

COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2021



NICKY THOMPSON

EXHIBITION *Shifting Sands*

LYTHAM HALL • 4TH FEBRUARY - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Fylde Borough Council are proud to present an extraordinary exhibition of contemporary travel posters by acclaimed artist Nicky Thompson. The 12 new artworks feature scenes from the Fylde Coast and will be presented as an art trail in the magnificent grounds of Lytham Hall. The Council's own collection of original works from the early-mid 20th century will be displayed in the Georgian Mansion from late Spring 2022 onwards (dates TBC).

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Community Rail
Accredited Partnership
2021-22

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Report for Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the four Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) that it supports.

In 2021 and early 2022 the principle work carried out by CRL has been the continuation of its education engagement programme; assisting the 4 CRPs develop projects along their lines and working with stakeholders on a growing number of Restoring Your Railway projects. A lot of this has been done using 'virtual means', although a number of face to face meetings have taken place.

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CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

It is once again my privilege to write the Chair's Report covering the activities of CRL and the 4 Lancashire CRPs over the last 12+ months. It has been another challenging year dominated by the changes wrought by the pandemic and how we have adapted to it. As you read through the report, I hope you will find it interesting, inspiring and stimulating. I will try this year to keep my report shorter to please Simon and more thematic as many of the individual projects will be covered later in this report.

AWARDS

Let's start this report on a high note and recognise the successes of both the CRL team and the Lancashire CRPs. The Community Rail Awards took place live in Southampton on the 9th December and it was a great night for CRL. With firsts for 'Backtrack', the anti trespass project, and '100 Women 100 Journeys' followed by a second place for 'Bonded Together with a Prayer Bead' and a third place for 'Along the Line', the art-based project at Ramsgreave & Wilsphire station. Well done to everyone involved in those projects it is a great recognition of your hard work.

The South Fylde Line has seldom been out of the news this year and to cap a good year many of the stations won coveted awards from NW in Bloom with Tony Ford, Chair of the SFL CRP, winning the 'Outstanding Contribution to Britain in Bloom NW' award now known as the 'Tony Award'.

CRL continues to sponsor the 'Small Projects Award - under £500' category at the Community Rail Awards and we congratulate all those who submitted an entry and especially The Bittern Line CRP, Greater Anglia Asset Team, Dura Composites Ltd for the 'West Runton Station Sign Restoration' for coming first – well done.



Tony Ford, Chair of the South Fylde Line CRP with his award

CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

SNAPSHOT OF 2021

Despite the pandemic much has taken place over the last 12 months as this report will illustrate but here are a few things that stand out for me:

- + During Community Rail Week we launched 'Make A Bee Line for the West Lancashire Line' with the help of Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School. The start of a series of line guides.
- + DalesRail ran again although it was a bit of a mixed season – see the report on page 24.
- + The Education Network continued to meet virtually every month and developed the highly successful and award winning Backtrack project. More about this on page 10.
- + The Education Team successfully completed the 100 Women 100 Journeys project. See page 10 to find out more or click here: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/100-women-100-journeys/>
- + We now have 3 stations adopted by schools namely New Pudsey & Bramley on the Calder Valley line and Burscough Junction on the West Lancashire Line.
- + **2021 has also been the year of the film:**
 - We now have a growing number of films under the generic heading of 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' – see page 20 to find out more.
 - There are a series of station tour films that have been produced as part of the Autism Friendly Line project – see page 23 to find out more.
 - CRL secured a grant from the Northern Accessibility Fund to enable inter active, 360 degree films to be produced for Blackburn and Manchester Victoria stations again as part of the Autism Friendly Line project.
 - We have been involved in a film about Lizzy Ashcroft who played for the Dick, Kerr Ladies – see page 29 to find out more.
- + We unveiled some fantastic artwork at Brierfield on the 2nd December, 2021 promoting the cycle routes of the area. A celebration 'Connecting Brierfield' cycle ride took place on the 29th March 2022.
- + On the 1st February some of the team took part in World Hijab Day.
- + We started the BSL Interpreted Rail Confidence Trips.
- + The fantastic work carried out by the many station friends groups – some of it very ambitious.



Re-Accreditation

Well we did it again! CRL and the 4 Lancashire CRPs received notification from the DfT on the 16th November 2021 that we had been re-accredited for a further year. So, many thanks to the CRP Chairs, the CRL team, Northern and Network Rail who all contributed to a successful meeting with Martin Clarke and Ian Davis from the Community Rail Network last October.

Accreditation recognises the hard work done by the CRL Directors, the CRP management groups, the CRL team and of course the many volunteers who help at stations, provide guided walks, distribute leaflets and much more.

CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

DEVELOPING OUR LINES

2021 saw many short-term changes to timetables reflecting the impact of the pandemic on daily life and on the railway community. Coupled with the apparent changes the pandemic is making in how and when we travel by rail looking at how to develop the local railway has never been harder.

Despite the uncertainties CRL has worked with partners on two Restoring Your Railway (RYR) projects for the Clitheroe – Hellifield and South Fylde Lines. RYR is a staged process with the first stage being the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). These have been successfully completed for both projects with the Clitheroe – Hellifield SOBC submitted in April 2021 (see <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/restoring-your-railway-clitheroe-to-hellifield/>) and the South Fylde SOBC submitted in November 2021 (see <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/south-fylde-line-restoring-your-rail-report-submitted/>). In both cases we wait to hear if the DfT will move these projects to the next stage in the process which is the development of a more detailed Outline Business Case. CRL is grateful to the Community Rail Development Fund (CRDF) which provided grants towards both SOBCs.

In addition, CRL also submitted comments to the Manchester Recovery Task Force on its consultation on the December 2022 timetables. Despite its primary focus on improving the reliability of trains in central Manchester and especially along the Castlefield Corridor the timetable implications go much further even affecting the Preston to Ormskirk line. All the lines covered by CRL and the 4 Lancashire CRPs were affected in some way. We wait to hear what changes will be made as a consequence of the consultation.

CRL also submitted comments as part of the Great British Railways Transition Teams (GBRTT) 'Whole Industry Strategic Plan' (WISP).



A busy Squires Gate Station

DEVELOPING OUR STATIONS

Apart from the great work done by the many volunteers who devote countless hours to improving the look and feel of their station other projects are coming to fruition.

CRL is delighted to see that the Access for All studies it commissioned to look at how to improve access at Burnley Manchester Rd and Accrington stations are now coming to fruition. In the case of the former a scheme to provide lift access between the two platforms now forms part of the approved Levelling Up bid made by Burnley Borough Council with support from Lancashire County Council and CRL. At Accrington Lancashire County Council is looking at including a lift scheme in its Levelling Up bid. In both cases proven need, a 'shovel ready' scheme and rising footfall (at least until the pandemic struck) all helped make the case for these much needed improvements.

CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

The A4A study we commissioned for Langho on the Clitheroe Line, and supported by Connecting East Lancashire has identified a range of improvements and it is possible that during 2022 some of these may come to fruition.

In the pipeline are further A4A studies to look at other stations across our lines in partnership with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Northern. More about that next year!

CRL STAFFING

There is little to report this year with no changes to the team during 2021. There are plans to recruit an additional Community Rail Officer during 2022 and Simon Clarke plans to reduce his hours as well – think I said that last year as well!

CRL welcomed Mike Cliffe, Lancashire County Council, to the CRL Board and Melanie Taylor, Blackburn with Darwen, was elected Chair of the East Lancashire and Clitheroe Line CRPs. Marion Atkinson is planning to stand down as Chair of the West of Lancashire CRP at its AGM in April this year.

VOLUNTEERS

A lot of what takes place across the Lancashire network is undertaken by volunteers which includes the CRP Chairs. Special mention must be made of the work undertaken by Tony Ford at St Anne's station and the improvements to the disused platform taking place at Squires Gate. We also welcome a new Northern volunteer group to our patch this year at Kirkham and Wesham Station.

Many of the stations across our patch are looked after by volunteers who devote many hours to making their station look special. The CRL team are happy to help them and of course special thanks go to Northern for not only helping fund their activities but also the help they receive from Martin Keating and Simon Abbott. Station adoption work has been affected by the pandemic but this has not dampened the enthusiasm of the volunteers.

A big thank you must also be extended to the Lancashire Rail Ramblers who were able to provide a programme of guided walks from DalesRail as well as from stations on the East Lancashire and Clitheroe Lines.



Station volunteers at Kirkham & Wesham (above left) and at Church & Oswaldtwistle (above right)

CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

FINAL WORDS

Special thanks go to the CRL Team who do so much to help initiate and facilitate community involvement in our local railway, look after our websites and social media and much more.

My thanks also go to the various people we have worked with this year including Karen Allerton, Cath Ford, Alastair Nicholson, Caroline Eccles and Mark Robinson, Gail Newsham and Sue Gardam.

I extend a big thank you to all the volunteer station adopters who give their free time to make the stations across Lancashire look more welcoming and to the walk leaders who help with our various guided walk programmes.

A big thank you to the CRL Board who provide positive encouragement as well as a steadying hand and to the CRP Chairs and Management groups who oversee the work that takes place across our community rail lines. I would like to personally thank Carolyn Watson, Owain Roberts, Martin Keating, Simon Abbott, Richard Issac of Northern; Dan Coles and Devon Wall of Network Rail; Jojo Buckley and Matt Worman of Avanti West Coast and Dan Fox from Trans Pennine Express for all their help and encouragement. We literally can't do any of this without you.

Looking ahead

2022 is shaping up to be an interesting and exciting year. Here are a few spoilers:

- + A new look for the CRL website and a totally new website for our education team.
- + Look out for further 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' films.
- + A new line guide for the South Fylde Line and a possible third one for an undisclosed route!
- + A new Backtrack campaign.
- + 360 degree films for the Autism Friendly Line.
- + And an exciting collaboration with Avanti West Coast.

More about all of those and much more in next year's annual report.

Richard Watts, Chair Community Rail Lancashire

1st March 2022

During the Covid Pandemic two young local rail enthusiasts in West Lancashire set about drawing pictures of trains they liked or had travelled on.

The fantastic train drawings created during the early lockdown, were converted into colourful Dibond panels (see opposite) and these were unveiled on Thursday 21st October 2021 and are now displayed on the fences at Birkdale and Hillside stations in Merseyside.



FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME 2021/22	£
Core Funding	
Northern CRPs	115,036
Avanti West Coast	12,714
TransPennine	10,000
Northern Education Grant	112,078
Sub total	249,828
Other Income	
Merseytravel	10,000
Others	6,000 a
Grants	74,779 b
Deferred income	160,000
Grand total	500,607
EXPENDITURE 2021/22	
To 31 March 2022	394,000
Balance	106,607

Notes:

a: Blackpool Council and Bentham Line CRP

b. Includes grants from the Community Rail Network's CRDF and small grant fund; Northern's Station Accessibility Fund; Avanti's Community Rail Fund etc.

More financial details of the grants and projects can be found on the following page and a copy of the accounts can be requested by emailing richard.watts.crl@gmail.com

Community Rail Lancashire Ltd., Registered in England No. 09999437 is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered Office: Accrington Station, Eagle Street, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 1LJ
t: 01254 386579 e: richard.watts.crl@gmail.com
communityraillancashire.co.uk & downtheline.org.uk

MAJOR PROJECTS AND GRANTS

Project	CRP	Cost	Funding
		£	£
Amazing Women by Rail Video	ELCRP	8,860	4,430 CRDF 4,430 CRL
Burscough Junction Train of Thought	WoLCRP	5,700	2,850 CRDF 2,850 CRL
Autism Friendly Line films	ELCRP	3,290	3,290 CRL
Autism Friendly Line 360° Tours	ELCRP	13,496	13,496 Northern
DalesRail	CLCRP ELCRP	1,331	1,331 CRL
Padiham Greenway Walk Film	ELCRP	900	900 CRL
Fantastic Plastic	CLCRP ELCRP	4,000	2,000 CRDF 2,000 CRL
Hidden Gems – St. Anne’s	SFLCRP	500	500 SATC
Education Network	ALL	1,000	1,000 CRL
Mini Timetables	ALL	3,000	3,000 CRL
Branded Boards	ALL	9,299	9,299 CRL
Restoring Your Railway SFL Passing Loop	SFLCRP	60,193	60,193 CRDF
100 Women 100 Journeys	ALL	3,990	3,990 Northern Seedcorn
Burnley Manchester Road A4A Business Case	ELCRP	9,500	7,000 LCC & BC 2,500 CRL
Hidden Gems – Kirkham & Wesham	SFLCRP	370	370 CRN Small Grant
Explore Lancashire by Rail Burscough to Rufford	WoLCRP	1,270	635 CRN Small Grant 635 CRL
Dick, Kerr Ladies	EL, SF & WoLCRP	18,360	18,360 Avanti West Coast
Make A Beeline	WoLCRP	1,600	800 CRDF 800 CRL
British Sign Language Projects	ALL	4,215	900 CRN Small Grant 3,315 Northern Seedcorn
Explore Lancashire by Rail Films	SFLCRP CLCRP	2,500	2,500 CRDF
Shifting Sands	SFLCRP	6,000	2,500 CRDF 3,000 FBC 500 CRL
Burscough Junction Toolbox	WoLCRP	660	660 CRN Small Grant
East Meets West	ELCRP	1,098	1,098 CRN Small Grant
Hidden Gems – Garswood	WoLCRP	600	500 Northern SAF 100 CRL
Rufford to Mere Sands Wood	WoLCRP	7,085	3,542 CRDF 3,543 CRL
Totals		168,817	168,817

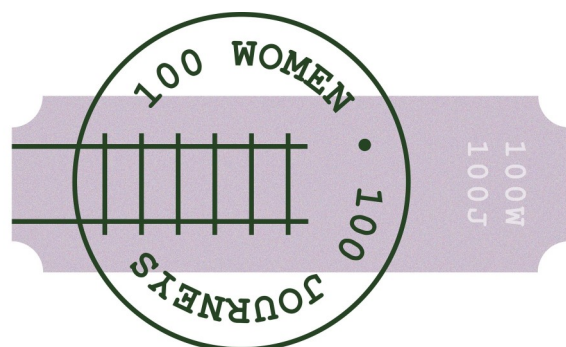
COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2021

Community Rail Lancashire had another good year at the 2021 National Community Rail Awards, held in Southampton on Thursday 9th December. We were lucky to have four projects short listed for the awards and came away with two wins, a second place and a joint third place.



Win number one was in the category of **'Involving Children & Young People'** and was the **Community Rail Education Network for the 2021 Backtrack (Create it, Share It, Save Lives) project**. Backtrack is led by CRL's Karen Bennett and involves officer from community rail partnerships across the UK. The project is an anti-trespass campaign and encourages young people to create content to warn their peers not to trespass on the railway.

Win number two was in the category of **'Best Community Engagement Project'** and was for the **100 Women 100 Journeys** project that was designed to address the gender imbalance of the workforce in the rail industry. When COVID-19 struck in March 2020, CRL's education team adapted to develop a new initiative that could be delivered under lockdown restrictions. Instead of taking groups out by train, women were encouraged to write about a memorable rail journey they had taken. The aim was to collect 100 stories from 100 women to compile into a book sharing their recollections and experiences. CRL wanted to use the stories to support rail recovery by reminding readers of the romance of train travel, as well as promoting rail as a viable career option for young women. The team also wanted to raise funds for Women's Aid to support the Rail to Refuge campaign.



COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2021

In the category of **'Involving Diverse Groups'** CRL's **Bonded Together with a Prayer Bead** was awarded a second place. The project led by CRL's Shahiesta Raja was designed to break down barriers, bring different communities together, and encourage new friendships by creating prayer beads, something that people of all faiths can relate to and recognise.

The last award was a joint third place in the category of **'Community Creative Projects & Station Arts'** and for CRL's **Along the Line** project, an art project led by CRL's Caroline Holden and based on Ramsgrave & Wilpshire station on the Clitheroe Line. The project saw students from Ribblesdale School and Blackburn College working with local artist Karen Allerton to produce a range of artworks, pictures, and stories. Young people also interviewed passengers, who highlighted a desire for better station signage. The artwork has made the station more appealing to a growing passenger market, and links made during the project ensured that rail information was included in information about a new local housing development.

What they said:

Karen Bennett, Community Rail Education Development Officer for Community Rail Lancashire, said: "We are delighted to receive these prestigious awards, and I would like to thank colleagues and supporters who have helped make both 100 Women, 100 Journeys, and Backtrack the successes they have been."

Richard Watts, Chair Community Rail Lancashire commented: "This has been a brilliant night for the CRL team and I am delighted with their successes. Once again the awards achieved reflect the diversity of projects undertaken by the team and I am especially proud that the Education Network, so ably chaired by Karen Bennett, has achieved a first in the category of 'Involving Children and Young People'. I also congratulate the Bittern Line CRP for winning the category sponsored by CRL and for the recognition their project received from the Sheringham Dementia Friends."

Jools Townsend, Chief Executive of Community Rail Network, said: "Our congratulations go to Community Rail Lancashire for their inspirational 100 Women, 100 Journeys project. They engaged women from different countries, generations, and backgrounds in a celebration of how rail journeys can open up new opportunities and experiences. While unable to take groups out on train trips due to the pandemic, this project was adapted to still have maximum impact, and the result is an amazing anthology of moving stories, which are being shared at stations through local engagement across the area."

Jools continued saying: "This all forms part of Community Rail Lancashire's exceptional range of work helping communities get the most from their railways and have a voice, including working creatively with young people. I'm delighted that the Backtrack competition they have led on with other community rail partnerships also scooped a much-deserved award."

To read about all the other winners and runners up and for more details about each project download the Winners Booklet on this link: [Community Rail Awards 2021](#)

Become headline sponsor of the 2022 Community Rail Awards

Community Rail Network is looking for a committed partner to work alongside us in hosting the Community Rail Awards (October 2022). With such significant changes occurring in the railway industry, we feel that it is becoming more appropriate for us to offer this headline sponsorship opportunity more widely across the industry. If you are interested in supporting this calendar highlight please click the link here: <https://communityrail.org.uk/events-training/community-rail-awards/>

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - CLCRP

Blackburn Rail Station

Pre pandemic, Community Rail Lancashire had strong links with Crosshill Special School in Blackburn and working on an art project for Blackburn Rail Station was a great way of rebuilding connection. In June 2021 our community rail Special Educational Needs Officer, visited the school to deliver a rail safety workshop followed up by a rail experience day once the artwork has been installed. In addition to learning important safety the students created artwork for the 2 metre long 'Welcome to Blackburn' sign, which was installed on Thursday 10th March and provides a wonderful colourful welcome to those visiting Blackburn and the railway Station.



Simon Clarke installing the Welcome sign



The Fantastic Plastic signs in place on Blackburn station

After being awarded a grant from the Community Rail Development Fund (CRDF) a project called 'Fantastic Recycled Plastic' has seen Community Rail Lancashire Officers work with Newfield School, a secondary school for pupils with varying physical and educational needs in Blackburn. Working in partnership with a local artist, it was decided that the children would develop an art project that promoted sustainability and rail travel. After initial discussions between the school and artist the Fantastic Plastic project was born. Utilising the plastic from milk bottles, the plastic was melted down and made into tiles that were used to form a piece of artwork. The artwork has now been completed and will be showcased at Blackburn Railway Station with a replica displayed at the school.

Due to the fact that many of the Children at Newfield school have some profound disabilities that can prevent them from travelling on public transport without adequate support, the Community Rail Lancashire team will liaise with staff and parents and in partnership with Northern will produce a directory of contacts that will make travelling by train safe and accessible for all. This can then be used by the school any time they wish to travel with the pupils.

Darwen Rail Station – Back on Track Project

The launch of this project took place in June 2021 and now provides Darwen Rail Station with some beautiful and inspirational art work. Working with Child Action North West, the project that actually took place during the autumn of the pandemic provided the young people the opportunity to think about the impact that lockdown was having on their lives both the highs and the lows and their hopes for the future. An inspirational piece of artwork that now shines at Darwen Stations and one that hopefully instils hope, confidence, ambition and potential in everyone who sees it. A short video about the installation can be seen here <https://youtu.be/56qyVM5IZO0>

Blackburn, Darwen and Entwistle Stations

These stations have recently been installed with posters to promote the local cycling and walking network across the borough. All stations now have information on how local residents and visitors can freely download the local cycling app and walking app, showcasing local cycling and walking events in the area.

Melanie Taylor, Chair CLCRP, March 2022

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - ELCRP

Accrington Station

CRL has been working with The Bahja Initiative and IMO (Inspire Motivate Overcome) on a wellness project for women in Accrington. Both these charities are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the people in their communities by collaborating with various organisations to provide new opportunities. A series of informal sessions took place at a local community centre and at the Bunker at Accrington Station. These included workshops on mental health and wellbeing, diet and nutrition, exercise, and travel for leisure. The women were given the opportunity to learn how to travel by train with confidence and for the purpose of improving their physical and mental health by walking and using the train to travel for leisure instead of the car. The sessions were a success, and more are planned for some groups in Blackburn and Burnley.

Brierfield Station

On Thursday 2nd December 2021, in partnership with the Connecting East Lancashire Project and supporting partners, Northern and Pendle Borough Council, Community Rail Lancashire Officers launched a celebratory event to showcase the Pennine Cycleway and hidden gems that can be appreciated from Brierfield Station. A new Cycle Shelter showcasing some of the most picturesque locations around Brierfield Station was unveiled, featuring many local residents, businesses and community organisations. A news item covering the event can be viewed here: <https://communityrailancashire.co.uk/news/connecting-brierfield-launch/>



The unveiling of the cycle shelter artwork on Brierfield station

Nelson and Colne College

This academic year, CRL are working with the Business Studies Year 1 cohort at the college. The students have visited the Bunker to learn about how a not for profit organisation operates and also have some upcoming careers talks planned. In the New Year, the students will be planning an event at either Nelson station or on a train on the East Lancs line to encourage more people to use the train.

Rose Grove Station for Padiham

Working with local creative film company Hucklebury Films, a film was produced highlighting a walk from Rose Grove station to the Memorial in Padiham, a 2.5 mile walk with plenty to see along the way. The walk takes you along canals and the Padiham Greenway. See also page 20.

We have also been working on a project based on the life and work of Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth with Padiham Green Primary School. She is one of the women who features in the booklet 'Discover Amazing Women By Rail' and we hope to use this project to promote leisure travel to Rose Grove and Padiham to visit Gawthorpe Hall, the home of Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth. This will be launched during 2022.

Melanie Taylor, Chair ELCRP, March 2022

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - SFLCRP

Along with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the other three Lancashire CRPs, the South Fylde Line CRP was formally re-accredited by the Department for Transport (DfT), recognising the hard work of both the paid staff and volunteers along the line.

The CRP was part of the project team for a Restoring Your Railway project to enhance the service frequency along the line. The first stage was to produce a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which has been submitted to the DfT. A grant towards the cost of the SOBC was secured from the Community Rail Network's Community Rail Development Fund.

In December 2021 the CRP along with CRL and the other Lancashire CRPs submitted a response to the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF) consultation on the December 2022 timetables.

The CRP has continued to be very active despite social distancing and other restrictions. Volunteers have continued to care for and maintain 'their' stations. The line enjoyed a successful year of community activities and far fewer service disruptions. Higher numbers on platforms indicate greater confidence and usage which bodes well for the future.

The colourful Hidden Gems artwork funded by St Anne's Town Council was unveiled by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. At the same time, they unveiled eye-catching carved twin owls which had been created by a local woodcarver who made the most of a left-over tree stump



The hand carved owls



Unveiling the new Moss Side history poster

History Posters depicting the development of stations over time were installed at St Anne's, Moss Side, Lytham and Salwick and one is shortly to be installed at Squires Gate.

CRL staff work with pupils from Pear Tree School to create artwork to brighten up a blank wall on the platform at Kirkham & Wesham station.

Several stations along the line gained prestigious In Your Neighbourhood Awards presented by North West in Bloom.

The Christmas trees made from discarded pallets made a welcome return for a festive display enhanced by decorated wooden ornaments created by members of the Memories Club.

Several stations engaged with national Community Rail Week by staging events and displaying posters with 'green' messages. Both Fylde Borough Council and St. Anne's Town Council have supported projects and activities at several stations along the line.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - SFLCRP

The Friends of Squires Gate station have a licence from Network Rail for the overgrown disused platform and work there has continued at a pace as they create wildlife-friendly habitats, attractive planting and signage detailing aspects of the station's history. In addition, the CRP continues to work with several stakeholders to progress step-free access at the station.

A number of volunteers continue to offer their services at other stations, sharing equipment and ideas as well as helping to develop a community spirit along the line. A new Station Adoption group has been created at Kirkham & Wesham station.

St Anne's station volunteers hosted station adopters from Romiley station and have shared their activities with other station groups through Northern's Station Adopters Facebook page.



The Friends of Romiley Station at St. Anne's-on-the-Sea station

CRL commissioned a local film company Huckleberry Films to make series of films under the banner of 'Explore Lancashire by Rail' and the CRP launched a video 'walk' from Lytham station to St Anne's station as part of the series. Click on the following link to view the walk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC7CtK2ZJJ0>

ICG a local marketing company based in Preston has been commissioned to help promote all the 'Explore Lancashire by Rail' videos and CRL's Simon Clarke took part in a broadcast on Radio Lancashire's Sunday Show.

Every station on the South Fylde Line now has a Facebook page where appropriate service messages provide useful information for rail users and station volunteers. The reach and usage of these pages have increased using the Government's Welcome Back Funding to improve postings and increase community engagement.

The CRP working with CRL have continued to produce pocket-sized timetables which are distributed to retail outlets, businesses, restaurants and hotels along the line. Work has also started on a new leaflet to help promote the attractions along the South Fylde Line and this should be launched during Community Rail Week in May 2022.

Tony Ford, Chair SFLCRP, March 2022

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - WoLCRP

As reported elsewhere in this report I was very pleased that the West of Lancashire CRP was successfully re-accredited by the DfT for another year. Although the CRP covers two lines, (Manchester) Wigan Wallgate to Southport and Preston to Ormskirk (Liverpool) lines. This year's focus has been on the Preston to Ormskirk line to help the recovery of passenger confidence in the line as Covid restrictions eased. Below are some of the highlights.

The continuing adoption, by Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School, of the disused platform at the Burscough Junction station under licence from Network Rail has seen the school working with local artist Karen Allerton and CRL's Caroline Holden on a project called 'Positive Train of Thought' project. The project saw pupils, replanting tubs and tyres on the platform, developing artwork and bee and bug hotels which are now on display on the disused platform at the station. CRL's Shahiesta Raja also talked to the pupils about safe rail travel.

A best practice paper about the project can be viewed here: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Positive-Train-of-Thought-Report.pdf>



Pupils planting up tractor tyres on the disused platform

Examples of the bee & bug hotels

The CRP also took part in the first of the Community Rail Network's Community Rail Week by arranging a series of events at Burscough Junction Station on Monday 18th October 2021, including:

+ Launching the 'Make A Bee Line for the West Lancashire Line' line guide and poster. Full details can be viewed here: [Make a Beeline for the West Lancashire Line](#) and the new leaflet can be downloaded directly on this link: [Make A Bee Line](#)

+ Taking pupils from St John's Catholic Primary School on a 'Give the Train a Try' experience to Rufford to walk back to school along the Rufford Branch and Leeds & Liverpool canal that has recently featured in a film produced by the partnership (see below). A short film was made to mark the event can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/EFjdVp0-eNQ>. For more information a news item about the event can be read here: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/community-rail-week-starts-in-burscough-junction/>

The CRP also commissioned local film making company Huckleberry Films to make a short video describing an easy walk between Rufford and Burscough Junction stations along the Rufford Branch and Leeds & Liverpool canals. This is forming part of a series of films called Explore Lancashire By Rail. This delightful film can be viewed on this link: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lancashire-by-rail/>.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - WoLCRP

At Rufford new artwork has been installed promoting the link to Rufford Old Hall. This is the start of a project to promote attractions that can be visited from Rufford station. Rufford CE Primary School is looking to focus on promoting Mere Sands Wood nature reserve, an ancient woodland, with ponds famous for its trees and waterfowl and the school will be working with artist Karen Allerton on the project but more about that in next year's report!



One of the colourful boards installed at Rufford station

The partnership also reintroduced the very popular, credit card sized, mini timetables for the Preston to Ormskirk line. These are distributed by the station volunteers to local shops, pubs, cafes and local attractions.

In addition, the partnership has;

- + Responded to the consultation by the Manchester Recovery Task Force on the proposed December 2022 timetable changes. In particular, the response highlighted concerns raised by users of the Southport to Manchester service.
- + Responded through CRL to GBRTT's WISP (Whole Industry Strategic Plan) consultation.
- + Installed a branded CRL branded community notice board at Bescar Lane at the request of the station adoption group.

COMPANY DIRECTORS

Community Rail Lancashire currently has six directors and they can be contacted by email to the Chair on richard.watts.crl@gmail.com. The six directors are:

Richard Watts - CRL Chair

Simon Clarke - CRL Secretary

Tony Ford - CRL Vice Chair & Chair of South Fylde Line CRP

Gerald Townson - Chair of Leeds - Morecambe CRP Ltd.

Melanie Taylor - Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council & Vice Chair of Joint Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire CRPs

Mike Cliffe - Rail Development Manager, Lancashire County Council

If you think you have what it takes to join the CRL Board then please contact the Chair on the email address above.

EDUCATION TEAM

It has been another great year for the Community Rail Lancashire Education Team, who were delighted to receive several awards in Southampton in December. A first for *100 Women 100 Journeys* in the Best Community Engagement project, Second for *Bonded together with a Prayer Bead* in the Involving Diverse Groups category and a joint third for *Along the Line* in the Community Creative Projects & Station Arts category.

In addition to delivering projects which bring our diverse communities to the railway, the team have engaged with over 1500 primary and secondary school pupils both in school settings and on train trips. Ten schools on the Bradford to Leeds via New Pudsey line which has seen a spike in trespassing have been engaged with. Two of these schools have also adopted New Pudsey and Bramley Stations. In addition, Burscough Junction has been adopted by a school in the west. Projects have also taken place with Rufford C of E School and Padiham Green C of E Primary. Blackburn and Nelson & Colne colleges have also engaged with CRL to enthuse young people into careers in the rail industry. CRL has continued to support Northern's Business apprentices, who are working on improving Burnley Central Station's image this year as well as attending the trip to Accrington Mosque on World Hijab Day (see also page 25).



The apprentices at Burnley Central



Artist Karen Allerton with Rufford Primary School

Autism Friendly Line

In order to develop the Autism Friendly Line's reach a series of films have been created to give people the opportunity to look around the station before travelling. These films are being used in rail safety and rail confidence sessions and are proving to be a very effective way of reducing anxiety about rail travel for autistic people and others (see also page 23).

In addition, Katie Douglas secured a grant from the Northern Accessibility Fund to develop an interactive 360 degree station environment for Blackburn and Manchester Victoria and is representing CRL at Knowledge Transfer's Rail Innovation Exhibition to speak about her role in the development of 'Serious Games' (virtual reality apps) that are at the final stages of testing.



On the autism Friendly Line

EDUCATION TEAM

East Meets West

This project, led jointly by Karen Bennett and Shahiesta Raja, sees women from the *Stations of Welcome* women's group in East Lancashire linking up with the *Neesie Project*, based in Bradford. The two groups were brought together to build confidence, create friendships and combat loneliness after the effects of Covid-19.

The group from Bradford visited Accrington and were hosted by *Stations of Welcome* participants. Their visit consisted of a trip to the local mosque and a traditional afternoon tea. The women came together quite naturally and found things in common.

Before the trip a survey was sent out to everyone about their experiences of train travel and what they hoped to gain from the project. Almost 30% of them highlighted lack of confidence as the main reason they would not travel by train. This shows how important projects like this can be in helping people to access public transport. In March, the Accrington group headed to Bradford to visit the Media Museum and eat at the International Restaurant. The project will continue into the summer.



An East Meets West afternoon tea



At Safety Works in Newcastle

Community Rail Education Network

The Community Rail Education Network has had another action-packed year, meeting monthly to support each other and taking part in sessions on diversity and inclusion, social media and railway chaplaincy. Chair, Karen Bennett, also has become a mentor to new education officers from the South West's *Platform* programme.

The Education Network met at *Safety Works* in Newcastle in October with representatives from Community Rail Network, Cross Country, Northern, Nexus and various CRPs. In-person meetings will now take place in March, July and November each year with the months in between taking place on Teams. Maddy Mills, Education Officer at Southeast CRP will take a lead on in-person meetings in the south. Community Rail Lancashire is currently upgrading its education website and will feature a dedicated area for the network which will host resources to support officers across the UK with ideas about rail education. The Education Network was thrilled to get a 1st at the Community Rail Awards in December for Best Youth Engagement project for *Backtrack*. Last summer, officers from across the UK visited stations countrywide to hand out competition sheets.

The network is open to anyone with an interest in Education in Rail. If you would like to come along online or in-person, please contact Karen (karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com).

EXPLORE LANCASHIRE BY RAIL

Over the last twelve months a series of films has been made for Community Rail Lancashire by a local film company Huckleberry Films which are designed to encourage people to Explore Lancashire by Rail. Four films have been made so far one for each of the Clitheroe Line, the East Lancashire Line, the South Fylde Line and the West of Lancashire Line (Preston to Ormskirk) with a fifth film in the pipeline.



The old lifeboat station and windmill on Lytham Green

The films can be viewed by clicking the links below:

Clitheroe Line

[A walk from Entwistle Station](#) – around Turton/Entwistle & Wayoh Reservoirs

East Lancashire Line

[A walk from Rose Grove \(without the bridge\)](#) – a walk down the Padiham Greenway but avoiding the closed bridge.

South Fylde Line

[A walk from Lytham](#) – a linear walk from Lytham station to St. Annes-on-the-Sea station along the sea front.

West of Lancashire Line

[A walk from Burscough](#) – a walk from Burscough to Rufford along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal

BEST PRACTICE PAPERS

Community Rail Lancashire produces 'Best Practice' papers for its larger projects to help with people looking at new projects and how to celebrate the successes and avoid some of the pitfalls and how to get the best out of funding opportunities. These can be seen on the CRL website on the link below:

<https://communityrailancashire.co.uk/best-practice/>

MAKE A BEELINE & POSITIVE TRAIN OF THOUGHT

‘Make a Beeline for the West Lancashire Line’ is a brand new line guide launched by the West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (WoLCRP) and Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) at the start of Community Rail Week Monday 18th October 2021.

The leaflet invites you to explore the West Lancashire line from Preston to Liverpool via Ormskirk and seeking out the many fascinating villages, towns and cities along the route and the highlighting many things you can do along the line. The full leaflet can be viewed by clicking on this link: [Make A Bee Line](#)

As part of the Community Rail Week celebrations and based around the launch of the Make a Beeline leaflet (see photograph below), local film company Huckleberry Films were on hand to record the pupils from St. John’s Catholic Primary School, Burscough travelling by train to follow in the footsteps of the Explore Lancashire by Rail film (see page20). Setting out from Burscough Junction the pupils made throe way to Rufford and then walked back to Burscough along the Rufford branch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Although the day turned out to be very wet the pupils thoroughly enjoyed their day exploring the canal and the sights that can be seen. You can watch the film by clicking this link <https://youtu.be/EFJdVp0-eNQ>

Being ‘bee friendly’ at Burscough Junction Station

Pupils from St. John’s Catholic Primary School in Burscough worked with community artist, Karen Allerton, on a project called ‘Positive Train of Thought’. This was developed as an art, environmental and well-being project to help the pupils back into school following its closure due to the Covid pandemic and also to kick start their involvement once again in looking after the disused platform at Burscough Junction station. The project used the bee-friendly theme and a series of decorated bee/bug hotels have been produced and are now on the platform. A recycled plastic toolbox/seat has also been installed with funding coming from Network Rail and the Community Rail Network’s Small Grants Fund.



St John’s RC Primary School launching the leaflet at Burscough Junction Station on 18th October 2021



St. John’s RC Primary School pupils acknowledge the approach of a train



One of the new bug hotels on the disused platform

SHIFTING SANDS

Shifting Sands is an art project that was launched on Friday 4th February 2022 at Lytham Hall on the Fylde Coast. The project has seen local artist Nicky Thompson create a series of artwork for posters in the style of the railway posters of the 30s, 40s & 50s. The works are displayed on a trail around the 78 acre grounds of the stunning Georgian Lytham Hall and are available to be seen until September 2022.



The images above are just a small sample of the artwork created by Nicky Thompson and the rest can be seen on the Community Rail Lancashire website at <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/shifting-sands/>. A short film was been made on Launch Day at Lytham Hall and this can be seen on YouTube on this link: <https://youtu.be/P3YLwBkS7js>.



This project was part funded by a grant from the Department of Transport's Community Rail Development Fund, Fylde Council, Lytham Hall and Community Rail Lancashire.

**Photographs, other images and downloads in this report courtesy of:
Simon Clarke, Nicky Thompson, Paul Bigland, Paul Nettleton, Caroline Holden,
Caroline Eccles, Karen Allerton, Katie Douglas, Tony Ford, Mark Lenton, Shahiesta Raja,
Source Creative, Karen Bennett, Richard Vince and Castelli & Co/Nylander Shaw**

AUTISM FRIENDLY LINE

The Autism Friendly Line, between Blackburn and Manchester via Todmorden, was launched back in July 2019. A partnership between CRL, Northern and the National Autistic Society saw this innovative idea come to fruition with a number of Northern conductors trained to assist passengers with autism and other additional needs, and comprehensive information booklets are now available for the line by downloading them from the website on this link: [Autism Friendly Line](#).

This year in order to develop the Autism Friendly Line's reach a series of films have been created by a local Rossendale company Huckleberry Films, to give people the opportunity to look around the station before travelling. These films are being used in rail safety and rail confidence sessions and are proving to be a very effective way of reducing anxiety about rail travel for autistic people and others.

"I've just watched the Blackburn video, it's really good. I'm not on the spectrum but I would've found the video useful when I first started using the train by myself! The concept's a great idea... having an online video of a station makes perfect sense." **Patrick Southern, Community Rail Network.**



A view of platform 4 at Blackburn station

You can view the films on the Autism Friendly Line YouTube channel by scanning this QR code:



Or you can see them on the CRL website by clicking this link: [Autism Friendly Line](#)

DALESRAIL 2021

With some relief, the DalesRail service was reintroduced in 2021 after last year's service was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. This year Lancashire Rail Ramblers decided to adopt a cautious approach and started their guided walks' programme from the beginning of June. Because of the continuing uncertainties surrounding the course of the pandemic, it was decided not to organise connecting buses from the train.



Ribbleshead Station



Arten Gill

Unfortunately, the season didn't run smoothly as six trains were cancelled due to COVID infections among rail staff at Blackpool Traincrew Depot and a shortage of staff resulting from the Sunday voluntary working contract under which Northern drivers operate to the west of the Pennines. At least a few days' notice of cancellations was given which meant walks' leaders and potential passengers weren't too inconvenienced.



Lending a helping Hand

Despite its unpredictability and ongoing concerns about Covid, the DalesRail service was surprisingly well supported with an average of 100 passengers using the train each week from Preston onwards. The Class 158 trains were well received by passengers. The weather was kind, the guided walks well supported and there was a welcome increase in day trippers. The ratio of walkers to day trippers was around 66:34. Had the service run consistently the average loadings would almost certainly have been higher.

Craig Ward, November 2021

WORLD HIJAB DAY 2022

Community Rail Lancashire participated in World Hijab Day on Tuesday 1st February 2022. World Hijab Day is an annual event founded by Nazma Khan in 2013, taking place on 1st February each year in 140 countries worldwide. Its stated purpose is to encourage women of all religions and backgrounds to wear and experience the hijab as a way to promote understanding and cohesion.

CRL's Stations of Welcome Women's group met at Burnley Manchester Road Station to help participants wear the hijab. The hijab is a head scarf worn by many Muslim women and has a huge significance in the lives of many Muslim women who chose to wear it as a sign of their faith. Over the years it has caused many debates and discussions and has been banned by some governments around the world. World Hijab Day helps to promote understanding and community cohesion by encouraging non-Muslim and Muslim women to try out a hijab for the day. The CRL team and members of Northern staff, as well as many visitors and Community Rail Officers from other Community Rail Partnerships travelled from Burnley to Accrington wearing their hijabs and walked to Raza Jamia Mosque as part of the experience.



Starting out at Burnley Manchester Road, Northern Apprentices, Ro Chantler & Karen Bennett at the mosque

For many this was their first visit to a mosque and what an amazing mosque to visit. A new building in Accrington that was built in 2017. The construction is a huge building that serves its local Muslim population of Accrington. It is used for regular worship as well as weddings and funerals. It is a place to sit quietly and contemplate and to celebrate. Jemshad Ahmed was kind enough to lead the tour of the mosque and explained the uses of the building and the thoughts behind its construction.

Some of the comments from the day were:

“It was fascinating to see a mosque from the inside. I had never been before, and it is such a beautiful building.”

“It was fantastic to get an insight into what a mosque is like and what it means to the community.”

“Such a welcoming visit to the mosque. I learned such a lot about the community that are involved in using the space.”

“Wearing the hijab made me feel safe. I don't like being looked at and it made me feel like people weren't looking at me.”

“It's amazing how a piece of fabric can make such a difference to the way we look! I didn't recognise my colleague!”

The day was a huge success and will hopefully be the first of many World Hijab Days and visits to the mosque!

SPONSORSHIP

This year has seen very little sponsorship taking place due to the Covid pandemic. None of the usual beer festivals took place and the Colne Rhythm & Blues Festival was cancelled with the threat of this being a permanent thing. It has now come to light that it has been rescued in a smaller format and hopefully CRL will once again be involved.

The one thing that CRL did sponsor was the Small Projects (under £500) category at the Community Rail Awards, and this was won by the Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership, Greater Anglia Asset Team and Dura Composites Ltd for the West Runton Station Sign Restoration - congratulations to them!

CRL WEBSITES & SOCIAL MEDIA

The two Community Rail Lancashire websites have continued to attract visitors to their pages even throughout the difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic. Details of the last 12 months can be see below:

communityraillancashire.co.uk

Users	Visits	Pages
24,226	32,410	64,260

TOP FIVE PAGES

Home page
DalesRail
The Bentham Line
News
DalesRail Timetable

downtheline.org.uk

Users	Visits	Pages
2,619	3,166	6,342

TOP FIVE PAGES

Home page
Projects
Autism Friendly Line
Toolkit
Backtrack

The CRL Twitter account @crl_live has seen 254 Tweets over the last 12 months with 1,077 followers, 144 of which are new, and 12,934 profile views where other Twitter users have visited the @crl_live profile for more information.

The Instagram account crl_live has 188 followers and there have been 115 posts over the last year.

CRL GUIDED WALKS

Following the relaxation of the covid restrictions the programme of CRL guided walks were reintroduced. The walks all start and end at a station in the East Lancashire area and are all led by experienced walk leaders. The walks are roughly every two weeks and alternate between a Tuesday and a Saturday.

John Barnes of the Lancashire Rail Ramblers very kindly reconnoitres the walks and grades them accordingly. A colourful leaflet is produced with a description of each walk, including length, grade, starting point and time of start.

The current programme can be downloaded here: [CRL Guided Walks](#)



TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS

Over the past year, Community Rail Lancashire have engaged with TransPennine Express in a number of ways. TPE supported the winning Backtrack Anti-trespassing competition by hosting a group of officers from CRL, Yorkshire Coast and the British Transport Police at Hull Station August. See also page 10.



Karen Bennett, lead Community Rail Education Officer with CRL spoke at the TPE Communities conference on 20th October 2021. Funding from TPE will also be supporting the branding and website upgrade of the CRL education offer website through their core funding to Community Rail Lancashire.

AVANTI WEST COAST

Preston Station: Improvements to Facilities at Platform 3C & 4C

Avanti West Coast have recently approved a project to add to the ambiance and improve the facilities provided for passengers using Platforms 3c & 4c at the far south of the station. The trains from Colne (The East Lancashire Line) arrive at these platforms and trains to Ormskirk (The West Lancashire Line) depart from here and the facilities are currently very poor with little seating or signage. The project being led by Lancashire County Council in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire will include seating with planters made from recycled plastic, hanging baskets to compliment those already that already feature at the station and notice boards to provide more useful information for travellers.



A Northern 156 unit sits in Preston's platform 4C



The very dismal south end of Preston station

Preston Station: Artwork Project

There are plans in development to create artwork at the Butler Street car park entrance into Preston Station. This will involve a local secondary school or college and will be looking at the fantastic career opportunities available in the rail industry and featuring local Preston sites; hoping to widen the knowledge of young people to the roles with rail and highlight the gems in the locality.

OTHER PROJECTS

BSL Interpreted Rail Confidence Programme

Towards the end of 2021 CRL were thrilled to receive a grant from the Northern Seed Corn fund to further develop the BSL interpreted rail experience trips and to undertake some research to have a better understanding of the challenges that BSL users experience. This research will enable us to support this demographic more effectively and, we hope, see an increase in the number of BSL users who become independent rail passengers.

With the impact of the pandemic on rail travel rail companies are understandably focussing on encouraging passengers to 'get back on track'. More specific to our territory, Northern are imploring "the people of the North!" to "Go Do Your Thing".

This project will, in a small way, help some of those who need a little extra support to do just that. The Deaf community is close-knit and by empowering a small number of BSL users who are respected in their communities, we can reasonably expect that a 'ripple effect' (through word-of-mouth and organic peer-supported journeys) will result in a larger number of people becoming (more) confident rail passengers.



On the train to Morecambe



Enjoying Morecambe station

A recent BSL-supported railway confidence trip to Morecambe saw a group travelling from Preston Station to Morecambe (see photos above) and was led by Katie Douglas CRL's Special Educational Needs Officer and supported by local Deaf Link Workers who are keen to support this work.

New Branded Poster cases

One of the ways that Community Rail Lancashire gets information out to the travelling public is by having branded poster cases on stations and each year we look for new sites or places where additional structures can be installed. This year has seen new boards going up at Moss Side, Salwick, Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Bescar Lane stations and additional boards going in at Colne and Clitheroe.



Colne Station



Bescar Lane Station



Clitheroe Station

OTHER PROJECTS

Preston Station: Dick Kerr Ladies

This project was instigated when Avanti West Coast was invited to support the making of a new film called 'Granny' about the Dick, Kerr Ladies, a very successful ladies football team, focussing on one particular player, Lizzy Ashcroft and the story of her connection with her grandson.

Community Rail Lancashire were approached by Avanti to support this venture and have been delighted to learn more about this part of Lancashire heritage. The story has inspired Avanti to name one of their trains 'Dick, Kerr Ladies' (the event is still to take place) and a youth engagement project has taken place this quarter.

Katie Douglas, CRL Special Educational Needs Officer, has worked with a group of Supported Internship Students based at County Hall to create a series of postcards about the Dick, Kerr Ladies. The group have visited the National Football Museum in Manchester, taking a tour of the Deepdale Stadium, hearing from Gail Newsham, historian and author of books on the Dick, Kerr Ladies and working with a local artist. At the Remembrance Service at the station in Nov 2021 Gail Newsham provided words on the fund raising the team did for WWI veterans (<https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/dick-kerr-ladies/>)



This story is inspiring for encouraging inclusive attitudes within sport and wider society, overcoming challenges and people's perceptions of propriety and the widening of horizons as demonstrated by the extensive travel the DKLs story explores.

There will be a showcase of the film taking place during the summer and through funding from Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) the project has been able to extend its reach to another great football town, Blackburn.

CRL is now collaborating with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust Veteran groups and a youth group to travel by train and bus to Preston North End to attend the premier and acquaint and raise confidence using public transport, particularly the train.

CRL has been introduced to About Time Dance Company who have created a dance about the Dick Kerr Ladies (DKL) 'Unfit for Women' which will be shown at the premier of the film. In addition, a workshop around the issues for women following the ban of professional women's football in 1921, reinstated 50 years later in 1971 will also take place.

This is an opportunity for groups from Preston and Blackburn to get together and learn from each other's stories and the premier of the Granny film will be an opportunity to raise the profile of not only the inspiring story of the DKL but women's football in Lancashire.

Rufford Station to Mere Sands Wood:

Instigated with the Friends of Rufford Station and Rufford Primary School, Year 6 pupils have worked alongside Karen Allerton, a local community artist to develop wonderful artwork that reflects the 'Hidden Gem' of Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve. A digital leaflet has been created using the children's artwork, reflecting the wide range of flora and ancient woodland, wildlife and waterfowl this habit has to offer and to promote the route from the station. The route and site are to be featured on the cycle shelter on Platform 1, as well as Dibond displays, with the unveiling and launch of the leaflet on April 22nd.

OTHER PROJECTS

Fantastic Plastic

A recent project called Fantastic Recycled Plastic has seen the East Lancashire CRP along with team members from Community Rail Lancashire working with Newfield School and local artist Alastair Nicholson.

Newfield School is a secondary school for pupils with varying physical and educational needs in Blackburn – see <https://www.newfield.org.uk/> for more information about the school. The school acquired some funding in 2020 for a community-based project but were unable to start anything over the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it's resulting restrictions.

They approached local artist, Alastair Nicholson, who they have worked with before, for some ideas on a community project that would benefit the school and it's community. As train travel is not something that the pupils who attend the school find particularly easy, it was suggested that CRL may be able to help the school and support some kind of community initiative.

The idea for an art project that would promote sustainability and rail travel and somehow allow the school to part of the wider community was thought of. Fantastic Recycled Plastic came about after a discussion with school and artist. The idea was that a unique piece of artwork would be produced by the pupils using recyclable plastic. The plastic came from milk bottles that would be melted down and made into tiles that would then be formed into a piece of artwork that has been displayed on Blackburn Station and a replica will be displayed at the school. This complements a piece of work that was produced by the young people at NightSafe and is currently displayed at the Blackburn Station.



The Fantastic Plastic artwork in place encouraging people to recycle, reuse & regenerate

Many of the pupils at Newfield School have some profound disabilities that can prevent them from travelling on public transport without adequate support. As part of the project CRL will liaise with the staff, parents and pupils as well as Northern to produce a directory of contacts that will make travelling by train safe and accessible for all concerned. This can then be used by the school any time they wish to travel with the pupils. It will also fit in with the school's Life Skills curriculum where the pupils are taught how to use public transport with confidence. The aim is to organise a train trip for some staff and pupils, with their parents in order build the confidence of all the participants.

WHO'S WHO

Richard Watts	Partnership Secretary & Chair Community Rail Lancashire Ltd.	richard.watts.crl@gmail.com 07487 699341
Simon Clarke	Community Rail Development Officer	simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com 07399 563599
Caroline Holden	Community Rail Development Officer	caroline.holden.crl@gmail.com 07973 312844
Karen Bennett	Community Rail Education Development Officer	karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com 07365 138233
Katie Douglas	Special Needs Education Officer	katie.douglas.crl@gmail.com 07490 771857
Shahiesta Raja	Community Rail Education Development Officer	shahiesta.raja.crl@gmail.com 07366 799979
Melanie Taylor	Chair Joint CL & ELCRPs	melanie.taylor@blackburn.gov.uk 01254 585687
Tony Ford	Chair SFLCRP	tonyford19@gmail.com 07831 415482
Marion Atkinson	Chair WoLCRP	marion.atkinson@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk 0151 3301027

Along with the core members of the management groups there are a number of other industry members who regularly attend the meetings along with representatives from local councils, Station Managers and from local Rail User Groups and Friends of Stations.

Owain Roberts	Regional Stakeholder Manager (West)	owain.roberts@northernrailway.co.uk 07583 087862
Martin Keating	Regional Community & Sustainability Manager (West)	martin.keating@northernrailway.co.uk 07500 447392
Simon Abbott	Regional Community & Sustainability Manager (Central)	simon.abbott@northernrailway.co.uk 07971 831442
Danielle Lahan	Community Rail Team, Network Rail	danielle.lahan@networkrail.co.uk 07710 964170
Devon Wall	Community Rail Team, Network Rail	devon.wall@networkrail.co.uk 07701 064801
Ian Davis	Operations Officer, North Community Rail Network	ian@communityrail.org.uk 07376 124962

Funding for the projects highlighted in this report has been received from a number of sources including: Community Rail Lancashire, the DfT's Community Rail Development Fund, the Community Rail Network's Small Grants Fund, Northern's Seed Corn & Station Adoption Funds, Network Rail, Merseyrail, Merseytravel and Transport for Greater Manchester