OBE a rail accessibility campaigner, to form a pilot that could determine signage changes across the whole Northern network and set about designing signs that would be clear and easily understandable, incorporating standard rail industry designs and taking an approach for wider disability criteria.

In the Most Enhanced Railway Spaces category, first prize was awarded to Friends of Goostrey Station for 'A Creative Hub at Goostrey Station.'

When the Friends of Goostrey Station (FOGS) formed in 2012, the group set out to gradually improved the original dilapidated

and disused station environment and retained a determination to renovate the building and bring it back into community use.

FOGS then looked to find a suitable tenant for the building to help realise its potential. During the COVID-19 pandemic, artist Debbie Goldsmith stopped working at the Tate Liverpool and set out to find somewhere as a base for creative workshops. The station building proved a perfect fit, and she agreed a contract with Northern, taking the keys in July 2021.

Debbie now uses the building as a studio to paint, create wool rugs, and prepare materials for local community workshops, with local arts events also being held there,

Goostrey Art Studio has revitalised the station building and created an environment that brings people of all ages and life experiences together and a recent successful application to the National Lottery will allow the building's facilities to be improved, with the installation of a kitchen and toilets, ensuring the studio can be a community hub for years to come.

In the category "The Station Friends and Adopters at the Heart of Communities," all three places went to North West groups with first place awarded to Friends of Buxton Station for 'Part of Something Positively Local.'

Covid pushed FoBS into looking at how they approached their objectives and by looking out to the wider community and seeking ways in which to maximise positive impacts on their locality, FoBS have now become a core part of something much bigger than the sum of its parts. With Covid restrictions easing into 2022, their 'new normal' way of working is based on effective partnerships, shared agendas, supportive thinking, and inclusive action. FoBS are now working with other voluntary groups (Buxton Sparkles and Transition Buxton), a Community Interest Company (Buxton Town Team), a local

charity (Buxton Civic Association), and High Peak Borough Council, with all partners dedicated to combining their skills and experience to deliver positive local impacts in imaginative and engaging ways.

The group are now also in the early stages of a major project that could see just under three acres of land near to Buxton Station gifted to the town, with the potential for this to be developed as a local nature reserve.

Second place was awarded to Friends of Kents Bank Station & Foreshore.

Following the closure of its shop, post office, pub, café and two hotels between 2014 and 2018, Kents Bank in Cumbria was left without any community meeting place. In recent years, the Friends of Kents Bank Station & Foreshore have turned the station into a true community facility and a real focal point at the heart of the village. Group activities have included working with community partners to find ways of alleviating the traffic problems and train overcrowding caused by people participating in Cross Bay walks along with maintaining the popular station and foreshore gardens amongst other initiatives.

Third place was awarded to Friends of Hindley Station for 'Supporting and Reaching Out to a Community in Crisis'

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Friends of Hindley Station were more determined than ever to reach out to their local community, ensuring they supported people in any way they could. Undeterred by the pandemic, the group were busier than ever, with a huge range of activities in 2021/22 including making a station footpath accessible for pushchairs, turning an old platform into a 'wildlife corridor,' creating an 'English Garden' to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee and installing new planters and benches among other work

First place in the "Outstanding Volunteer Contribution" was awarded to Julie Levy,

Chair of Bolton Station Community Partnership and Southeast Lancashire CRP.

Julie is always an active promoter of community rail, ensuring that projects receive appropriate recognition via local and national media. She is passionate about making an impact and believes strongly that community rail should be focused on 'doing and delivering' to create real change and opportunities for everyone.

SELCRP chair Professor Paul Salvesson said: "Julie is an amazing force of nature. Without her involvement in the various activities at Bolton Station, and more widely in the South East Lancs CRP, we would not have been able to achieve a fraction of what we've done. She goes way beyond the traditional horizons of station volunteering and has brought in new groups such as Stand-Up Sisters, Bolton City of Sanctuary, and local filmmakers."

Third place in the category was awarded to Tony Ford – volunteer for South Fylde Line Community Rail partnership and Friends of St Anne's Station

Tony has been an inspiration to the South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership since he took over chairing the group. His real passion lies in being an active member of the partnership and running his local Friends of St Anne's station group. Tony has inspired the formation of new station partnerships at Kirkham & Wesham and Squires Gate, and supports other more established groups at Lytham, Moss Side, and Ansdell.

Over the past year, he played a key role in the 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' film, detailing the walk between Lytham and St Anne's, and also inspired the production of the 'Discover the South Fylde Line' leaflet launched during Community Rail Week, 2022.

Friends of Goostrey Station were awarded joint first place for Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

The Friends of Goostrey Station work tirelessly to improve their historic station, its facilities, and the service it provides to their village. Following their formation in 2012, the group's major project was to save and restore the station's Victorian building, which has now been successfully converted into Goostrey Art Studio for which they also received first place in the Most Enhanced Railway Spaces category in these awards.

The group are now expanding their reach with different projects, including developing the station into a wildlife-friendly site that enhances nature and biodiversity.

Richard Watts, Chair of Community Rail Lancashire received the Board's Special Recognition Award.

Richard is one of the founders of community rail and as chair of Community Rail Lancashire (CRL), Richard has led community rail in new and exciting directions, including a range of pioneering education programmes. The work of the CRL education team has impacted on tens of thousands of young people and is a blueprint for much of the community rail education work that now takes place across the country.

Richard's many achievements in rail down the years include:

- Redevelopment of Accrington Station as one of the UK's first 'eco-stations';
- The creation of transport interchanges at Burscough Bridge, Carnforth, and Clitheroe, the building of new stations at Burnley Manchester Road and Buckshaw Parkway, and the reopening of the iconic Settle-Carlisle Line;
- Supporting vital community projects such as the 'DalesRail' guided walks programme and the EU Interreg project, 'Citizens' Rail', working alongside the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership and partners in France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Richard influenced government policy through Rail North, helping to shape the

future of community rail within new franchise agreements with Department for Transport.

In the Photo Competition 'Best Image Capturing the Essence of Community Rail' first place was awarded to Friends of IRLam

Station (FIRST) for A Good Workout! (see picture below left) while second place was awarded to Friends of Goostrey Station for Volunteer Pride (see picture below right)



Both pictures courtesy Community Rail Newsletter

Two Trains Per Hour For Wrexham-Bidston?

30th November 2022 was a bit of red letter day for rail users along the Wrexham Bidston line as the Office for Rail and Road (ORR) finally gave approval for the (mostly) two trains per hour that had long been promised along the line. Transport for Wales, which runs the service, submitted an application some time ago but the Rail Regulator has been considering an objection from GB Railfreight that such a service would not be possible with the number of freight trains on the line and would prevent any expansion of them.

The Wrexham Bidston Rail Users Association (WBRUA) welcomed this decision and were pleased to note that two passenger trains an hour will run for most of the day, albeit that the additional services are "skip stop" and will not call at some stations. They are not happy that there will be a one hour gap in the evening service for the foreseeable future to permit the freight paths.

It was too late for TfW to introduce additional trains from the December 2022 timetable change, but the Association has asked TfW to implement the additional passenger services as soon as possible and not wait

until the next timetable change in May 2023. They have also continued to push for line speed improvements which will enable the additional passenger trains to call at more stations together with track and signalling enhancements which will allow two passenger trains an hour to operate throughout the day alongside freight traffic.

A Transport for Wales spokesperson said, "We welcome the ORR verdict for the Wrexham-Bidston line, which includes 24 of our 26 requested paths. We still have a strong ambition to deliver both a full twice-hourly service and increased frequency directly into Liverpool for the North Wales Metro."

"We're planning to introduce the twice-hourly service on the Wrexham-Bidston line once the Class 230s have entered service. However, testing and training is currently on hold following the recent announcement from Vivarail."

We'll be able to provide an updated statement in the coming days, but our focus remains to bring our Class 230 units into service on our network. We're currently planning for this to take place during 2023."



Paul's daughter Anne, wife Shirley and sons, Brian and Malcolm pictured next the plaque, photos Trevor Bishop

Paul Abell Memorial Plaque dedication by Friends of Glossop Station

Family and friends gathered at Ashburys Station on Wednesday 16 November to mark the dedication of a plaque in memory of Paul Abell, who sadly passed away in autumn 2021.

Paul was widely known in railway circles and was a former editor of Today's Railways UK. From 2017 onwards, Paul worked closely with the Friends of Glossop Station and other contributors on the project to equip every station on the Glossop Line with a Heritage Information Board. Paul created the contents for the boards at Ashburys and Gorton railway stations, and was closely involved in the development of the remaining ten. Each board stands in proud tribute to Paul's railway and social knowledge.

The plan to create a plaque in Paul's memory began back in January 2022, and with the involvement of his family at all stages, the plaque was designed and developed in the spring and summer. The foundry firm of Leander at Dove Holes near Buxton brought the family's design and wording – featuring a tram and a steam engine – to life. As Paul

had spent his early years in Gorton, it was decided that Ashburys Station was a fitting home for the plaque, alongside the heritage board he was so instrumental in creating. The plaque was kindly installed by ISS, in conjunction with Northern.

Owain Roberts, Northern Stakeholder Manager, welcomed everyone to the station and in a speech covered Paul's diverse career which included spells in the Navy and teaching Mathematics. He was also a volunteer with various organisations and was a fully passed out heritage tram driver! Brian, Paul's son, followed Owain with railway recollections of his father. On conclusion Neil Williams, from Friends of Glossop Station, presented Shirley, Paul's wife, with flowers on behalf of all present.

Everyone then left by train to have light refreshments by kind invitation in the office of Northern Station Manager Theo McLauchlan at Guide Bridge. The refreshments were kindly sponsored by TfGM. (Information courtesy of Community Rail News)

Railfuture North West Branch Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022

For information of members please note the accounts for our branch in 2022 below (with 2021's accounts shown on the left for reference). The notes are by way of explanation of any issues that may not be clear from the simple numbers.

	2021	2022
Income.		
Subvention	0-00	300-00
Meals	0-00	57-30
Donations	0-00	0-00
Campaigning	<u>0-00</u>	<u>0-00</u>
	0-00	357-30
Expenditure.		
General Administration	77-00	50-00
Branch Newsletter	239-75 ¹	353-88
Campaigning and lobby	0.00	0-00
Meals	0-00	71-55
Travelling	0-00	0-00
Affiliated to TWNW	50-00	0-00
AGM meeting	0-00	150-00
Donation to RNLI	0.00	25.00
	316.75	650-43
Surplus of income over Expenditure	<u>(316-75)</u>	<u>(293-13)</u>
Current Assets		
Cash in Hand	324-06	55-93
Cash in Bank	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0-00</u>
	640-81	324-06
Accumulated Fund		
Balance at 1 st January	640-81	640-81
Surplus income over Expenditure	<u>(316-75)</u>	<u>(293-13)</u>
Sub Total		30.93
Default cheque out of date		25.00
Balance at 31 st December	324.06	55.93 ²
Transfer to Railfuture National		55.93
Balance of North West Account at 31 December 2022		0-00

Notes

- 1) Newsletter costs for 2021 only include one newsletter and 2 lots of postage costs, printing of second newsletter was paid for directly by national accounts and was deducted from subvention for 2022.
- 2) Balance at 16th November when the remaining balance transferred to a national Railfuture account, from that date we will operate our accounts on a "virtual" basis i.e. there is money allocated from the national income to spend in our branch, we decide what we spend it on.

**Railfuture North West England
 Annual General Meeting
 Saturday 25th February 2023
 Holiday Inn
 The Ringway
 Preston
 PR1 3AU**



Railfuture North West England’s Annual General Meeting for 2023 is at the Holiday Inn Preston, as above, and is expected to be in the Ribblesdale suite (this will be confirmed on the notices in the hotel),

We expect to have a speaker from Network Rail to talk about the Tran-Pennine Route Upgrade so we plan to extend the day to accommodate. We will have a 1200 start, lunch at 1315 for 30 minutes with the speaker after lunch and a finish no later than 1430. This will be confirmed by email and on the website.

The outline agenda will be the normal AGM business to start, we will also have topics that will no doubt prove talking points and do want to hear members thoughts on any issue you wish to raise.

Tea and coffee will be served on arrival and a sandwich lunch including chips and salad is available at £7.95 per head and needs to be pre-booked, we need to have bookings by 18th February as we need to confirm numbers before the meeting, please advise Christopher Norton by email, cjnblackpool@btinternet.com, or telephone 01253 623338 (email preferred). You can pay on the day to the Treasurer.

**Nomination for Railfuture North West England Branch
 Committee 2023/4**

Nominations are now invited for the 2022/23 branch committee, these can be made using the form below or via post or email, provided the information requested in the form below is included

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder	Position (if any)	Standing for Officer only Y/N
A.N. Other 1	A.N. Other 2	A.N. Other 3	(e.g., Secretary)	

Please return to Christopher Norton, either by post or email, addresses is 26 Handsworth Road, Blackpool, FY1 2RQ, email cjnblackpool@btinternet.com, the closing date is midnight on Sunday February 19th 2023.

Please note the email addresses above wont correctly copy from the pdf edition, this is to prevent spam.

Future branch meetings.

Our next branch committee meetings after the upcoming AGM will be on Saturday 22nd April and we are hoping this will be at Irlam station in one of the event rooms there, and Thursday 29th June which is planned to be at Kendal Town Hall both to be confirmed as venues but please contact the Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary to confirm.

Further dates/details will be on our website but do please get in touch with your branch committee, (details on the back page) if there are any issues you wish to raise.



LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

www.lmr.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.

Rail User Groups within the North West area

(for those viewing in pdf format, those underlined have embedded links to the group's websites or pages)

- [Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users' Association](#)
- [Bolton Rail Users Group](#)
- [Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group](#)
- [Friends of Castleton Station](#)
- [Friends of Denton Station](#)
- [Friends of Eccles Station](#)
- [Friends of Littleborough Stations \(Lancashire\)](#)
- [Friends of Reddish South Station](#)
- [Friends of Rose Hill Station](#)
- Friends of St Annes Stations email brussell_2019@outlook.com
- [Friends of Settle Carlisle Line](#)
- [Furness Line Action Group \(FLAG\)](#)
- [Goyt Valley Rail Users' Association \(Stockport\)](#)
- [Lakes Line Rail User Group \(LLRUG\)](#)
- [Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group \(LASRUG\)](#)
- [Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association \(MCRUA\)](#)
- [North Cheshire Rail Users' Group \(NCRUG\)](#)
- [Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers Association \(OPSTA\)](#)
- [Ribble Valley Rail](#)
- [Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership \(SELRAP\) \(reopening campaign\)](#)
- [Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester line \(STORM\)](#)
- [Stalybridge to Huddersfield Rail User Group](#)
- [Wirral Transport Users' Association \(WTUA\)](#)
- [Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users Association \(WBRUA\)](#)

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 £3/year, £5 for family membership.

Contact; Membership Secretary, "Hamlet" 2B, Meadow Park,
Wesham Preston PR4 3DN. Contact through our Facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Blackpool-Fylde-Rail-Users-Association-1266722540018377/> and click on "Sign Up"



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 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,
Cumbria

Membership: £5.00 Individuals,

£7.00 Family, £13.00 Corporate

LA9 5DA

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Railfuture North West Branch Officers

<i>Chairman</i> Trevor Bishop	4 Butterfield Close Cheadle Hulme Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7AE	trevor.bishop@railfuture.org.uk Tel 0161 485 8426
<i>Vice Chairman & Treasurer</i> Malcolm Conway	58 Greengate Lane, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5LL.	malcolm.conway@railfuture.org.uk Tel 01539 725995.
<i>Freight Officer</i> (vacant)		
<i>Secretary and Returning Officer</i> Christopher Norton	26 Handsworth Road Blackpool FY1 2RQ	cjnblackpool@btinternet.com 01253 623338

Rail North West is the newsletter of the North West branch of Railfuture. Contributions in the form of articles and letters are welcomed. Please send them to Arthur Thomson at arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk. 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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