

Rail North West



The new bridge over Water Street in Salford that will form part of the Ordsall chord linking Manchester's Victoria and Piccadilly stations directly for the first time. This work will form part of infrastructure that will require new/additional trains. Photo courtesy Network Rail.

GWR Electrification Delay Fallout

Railfuture North West England and user groups across the north west are very concerned about the consequences to the delay in finishing the Great Western electrification programme announced by the government recently. Several parts of the original electrification plan have been shelved, with no stated completion date (other than a vague "in Control period 6") and this means that planned cascade of DMU's from Great Western to Northern routes desperately in need of extra rolling stock won't happen until much later.

Northern have released a statement implying that the delay in service improvements which would be enabled by this cascade, may be only 6 months to May 2018, but Railfuture North West feels this

doesn't add up, as the new timescales for electrification of the Thames Valley Branches and the cascade to the Bristol area of the class 165/6 trains currently in service there, mean that it's unlikely that franchise commitments for new and enhanced services on the Northern franchise will be met.

Some of these enhancements will still go ahead, as a member of a user group was at a recent meeting with Northern in late November at which it was indicated that from December 2017, the Clitheroe-Manchester service will be extended to the newly opened bay at Rochdale station, while Northern are also exploring the possibility of extending the Blackburn-Todmorden-Manchester service to the Airport at the

same time, though this would depend on completion of the Ordsall curve to the same timescale.

Even when electrification of Manchester Victoria - Euxton Junction is completed, electric trains will have to wait for the delayed Preston-Blackpool section to be completed before they can run to Blackpool North. The new diesel train depot at Blackburn is planned for completion in Sept 2017 which will allow Blackpool North depot to be closed/converted to stabling electric units after that, though the recent announcement by Northern and Porterbrook to develop electro-diesels from the class 319 electric units may suggest that Northern are planning for further delays to the electrification programme in the north west.

SELRAP Open Meeting Success

Over one hundred people attended SELRAP (Skipton – East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership) latest meeting at Herriots Hotel in Skipton on the 14th November 2016.

The meeting began with an update on the campaign to re-open the Skipton to Colne line.

SELRAP then welcomed their invited guests Nigel Harris and Philip Haigh. Both journalists gave entertaining accounts of their experiences of the rail industry together with the government officials involved with this.

Nigel is Managing Editor and Events Director for Rail Magazine – Britain's biggest-selling modern railway magazine. Philip is a freelance railway journalist and communications advisor. He was Rail magazine's deputy editor and ran the news desk for many years.

During the question and answer session which followed it was clear that both Nigel

and Philip are supporters of the campaign. It would be a strategic line getting people to their places of work and one which would bring economic regeneration. They felt it to be a very deliverable project.

SELRAP was also very encouraged by Lancashire County Councillor Azhar Ali who has recently written a letter to the chancellor Philip Hammond outlining the benefits which would result from this line being re-opened.

The Campaign for Better Transport had urged Mr Hammond to focus on small rail improvements in his Autumn statement. The organisation has identified 12 priority lines for re-opening and these include the Skipton to Colne initiative.

New combined Liverpool City Region User Groups /Associations

Earlier this year, following informal discussions, a meeting was held, at Merseytravel's office to take forward the notion of presenting a united front to the Liverpool City Region transport authorities, by all the User Groups/Associations whose areas impinge upon Merseyside and Deeside.

The Groups represented were Mid Cheshire RUA, (MCRUA), Shrewsbury Chester RUA, (SCRUA), Wrexham Bidston RUA, (WBRUA), Wirral Transport UA, (WTUA), North Cheshire RUG, (NCRUG), and Ormskirk Preston & Southport Travellers Association, (OPSTA) and representatives from Railfuture North West England and Wales branches were invited to attend as well. With the exception of SCRUA and NCRUG, all were represented by their Chairman. Steve Boulding represented SCRUA and John Hobbs and Cedric Green represented NCRUG.

Merseytravel were happy to provide the meeting room and are keen that all the local Rail User Groups/Associations should act together and present a united front to them with regard to improving and extending the public transport offer. Its felt that there is an advantage in showing the positive agglomeratic effects of the various campaigns to the Liverpool City Region and beyond rather than each pushing for their own schemes in isolation. For example WBRUA's aspirations to increase service frequency on their line not only improves their local service but also benefits NCRUG's campaign to re-open Halton Curve. Another plus would be SCRUA's campaign to extend the re-doubling on the Chester/Wrexham line. This would increase capacity and allow new services to be introduced over the Halton Curve and at the same time improve connectivity at Chester and Wrexham to services operating in the areas covered by WBRUA, MCRUA and WTUA. OPSTA, who have recently conducted passenger surveys on the Southport Manchester route, will share their Code of Conduct with others in the group. They are endeavouring to have the service continuing to run into Piccadilly rather than all diverted to Victoria to cater for the requirements of the majority of passengers. Their passenger survey provides hard evidence to back their case. Their experience will help others to factually back up their campaigns for better and more appropriate service provision.

The groups believe, in most cases, no RU Group/Association scheme should be looked at in isolation because they all have benefits which improve the business cases of other adjoining schemes. One helps the other.

There have been 3 meetings so far in 2016. In addition the groups have met separately with David Powell, (Merseytravel's Director of Rolling Stock Procurement) and Cllr Liam Robinson, (Chairman of Merseytravel and Rail North Ltd). The plan is now that future meetings will be followed by discussions with Liam to enable issues to be taken up without delay and to be up-dated on developments from their side.

The groups welcome this opportunity to have regular and constructive dialogue with Senior Management at Merseytravel. This is a significant step forward and acknowledges the value of user groups' in providing unique information and suggestions for improving the travel experience of the passenger.

Leeds - Morecambe Community Rail Partnership; Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

On 30 November, LASRUG President Canon John Bearpark formally opened a new shelter on the westbound platform at Giggleswick, assisted by Councillor Margaret Airey of Giggleswick Parish Council and Richard Isaac of Northern Rail. Sourcing a suitable cantilever shelter for the narrow timber-based platform had been a major challenge. Mr Isaac praised the sustained and positive effort, and the resulting improvement to passenger and the community facilities at this more rural station.

Barrow Connections

The Furness Line Action Group (FLAG) has previously noted a large number of errors in the pocket timetable on their line (Northern number 6) most of which the group had flagged up. This resulted in Northern reprinting it and although the group's Secretary was involved in some proof-reading for the new timetable from December 2016, it is evident that their suggestions for Manchester and London connections to be shown are still not fully realised.

Not only are the Manchester connections incomplete (and not indicating when a Lancaster as opposed to a Preston change would be more sensible/convenient), but the London connections are still not shown at all. Their Secretary has therefore produced a table (below – only departures from Barrow shown) to include this additional information and demonstrate to Northern where they can make further improvements next time!

Departures from Barrow with arrival times at Manchester stations and at London Euston and where to change.

k - change at Lancaster. p - change at Preston Journeys requiring two changes not shown.
Shaded columns are through trains to Manchester
 Times for all stations Barrow and Lancaster are as in Northern TT No 6 - 11 December 2016 – 20 May 2017

		Mondays to Fridays - Barrow to Manchester and London																	
Notes		X						X						Y					
Barrow-in-Furness	d	0523	0615	0648	0713	0806	0850	1009	1113	1213	1331	1441	1524	1610	1720	1803	2015		
Lancaster	a	0616	0718	0748	0813	0913	0952	1118	1215	1314	1433	1533	1628	1714	1818	1904	2115		
Preston	a	0639	0742k	0807	0845k	0937	1024	1144k	1240	1345k	1545k	1553	1656k	1746k	1845k	1932	2135		
Manchester Piccadilly	a	0727	0827k	0856	0927k	1027k	1127k	1228k	1325k	1427k	1628k	1656	-	1828k	1929k	2029k	2259p		
Manchester Airport	a	0747	0847k	0916	0947k	1047k	1147k	1247k	1347k	1447k	1647k	1717	-	1847k	1947k	2047k	2315p		
London Euston	a	0907k	1013k	-	1114k	1213k	1313k	1413k	1514k	1612k	1713k	1810k	1914k	2012k	2125k	2225k	-		

		Saturdays only - Barrow to Manchester and London																	
Notes		X																	
Barrow	d	0435	0532	0615	0707	0808	0850	1009	1120	1211	1333	1455	1525	1629	1720	1803	2017		
Lancaster	a	0531	0623	0718	0808	0909	0947	1111	1219	1315	1433	1608	1617	1736	1818	1905	2017		
Preston	a	0555k	0642	0742k	0841	0945k	1007	1142k	1245k	1345k	1434	1637k	1637	1811k	1845k	1931	2017		
Manchester Picc	a	-	0727	0827k	0928k	1028k		1228k	1328k	1428k	1556	1730k	1730k	-	1929k	2029k	2130k		
Manchester Apt	a	-	0747	0848k	0947k	1047k	1121	1247k	1347k	1447k	1621	1748k	1748k	-	1946k	2047k	2147k		
London Euston	a	0817k	0913k	1013k	1116k	1213k	1313k	1413k	1513k	1613k	1713k	1915k	1915k	-	2138k	2245k	-		

NOTES - X - At Lancaster, platform 2 to platform 4 in 6 minutes ; Y - over 1 hour wait at Lancaster :

r - change at Manchester Oxford Road ; k - change at Lancaster ; p - change at Preston Journeys requiring two changes not shown
Shaded columns are through trains from Manchester
 Times for all stations Lancaster to Barrow are as in Northern TT No 6 - 11 December 2016 – 20 May 2017

Mills Hill Park and Ride

Transport for Greater Manchester sees Mills Hill station as a transport hub, but its car park is already inadequate. As the area around is fully developed, the site of a former soft drinks factory could offer the last chance for a Park and Ride with direct, step-free access to the adjoining eastbound platform - the adjacent industrial premises

might not make the most suitable neighbours for the proposed housing development. Northern does have a project to improve its car parks, but plans for Mills Hill are still unclear. As was feared, delays to Great Western electrification will impact some of the changes planned under the Northern franchise (see story on front page). Enhancements to the Dec 2017 timetable will prioritise services that can be rolled

forward into the 'full' May 2018 timetable with no significant further change, and those that are relatively self-contained, so do not require wholesale changes to a wider group of services. There will be a further update in February 2017, together with a full consultation.

Southport – Manchester South services update

Following up from the meeting between OPSTA, Northern and Rail North on 21st November 2016, there was some good news, services on the line will not be changed before May 2018.

This is a deferral from the planned December 2017 change which would have resulted in all services from Southport to Manchester being diverted to terminate at Manchester Victoria. Some other service and timetable changes will still be made at that time and it may well have been the case for these services too if it was not for the pressure from OPSTA's campaign.

Nevertheless, the plan remains to run both Southport – Manchester services to Victoria and OPSTA were disappointed not to see any kind of proposal tabled at the meeting on 21st November with Northern and Rail North.

OPSTA representatives report that the meeting was constructive, with information and thinking exchanged, and actions agreed to work together before the next meeting in January. RN and Northern were positive there is time to work up options, and explained it was a number of industry issues and dependencies that precluded them from a meaningful discussion of options at this point. Proposed timetables will be out for

public consultation in March and the formal submission of finalised timetables must be made to Network Rail in August as part of the regulated process.

The group made it clear that they expect to see the detail of real options that will deliver the full 7 day service requirement.

They ensured the meeting was documented comprehensively with key points, areas of agreement and actions. The challenge is to drive the process forward.

OPSTA have established some common ground. The data from the independent passenger survey was reviewed and considered against our own work with you. It was agreed there is good alignment and a firm basis to work from.

What stands in their way? Northern is clearly very exercised by two issues:

- The peak passenger numbers it needs to carry between Bolton and Piccadilly either starting from or passing through Bolton. They don't seem to correlate this demand with the one in four that will be setting out between Southport and Westhoughton for the south side.
- The promised cascade of diesel trains is now uncertain and subject to an unknown, possibly lengthy delay.

The group plans to follow through on the actions agreed with RN and Northern. At the same time they will be briefing and speaking with local MPs to establish what further measures they can take.



Artists illustration of new Merseyrail electric network trains, courtesy Merseytravel

New Trains for Merseyrail Network

Merseyside City region leaders have approved a deal to buy new trains for the Merseyrail electric network, in a £460 million deal which will see Merseytravel buy the trains rather than leasing, as previously.

Swiss manufacturer Stadler will build the state-of-the-art trains, which will come into service by the end of 2020, replacing the near 40-year-old fleet that currently runs on the network – the oldest in the UK, subject to signing of contracts in 2017. 52 four car trains will be ordered, replacing 59 three car (208 carriages as opposed to 177).

Accessibility will be improved with the new trains which should make it safer and they will be able to carry 60 per cent more passengers while retaining the same number of seats, will cut journey times by 10 per cent– equivalent of up to nine minutes on some end-to-end routes, and will have the capabilities to eventually run

beyond the current Merseyrail boundaries to places like Skelmersdale, Wrexham and Warrington. (Although its not clear from the press release, the editor thinks this will be through ordering dual voltage convertible trains and that the Bidston – Wrexham line and any new line/station to Skelmersdale will be electrified at 25kV overhead.)

Key features of the new trains:-

- More space for bikes, buggies, disabled passengers and luggage; intelligent air conditioning; a bright, open and airy saloon, and a mix of seating types, keeping some of the ‘sociable’ facing seats
- Easier to get on and off. This will be achieved through reducing the ‘gap’ between the train and platform through: a train body configured specifically for the network; lower train floors; platform and track improvements and a ‘sliding step’ from the train – this combination gives almost ‘level access’ in a first for the UK.

- On-board safety – the train will be a ‘safe space’ forming one continuous space with no dividing doors; CCTV with images broadcast within the train saloon and to the driver and control room; a direct link to the driver and control room; the driver visible through a transparent cab door; on-board customer service staff, supplementing other on-board staff and staffed stations.

- Door safety – there will be traffic light system door illuminations indicating when it’s safe to get on and off; sensitive door edges that will detect ‘the pull’ from something as narrow as a tie or finger, stopping the train from moving or bringing it to a stop.

- Wider aisles, larger areas at the doorways and many more grab handles, making the train much easier to move around and safer for standing passengers.

In buying the new the authorities took into account a number of factors including the increasing costs in maintaining a near 40-year-old fleet and the capacity pressures of a 2.5 per cent rise in passenger journeys every year.

The new trains’ project also includes infrastructure upgrades to power supplies, platforms and track, as well as refurbishment of the depots at Kirkdale and Birkenhead North and the ongoing maintenance of the trains.

The new trains will be operated differently, with the driver – assisted by cameras along the length of the train – responsible for the opening and closing of the doors and the dispatch, rather than the guard.

This mode of operation, Driver Controlled Operation (DCO), was put forward by all bidders in meeting the recommendations of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) report into the fatal incident at James St in 2011

Stations wanted for New Villages

Four new garden villages in the north west will create thousands of homes under new government plans to expand affordable housing, but Railfuture is expressing the view that all of these should have new stations on the network to ensure good transport links.

The Government has allocated money for four so-called Garden villages in the North West region - Bailrigg in Lancaster, St Cuthberts near Carlisle, Cumbria, Handforth in Cheshire and Halsnead in Knowsley. All four of these locations are close enough to railway lines such that it would make sense to plan to either make good connections with existing stations or make plans for new ones.

These newly-built communities will vary in size from between 1,500 and 10,000 properties and will get £6m in Government funding over two years.

Metrolink Second City Crossing

The second city crossing on Manchester’s Metrolink network (2CC) was expected to open early in the 2017, following notice of permanent diversions to existing road routes affected by the new street – running lines. The link, which will form another connection on the Metrolink network from Manchester Victoria station to St Peters Square, saw test trams running in early December. This is part of Metrolink’s “Big Bang” expansion which provided a number of additional destinations on the Metrolink network and resulted in a large increase in cross- city traffic and, so the building of this link means some traffic going from south to north (and vice versa), can be diverted to take this route

**Railfuture North West England
Annual General Meeting
Saturday 18th February 2017
Friends Meeting House
6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS
(near St. Peters Square Metrolink stop)**

Railfuture North West England's Annual General Meeting will take place at the Friends Meeting House Manchester as above. The business part of the meeting will start at 11-00 with a break for lunch at about 12-30 and then speakers from 13-30 who we hope will be from Northern and Metrolink and we aim to finish about 15-00.

There will be tea/coffee and biscuits on arrival from 10-30. A buffet lunch is available which **MUST** be booked in advance by the 5th February at a cost of £13-00. The buffet will consist of Sandwiches, pork pies, sausage rolls and cakes etc.

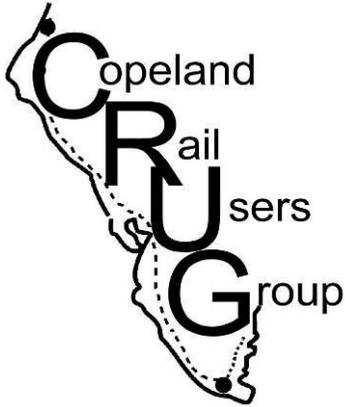
Please contact the treasurer M. Conway to book lunch at 58 Greengate Lane, Kendal. Tel. (01539) 725995. Email: mec1uk@aol.com Payment will be required on the day.

**Nomination for Railfuture North West England Branch
Committee 2017/18**

Nominations are now invited for the 2017/18 branch committee as below, these can be 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 Ronald Schwarz, either by post or email, addresses on the back cover of this edition, the closing date is midnight on February 12th 2017.



Promoting the Cumbrian Coastal Railway

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Download our online form from:
[http://www.bafrua.org.uk/](http://www.bafrua.org.uk) click on "Join Our User Group."

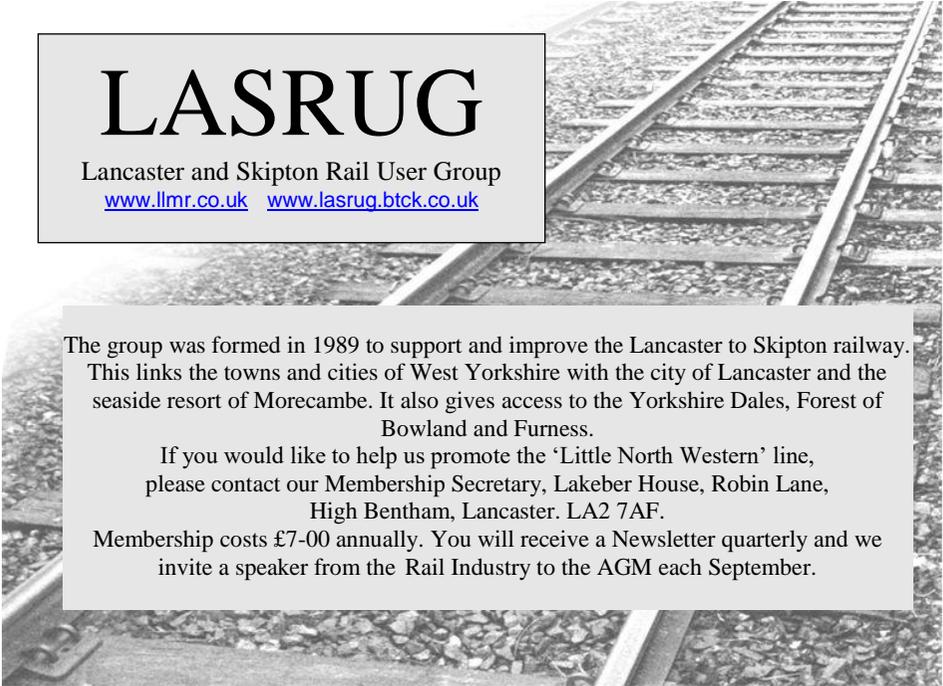
Future meetings.

After our AGM on February 18th, the following committee meetings, open to members, will be on 22nd April 2017 at the Golden Pheasant, Plumley, and on June 24th 2017, at Littleborough station History room, do please check with Chairman/Secretary as below.

Both meetings will start at 1300, but for those that want lunch, we will be there from 1200 (the latter at nearby cafe's as there are no facilities at the station room). 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



LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

www.llmr.co.uk www.lasrug.btck.co.uk

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

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

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

Wrexham-Bidston



Rail Users' Association

Cymdeithas Defnyddwyr Rheilffordd Wrecsam-Bidston

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

The Association seeks to identify, justify and promote:

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



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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**

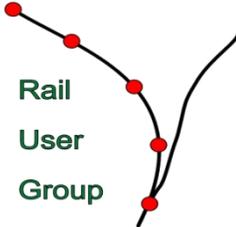
*Send your subscription to our Membership Secretary today
and receive a copy of our latest newsletter*

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



Join Today!

Contact: Mr. P Bell 9, Vicars Hill,
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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.

www.railfuture.org.uk

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