



Community Rail Lancashire Newsletter

April 2026



Wow—what a busy and exciting few months it has been at Community Rail Lancashire! From organising visits for hundreds of schoolchildren aboard the Inspiration Train across the North West, to celebrating success at the Community Rail Awards, it's been a fantastic period of activity and achievement.

We've also been proud to support a range of exhibitions and workshops at Haworth Art Gallery and Clitheroe Castle Museum, helping to bring communities together through creativity and local heritage.

All in all, it's been a brilliant start to our 25th anniversary celebrations of Community Rail in Lancashire, and there's plenty more to come!

Read more about our anniversary year here -

<https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/25-years-of-community-rail-in-lancashire/>

Stay up to date with all the latest CRL news and stories by visiting:

 [CRL News Updates](#)

Annual Report 2025

Community Rail Lancashire are delighted to present its annual report for 2025. You can read more about the report and download a copy here:



LancsCAN (Lancashire Climate Action Network)

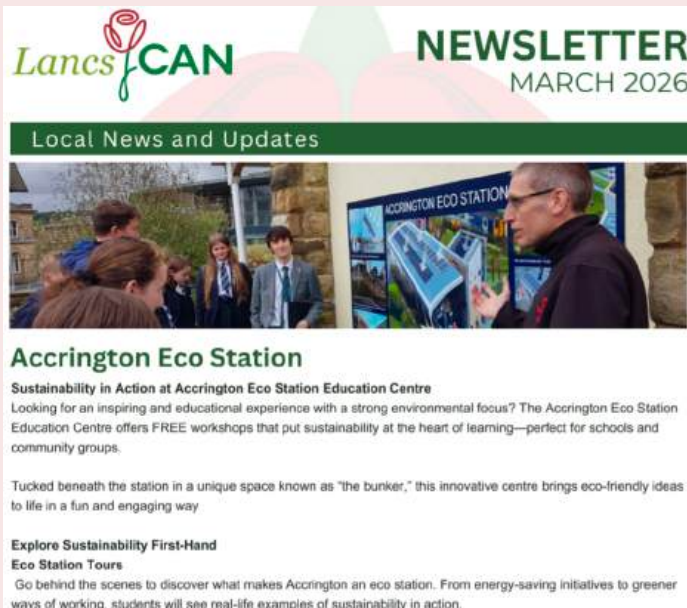
Lancashire Climate Action Network is a county-wide partnership working to mobilise Lancashire's community voice and action on climate change. Its aim is to bring organisations and communities together to collaboratively advance the county's climate agenda.

Community Rail Lancashire is proud to be part of this network, supporting shared goals around sustainability and environmental awareness.

Last month, Dave attended the LancsCAN conference in Lancaster, contributing to discussions on local climate action and partnership working. Richard also continues to play an active role as part of the leadership team.

Our work at Accrington Eco Station was also featured in the March LancsCAN newsletter, highlighting the ongoing impact of community-led environmental initiatives. The newsletter can be viewed here:

<https://sites.edgehill.ac.uk/lancscan/news-blogs/newsletters/>



Success at the Community Rail Awards 2026

Thursday 19 March 2026 saw the annual National Community Rail Awards ceremony take place in Derby, bringing together community rail partnerships from across the country to celebrate achievement and best practice.

Community Rail Lancashire were delighted to return home with two first-place awards. The first award recognised *“The Clitheroe Line: A Picturesque Railway Journey”*, delivered by Community Rail Lancashire in partnership with Arts2Heal. The project won in the **Community Creative Projects and Station Arts (Large Group)** category, sponsored by Avanti West Coast.

The second award was for *“The English Queen”*, a collaboration between Community Rail Lancashire and Lancashire Archives, which won in the **Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability** category, sponsored by Northern.

Several members of the team attended the ceremony in Derby to accept the awards on behalf of all partners involved.

Church and Oswaldtwistle Rotary Club and the Friends of the Station were commended with a Silver award in the “It’s Your Station” category, recognising their dedication to improving the local railway station. Their achievement highlights the positive impact of community volunteers in creating a welcoming and well-cared-for space for all.

👉 **Read more:**

<https://communityrail.org.uk/hall-of-fame/2026/>



Inspiration Train returns to the North West

The Rail 200 Inspiration Train returned to the North West in January, giving around 800 students from 37 schools a unique, hands-on learning experience.

Visiting Ribble Steam Railway, Southport, Crewe, and the East Lancashire Railway, the tour welcomed students aged 7–18, including SEND groups. School visits were arranged by Community Rail Lancashire, with Dave coordinating on-site to ensure each visit ran smoothly.

Students explored interactive carriages focused on railway history, engineering challenges, and rail careers, supported by the TrainEd team. Sessions ended in the Partner Zone, with fun activities and free resources, including Arlo books and careers information.

👉 **Read more:**

<https://trained.website/community-rail-lancashire-organises-school-visits-to-the-inspiration-train-in-january/>

The Inspiration Train will return to the North West for one final time in May, visiting Stockport (1–6 May), the East Lancashire Railway (11–13 May), and Blackpool North (14–17 May). Dave will once again be coordinating school visits at each location. Please see the poster below for further details.

The poster is for the 'Inspiration Train' celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Railway Museum. It features a red header with the '200' logo and 'RAILWAY MUSEUM'. Below this, the word 'INSPIRATION' is written in large white letters, followed by 'is coming...' in a black box. The middle section shows three photos of children interacting with the train's exhibits, labeled 'Railway Firsts', 'Remarkable Roles', and 'Your Railway Future'. A green banner below these photos says 'Book your free tickets to Inspiration - the touring exhibition train telling the incredible story of our railways'. The bottom section lists what pupils will discover: 'Railway Firsts' (how railways changed everything), 'Interactive Fun' (hands-on exhibits), and 'Remarkable Roles' (interesting careers like drone pilot and ecologist). It also mentions that thousands of events have celebrated the 200th anniversary and that 87% of participants would recommend the journey. Each 60-minute tour includes games, engaging staff, and a ticket-stamping trail. The footer provides free admission details (up to 30 children per session), contact information (earlyengagement@networkrail.co.uk), a QR code to book, and the website Railway200.co.uk/Inspiration.

200 | RAILWAY MUSEUM

INSPIRATION is coming...

Book your free tickets to Inspiration
– the touring exhibition train telling the incredible story of our railways

Your pupils will discover:

- **Railway Firsts:** How railways changed everything from the food we eat to how we tell the time
- **Interactive Fun:** Get hands-on with endlessly entertaining and educational exhibits
- **Remarkable Roles:** The interesting and lesser-known careers in the railways – from drone pilot to ecologist

Thousands of events have celebrated the **200th anniversary of our railways** – now you can too! 87% would recommend this **STEM-focused** journey through the past, present and future of rail.

Each **60-minute tour** features games, engaging staff and a ticket-stamping trail (the tickets make great souvenirs!) all while learning about the wide variety of careers available on today's railway.

Free admission. Up to 30 children per session. Schools can register multiple group visits.
For more information contact: earlyengagement@networkrail.co.uk
Learn more at Railway200.co.uk/Inspiration

Book here:

‘Forged in Steam’ Exhibition Celebrates Railway Heritage

'Forged in Steam', a exhibition by Lancashire-based photographer Diane Muldowney, launched at Haworth Art Gallery in Accrington on 24 January and ran until 4th April.

Community Rail Lancashire has played an active role in bringing the exhibition to a wider audience. They have organised several school visits, giving students the opportunity to engage with the artwork and learn about railway heritage. In addition, local author Susan Bowrigg delivered a talk about her book *The Wrong Tracks*, further enriching the programme of events.

The initiative also welcomed local community groups, and Diane Muldowney hosted "meet the artist" sessions, offering visitors insight into her work and creative process. Overall, the exhibition has been a great success, attracting a diverse audience and celebrating the region's rich railway history.



World Book Week Celebrations at Clitheroe Castle

Community Rail Lancashire teamed up with Clitheroe Castle Museum and author Susan Brownrigg to provide pupils from Sudell Academy in Darwen, St Margaret's (Langho), and St James' (Clitheroe) with a memorable educational visit focused on rail travel, reading, and local heritage. Those travelling by train received a rail safety briefing and completed All Aboard activities en route, before taking part in an interactive session with Susan Brownrigg about her book *The Wrong Tracks*, inspired by the Rainhill Trials, with each class receiving a signed copy. The experience was rounded off with a guided museum tour, reading *Arlo's Adventures*, creating a fun and enriching day for all involved.

👉 **Read more:**

<https://trained.website/local-pupils-celebrate-world-book-week-with-authors-rail-safety-and-clitheroe-castle-adventure/>



Yorkshire Dales Explorer

YDE Reaches 10,000 Passengers

The Yorkshire Dales Explorer has celebrated carrying its 10,000th passenger since launching in June 2024. Mr P Metcalfe from Hellifield marked the milestone and received a complimentary Weekend Family Explorer ticket from Northern.

Running on Saturdays, the service links Greater Manchester and Lancashire with the scenic Yorkshire Dales via the Settle–Carlisle line. Extending from Rochdale to Blackburn, two trains continue through Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley to Ribbleshead.

The milestone highlights the growing popularity of this scenic route, offering a sustainable and enjoyable way to explore the Dales.

Dales Bus 80 service

The DalesBus 80 service resumed on Saturday 4 April 2026 and will run through until Saturday 17 October 2026. The service runs from Ribbleshead to Hawes and connects in both directions with the Yorkshire Dales Explorer service.

Yorkshire Dales Guided Walk Program 2026

Guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales are organised by Lancashire Rail Ramblers and led by experienced volunteer guides, offering graded routes to suit different abilities. Participants are welcome to join any walk, but safety is their own responsibility and routes may be changed depending on weather and group capability. The guided walks start from 23rd May. Click below for further details:

<https://railramblers.wordpress.com/yorkshire-dales-explorer/>



Tracks of Life: Trains, People and Places at Clitheroe Castle

11 October 2025 – 30 June 2026

A special exhibition at Clitheroe Castle Museum celebrates the life and work of Ken Roberts (1928–2024), a talented and dedicated local railway enthusiast and photographer.

The photographs on display showcase the breadth of Ken's interests and his lifelong passion for railways, capturing trains, people, and places with remarkable character and detail.

To mark 200 years of passenger rail travel, the museum also hosted a fun-packed, free All Aboard Railway Family Fun Day on Monday 16th February. The event brought together train-themed activities for all ages and complemented the exhibition perfectly.

Visitors can explore the free exhibition "Tracks of Life: Trains, People and Places", currently on display in the Steward's Gallery—an inspiring tribute to both local heritage and the enduring fascination with railways.

👉 Find out more:

<https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/all-aboard-for-a-family-fun-day-2/>



Gare Du Nord - Rail 200 Show

After more than 40 performances and a year on tour, the Fantastic Rail 200 show, performed by Gare du Nord, concluded with its final performance at Clitheroe Castle Museum on 28 March. The production, funded by Avanti West Coast, toured the country over the past year.

Community Rail Lancashire was delighted to work in partnership with the theatre group to bring the show to a range of venues, including the "bunker" at Accrington Eco Station on

two occasions, Lancashire Archives in Preston, and finally Clitheroe Castle for its closing performance.

The show offered a fantastic look back at 200 years of railway history through music, dance, and humour. The final performance was an emotional occasion for the cast.



Education Update

The education team have been busy attending career fairs, delivering safety talks, running Try the Train trips, and taking groups out on rail confidence experiences.

In addition to these activities, we continue to offer free educational sessions at Accrington Eco Station, providing students with hands-on learning opportunities and an insight into the world of rail.

 Learn more and book a session here:

[Discover Accrington Eco Station Workshops](#)

Girlguiding Cityscapes

On Saturday 21st March, Girlguiding hosted a nationwide game across five cities, with Community Rail Lancashire supporting activities at the National Railway Museum.

At the York event, girls took part in hands-on STEM activities, including designing and costing a new railway, while learning about careers in the rail industry. The event saw strong participation, with over 100 teams joining the activities and around 1,300 Girlguiding members attending from across the UK.

The day combined teamwork, creativity and learning, as girls explored railway roles, renewed their promises, and discovered future career opportunities, supported by enthusiastic leaders throughout.

👉 Find out more: <https://trained.website/girlguiding-cityscapes/>



All Aboard! Community Rail Lancashire Launches Fun Booklet for School Train Trips

Community Rail Lancashire has launched the 'All Aboard Booklet', a fun and educational resource designed for KS2 pupils travelling by train. Packed with activities such as I Spy, word searches and creative tasks, it helps turn every journey into a learning experience, with space for children to reflect on their trip.

The booklet has been generously funded by Northern Trains, supporting engaging and accessible travel for young learners. Already in use on Community Rail Lancashire lines, there are plans to expand it across the wider Northern network.

The team has also developed a helpful guide for planning school trips by train, making journeys smoother, safer and more enriching for schools.

To find out more and download a copy of the booklet click here:

<https://trained.website/all-aboard-booklets/>



Stay Connected with the Latest News and Events from the Education Team!

Our education team is always on the move—bringing you fresh updates, inspiring stories, and event highlights. Don't miss a thing!

👉 Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/trainedbycrl

👉 Check out our blog for more news: trained.website/insights-events

Whats Coming Up

12th May - West Lancs Walk with Rail Ramblers

14th May - Station Adopters Event - Preston

1st - 6th June - Community Rail Week

15th - 21st June - Rail Safety Week



Contact us

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