

friends on track

Adventures and experiences on the Settle–Carlisle line



1876 – 2026

Line-up for our 150th celebrations

Platform Pints – a new arrival
for pub lovers

Brick by Brick – breathing new
life into heritage spaces

May 2026



Scenic. Historic. Sustainable.

friends on track

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Flying High photo courtesy of Terry Callahan.

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Leander on Moorcock Bridge Garsdale.
Photo courtesy of Ian Dinmore.

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• FOOTSTEPS IN TIME •
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20th May	Stainmore Railway and Viaducts
3rd June	Limestone Botany
17th June	Navy Hike
1st July	Garsdale Remembered
15th July	Rocks and Rails
29th July	Limestone Botany
12th August	Armathwaite and Signal Box
26th August	Navy Hike
9th September	Lost Village of Thorns
23rd September	Shanty Site Tour

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Welcome

A note from our editor, David Owen, on heritage, partnership and progress...

May 1st, 1876, was the inaugural date for passenger traffic on the line, so it's timely that we recognise the vitality of the conservation work that both re-purposes and maintains our heritage. We're fortunate that The Railway Heritage Trust has supported two new projects along the line with their financial input on the new Scott & Brassey pub on Carlisle station and the remodelling of Ribbleshead Visitor Centre & café. As Railway Heritage Trust Executive Director Tim Hedley-Jones says in his article on page 16, 'We're not here to create museums or preserve stations in aspic but to respect railway heritage and find new uses for it.'

Anniversaries allow us to revisit significant milestones that inform the present day. But let's move on from looking back 150 years to the new-found collaboration between the Friends, The Trust & the DevCo. No aspic like preservative is to be found there. And without the additional investment by the Lancaster Brewery into the Scott & Brassey we couldn't enjoy its Victorian splendour, instead it would remain as a sealed up redundant space. The future depends on a joined-up dynamism to market the line. To borrow from a famous advertising campaign 'because we're worth it.'



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Settle Carlisle Railway family launch 150th anniversary year

Organisations which support and promote the Settle Carlisle Railway are working together to provide a year of celebrations to mark 150 years of passenger services along the world-famous line. The first passenger train travelled over the famous Ribbleshead Viaduct along the 73-mile line on May 1, 1876.

To mark the anniversary, the Settle Carlisle Railway ‘family’ – Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company, Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line and Settle Carlisle Railway Trust – will host a wide range of activities throughout the year, working with communities along the line.

Ribbleshead Station Café and Visitor Centre has just completed a major refurbishment and is now open to mark the start of the 2026 season. And in the summer, there will be 40th anniversary events to mark the re-opening of stations along the line.

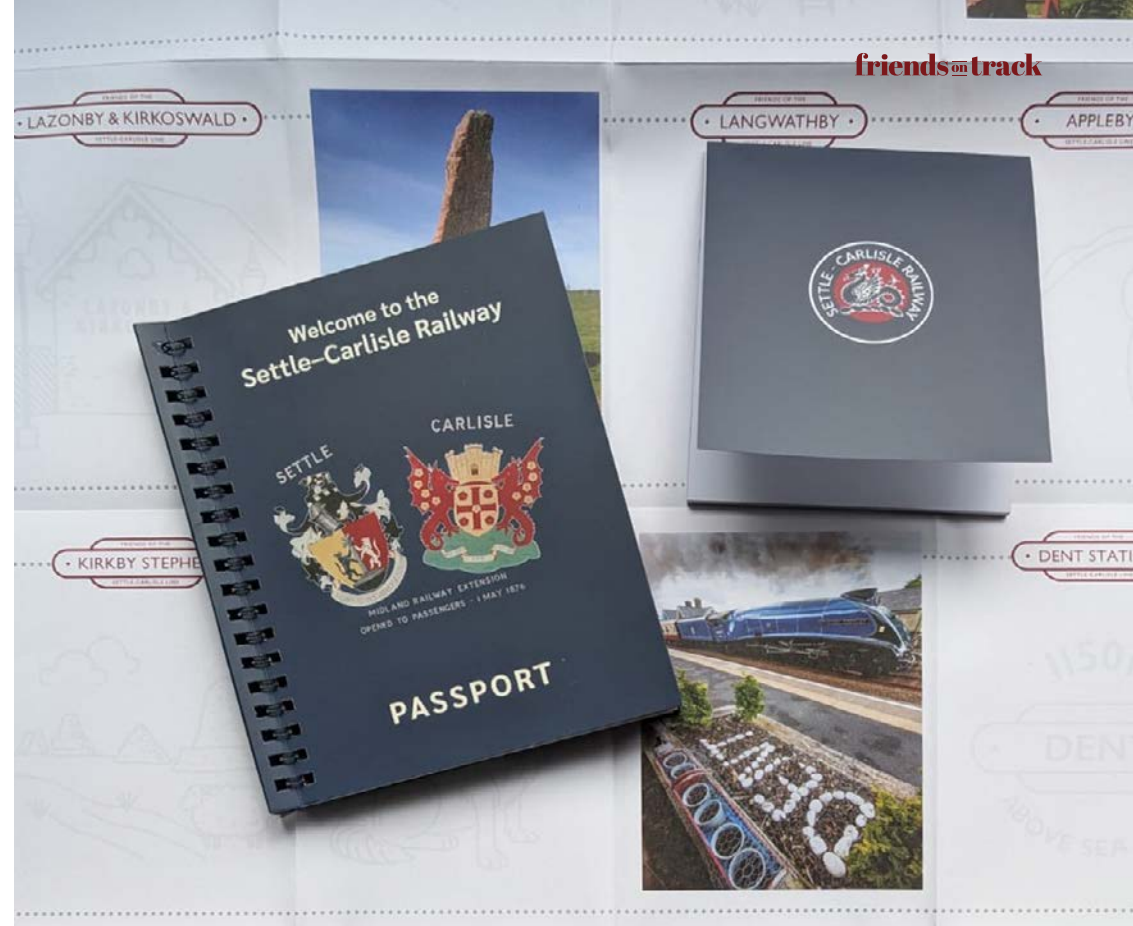
The Settle–Carlisle Railway Passport

Anna Jackson, Commercial Manager, offers travellers a unique memento to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Line.

Many famous long-distance routes have developed their own system for those embarking on the journey to capture and record their experiences – examples include the Credencial del Peregrino needed for walking the Camino de Santiago or closer to home the Coast to Coast or Southwest Coast Path passports. To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Line we have developed a beautifully illustrated

Settle–Carlisle Railway Passport which includes stunning images, family friendly ‘challenges’ to undertake on your travels and a quirky way of ‘evidencing’ that you haven’t skipped a station with a trail of stone rubbing plaques located at every stop along the line that can then be converted into a keepsake poster.

The passport also challenges people to take on a ‘150’ challenge – which could involve walking, cycling or even space hopping if you are so inclined and gives you space to record your achievements



as you go. Commercial Manager, Anna Jackson walked the Camino de Santiago a few years ago and was inspired to produce this unique memento for the line. She commented that ‘Just as with the Camino, everybody’s experience on the Settle–Carlisle will be different. Some will love the history and stories whilst others will be there to admire the beauty of the scenery. Our passport gives holders an insight into every unique station along the line, why it’s there, what it’s famous for, what they can see and do when they visit. It encourages people to step off the train and not just sail on by but venture out into the incredible countryside and

communities that border the line and challenge themselves to do something different – big or small there’s something for everyone.’

Money raised from sales of the passport will be used by the organisations supporting the line to help deliver the events and activities that hundreds of visitors come to enjoy every year, from guided walks to history talks, on train guided tours and provision of hospitality in the cafés and visitor centre.

Passports are £8.50 and can be bought from Settle and Appleby Station Shops and online from the FoSCL website.

A new play about the Settle Carlisle line has been commissioned. Local playwright Joan Barnard is working with Kirkby Stephen-based Vagabond Theatre Group, who will perform their premiere in the Public Hall, Appleby on Saturday 4 July with their second performance in The Victoria Hall, Settle on Sunday 5 July. The matinee performances will enable people to travel by train to see both performances.

Young people are the future passengers, employees and volunteers. **The Art150**

project brings together 150 primary school children from communities along the line to create a timeline with local award-winning artist Karen Babayan. The work will be displayed on all the stations along the line.

School children will also be taking part in a journey back in time, dressing in Victorian costumes to travel from Lazonby and Kirkoswald.

To recapture the age of steam when the line opened, an **anniversary Charter Steam Train** will be taking passengers from Carlisle to York on May 25, the spring bank holiday.

During the summer holidays, the line will be linking up two annual **Flower Pot Festivals**, with volunteers in Settle and Appleby coming together for workshops, and hosting their own town displays and trails.

Other events will be taking place with other organisation, including a **model railway fair** in Keighley, Settle Railway Days with Settle Church and a conference and **study day with the Midland Railway**

Society and Lancaster University.

Work is also underway for a **celebration of the food producers**, cafés and bars along the line in the autumn, and the anniversary year will be completed with Christmas activities at various stations along the line.

Chair of the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company, Pete Myers, said: “The Settle Carlisle line has a very special place in people’s hearts. It is an iconic line, with the most beautiful scenery and history. There are many opportunities for people to get involved and enjoy celebrating our 150th anniversary.”

Chair of Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line, Allison Cosgrove, said: “It’s exciting to see all the events that are planned for this year to celebrate our 150th anniversary, and we look forward to working together to showcase our Line to as many people as possible”.

Bryan Gray, Chairman of the Settle Carlisle Railway Trust, said: “The Friends, the Trust and the Development Company form a unique partnership working together with Network Rail and Northern. Over 40 years ago, Michael Portillo charged us with supporting and promoting the line. I think we can all be proud of what has been achieved as we approach this remarkable anniversary milestone.”

Events will be launched throughout the year, and the latest information will be available on the Settle Carlisle Railway social media platforms and website www.settle-carlisle.co.uk

‘I think we can all be proud of what has been achieved as we approach this remarkable anniversary milestone.’



150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

MAR/APR	Settle Carlisle Passport Launches
	Re-opening of Ribbleshead Visitor Centre & Tearoom
	Ride 2 Stride festival pre-launch walks and activities begin 28th April
MAY	1st May – Formal Anniversary
	Ride 2 Stride Festival launch at Settle Station 10am
	Events and activities at Settle including Signal Box tours
	Settle Wheelers cycle the line visiting every station from Carlisle to York Arrival back into Settle around 4pm
	25th May – Steam train Carlisle–York Train naming by Northern – Date TBC
JUNE	Formal launch at newly refurbished Ribbleshead Tearoom (see social media for dates of various daytime and evening activities)
JULY/AUG	40th Anniversary of stations re-opening – new info plaques displayed with community events
	Railway Play at Appleby 4th July and Settle 5th July
	Family Rail Fest with Settle Church 11th and 12th July
SEPT/DEC	Flowerpot trail along the line leading to Settle and Appleby flowerpot festivals
	Food Festival and Awards Conference with MRS and Lancaster Uni
	Christmas activities at various stations along the line including carol singing at Horton and Ribbleshead
	Closing Event: ‘Life on the Rails’ Documentary film red carpet preview

Follow Settle–Carlisle Railway on social media for further updates and details as they are released: www.facebook.com/FriendsSettleCarlisle



Stop all the Clocks — it's 1847

We all know that the pub trade is having a very difficult time. On average we're seeing 6–8 pubs closing or converted to other uses each week, so it'll come as a very pleasant surprise to hear that Carlisle's Citadel station is bucking that trend.

The grade II listed former first-class waiting room opened its doors on 15th February following a transformation into the wonderfully characterful Scott & Brassey pub. With rail heritage design cues first and foremost in its re-development, a major part of the original building has been brought back to life.

I went along to the opening to delve into why Lancaster Brewery see this as a timely addition to their estate. Along with additional funding from the Railway Heritage Trust (learn more about the Trust on page 16), an outstanding renovation has taken place. The Scott & Brassey name was chosen to reflect an association with two key figures related to Carlisle and the line. Scott refers to author Sir Walter Scott who married Charlotte Carpentier in 1797 in Carlisle's St Mary's Church, formally part of the truncated nave of the Cathedral. Carlisle continued to feature in his life, not least because the city is referenced in a number of his novels. He also had an association with William Wordsworth, visiting Rydal Mount on his many returns to the area.

The Brassey reference is because Thomas Brassey was the civil engineer who connected Lancaster to Carlisle. He was a giant of an engineering polymath. His civil contracting business focussed on railways, not just in Britain but also in Europe, Canada, South America & India. The eponymously named pub relates to his



One of the two Tudor style fireplaces which add so much character.



work on the line which opened between Lancaster and Carlisle in 1847, helping to make good the network from London & the south to Scotland.

The date is a clue to one of the more unusual features of the interior design – a bank of clocks on the mezzanine level wall. They are all stopped at 18:47. The overall concept is the work of interior designer Amelia Wilson of Amelia Wilson Interiors Ltd. Given its Victorian origins, and the commonly held belief that the former waiting room was visited by Queen Victoria, Amelia told me that she wanted “to develop a style that had the feel of an extravagant train carriage.” The colour palette features a gold paint known as heritage gold, a colour she felt reflected the highlights on certain steam trains and the preference that Queen Victoria had for gold (don’t we all?). The lighting design utilises a round diffuser style of shade to replicate earlier train lighting. Amelia went a little more contemporary with the pictures and photos around the walls. Whilst giving them a Victorian look, they are actually photos of some of the contracting team who worked on the project, as well as some Network Rail personnel. Something only they would know, but a nice touch in recognition of all the good work that’s gone into the project.

Whilst Lancaster Brewery MD Phil Simpson pulled the first pint, he gave some insights into how diverse the railway station customer base can be – not unlike an airport terminal. This isn’t there first station venture either, Lancaster has its own Tite & Locke pub. Maybe the clocks should stop there as well - Lancaster was built by Sir William Tite in 1846 and he was also architect on Carlisle’s Citadel station. It’s all about re-purposing the country’s heritage for modern usage in an aesthetically but commercially attractive

way. Not least because the Scott & Brassey is all part of the Carlisle Gateway project, supported by Cumberland Council, Programme Manager Andrew Sproat also attended the opening (see page 25 for the future plans). I couldn’t help complimenting him on the fantastic transformation currently underway between the station and the retail area. The pedestrian paving and street furniture oozes quality.

As if on cue, in walked the first customers. I had a word with father & daughter Thomas Michalek and Lucy Allan, on their way to a football match on Teesside. Coincidentally, Thomas had not long retired from 50 years work on the railway so a nice association with the first customer. They both thought that the transformation was ‘fantastic.’

Books and journals cited for the listing:
Bonavia, M R, Historic Railway Sites in Britain, (1987), 139

Robinson, P W, Rail Centres Carlisle, (1986)

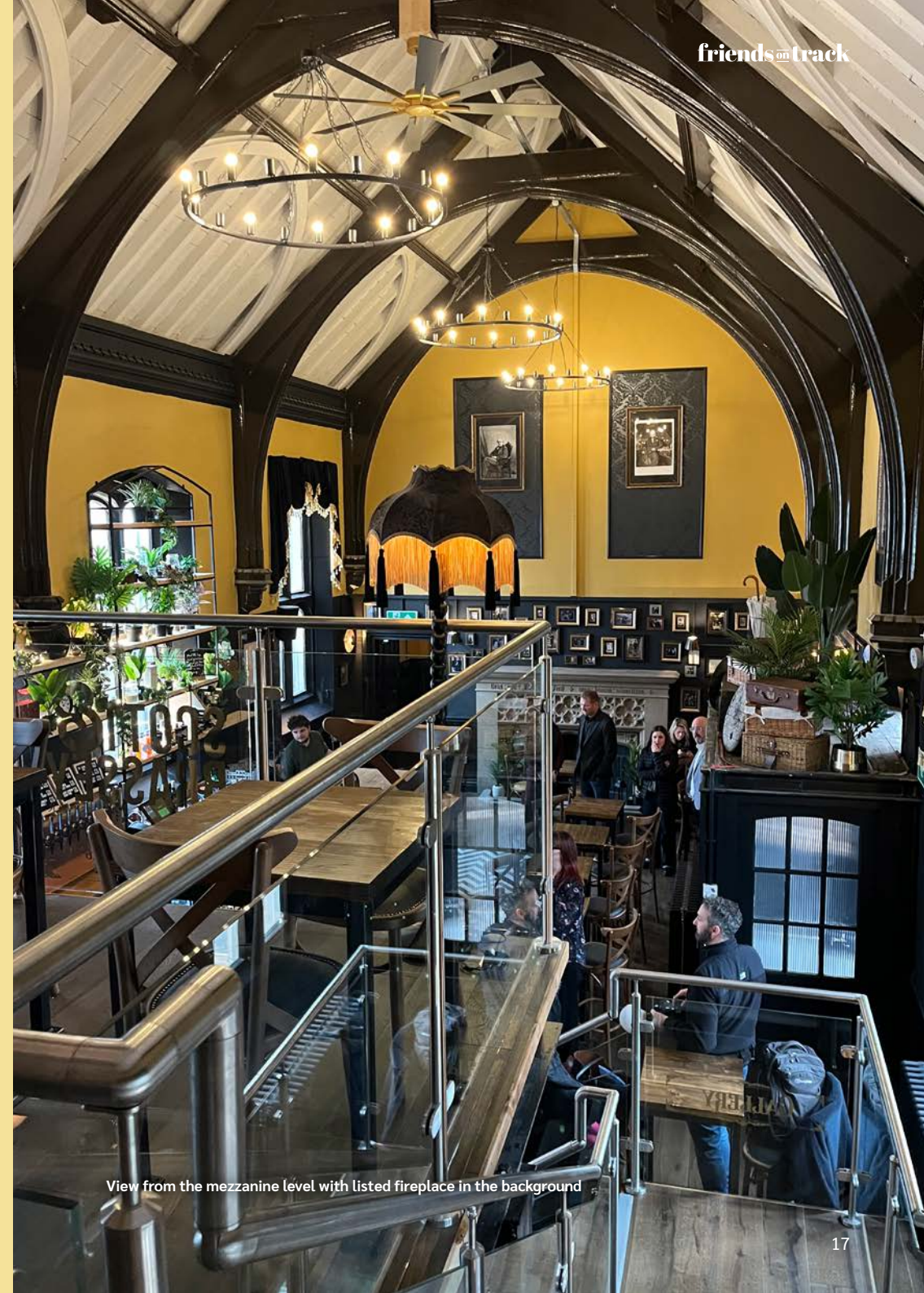
My thanks to Hannah Clarke of Network Rail for inviting FoT to the opening.

Left Top: First customers – Father & daughter Thomas Michalek & Lucy Allan

Left: Phil Simpson, MD of Lancaster Brewery pulling the first pint flanked by Maura Nelson, Network Rail Sponsor (left) & Tim Hedley-Jones, Executive Director of The Railway Heritage Trust (right).

HISTORIC ENGLAND'S LISTING ENLIGHTENS US ON THE ARCHITECTURAL MERITS

The single-storey former waiting and refreshment rooms have a series of facing gabled projections with various mullioned and canted bay windows. Under the glazed roof, which is supported on a series of hooped trusses, is a central footbridge of crossed girders linking with the island platforms. The island buildings are also of two storeys, numerous bays in a continuous row with doorways and windows in restrained Tudor style. Interior: numerous stone fireplaces in Tudor style, some in former refreshment rooms are inscribed and dated, see Bonavia (1987), for an illustration of one. For further details and removal of part of roof in 1957-8, see Robinson (1986). Detached wall for demolished roof is listed separately. The building by Tite is among the most important early major railway stations in Britain.



View from the mezzanine level with listed fireplace in the background

Heritage on the Line

TIM HEDLEY-JONES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, EXPLAINS HOW THEY HELP TO RESTORE & RE-PURPOSE THE RAIL ESTATE.

2025 was an important year of anniversaries for railways in Britain with the Railway 200 celebrations, but it also included important birthdays for the Settle & Carlisle Railway and the Railway Heritage Trust. Readers of this magazine will be familiar with the 150th anniversary of the start of freight services on the S&C, but perhaps less aware of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Railway Heritage Trust (RHT). And yet the RHT has been a key partner of the S&C ever since it was saved from closure in 1989.

The Railway Heritage Trust was founded in 1985 when British Rail agreed with heritage campaigners that it needed to have a better way of ensuring that the historic railway estate which it managed was properly cared for. The demolition

of architecturally stunning stations like Newmarket and Derby Midland led to protests that more should be done to protect our railway heritage. The RHT was therefore founded, under the Chairmanship of Sir William McAlpine, with the objective of providing grants for the restoration of historic railway buildings and structures which are listed

or in conservation areas. A secondary objective is to bring disused space in historic railway buildings back into sustainable and productive use. We have given more than 2000 grants worth over £72m in that 40-year history across England, Wales and Scotland

We want buildings and structures to be well used for the benefit of railway users and the communities they serve. We're not here to create museums or preserve

stations in aspic but to respect railway heritage and find new uses for it. Buildings which are left empty fall into decay and disrepair. In the worst cases, they become subject to vandalism and get burnt down. Nowadays, Network Rail has replaced British Rail, and they provide the Railway Heritage Trust with most of its funding to reinvest back into the national network. We have

also received a small amount of funding from the Historical Railways Estate of National Highways and this has helped us to give grants to railway heritage structures which were not transferred to the then infrastructure provider Railtrack at the time of rail privatisation. We give grants to train operating companies, charitable trusts, local authorities and

"We're not here to create museums or preserve stations in aspic but to respect railway heritage and find new uses for it."



Ribbleshead Station Master's House. Photo courtesy of Railway Heritage Trust

commercial organisations, anyone who is using and re-using railway heritage structures and buildings.

It is good that our 40th birthday coincided with the year of Railway 200. That celebration has had a real focus on what the railways have done for the country, but it has also looked ahead to how rail is still shaping our future and what railway careers there might be for young people. Like the Settle and Carlisle Railway, we celebrate our railway past but look for sustainable future uses for railway heritage.

During our 40th anniversary year, we held a travelling exhibition that highlighted forty of the most transformation projects we have supported. The exhibition was displayed at stations in York, Aberystwyth, Bristol, Edinburgh and London Waterloo. It

featured projects from the Highlands of Scotland to the hearts of our cities. Many were our favourites and showcased how looking after our railway heritage can transform places and communities. It will come as no surprise that the Settle and Carlisle Railway was one of those forty projects.

Indeed, it was the only one of those 40 entries which was a whole route rather than a specific structure or station. That is because it is a linear Conservation Area and therefore the whole route comes within our scope for awarding grants. The Railway Heritage Trust has supported many of the projects which the Station Improvement Group of the Settle & Carlisle Development Company has delivered since the railway was saved from closure. In total we have awarded over 50 grants worth more than £1.4m to



Tim Hedley-Jones, Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust

the route. Our first grant to the route was in 1988/89 when we awarded £50,000 to support restoration works to Ribbleshead Viaduct, and our first grant to a station was in 1994/95 when we awarded £10,000 to the restoration of a waiting shelter at Dent Station. Since then, we have awarded grants to all the stations along the route with the exception of Armathwaite.

Most recently we gave a grant of £52,868 to Horton-in-Ribblesdale Station to support the creation of a café and holiday let there. The Settle and Carlisle route has truly been a trailblazer in re-purposing railway buildings for new sustainable uses. We support similar projects across England, Wales and Scotland where other communities with the same pride in their localities as those along the Settle & Carlisle want to make their stations welcoming gateways to their communities and to the rail network.

And we continue to help with projects along the route. We have just awarded a grant of £18,000 to support the current improvement works at Ribbleshead. We've given grants to that station since 1997/98 when we supported roof repairs. It just goes to show that looking after our railway heritage is never a one-off, it's an ongoing commitment to good maintenance and care. The second ongoing project we are supporting is the creation of a small holiday let at the now-closed Cumwhinton Station. The Settle & Carlisle Development Company, the RHT and Network Rail are working together to make it possible to restore a platform

building and we hope to make progress on this during 2026.

I was pleased to attend the recent launch event in Settle to mark the start of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the start of passenger services on the route and I am pleased that the partnership between the railway and the Railway Heritage Trust goes from strength to strength. It is a great showcase for demonstrating the important link between railway heritage and marketing the railway for current and future users. We look forward to continuing to support the Settle & Carlisle route as we start our next forty years.

**RAILWAY
HERITAGE
TRUST**

Top Right: Horton in Ribblesdale Station. Photo courtesy of Railway Heritage Trust

Right: Cumwhinton station. Photo courtesy of Railway Heritage Trust



Yorkshire Dales inspiration for local author's acclaimed novel

When local author Chris Gill returned to live in the Yorkshire Dales as an adult in the early 2000's, he fell in love with its landscape and communities again, as he had whilst living there throughout his childhood. However, he did not think that one day he would write 'The Butcher Boys', an acclaimed novel inspired by the Dales.

The Butcher Boys is a story about two close friends growing up in rival butchers' shops in a Dales village in the 1970's and 80's. After being there for each other through traumatic childhoods, Jack and Michael's personal struggles for identity and the intense rivalry between their shops threaten to destroy them in adulthood. Will their past friendship be strong enough to save them?

Sometimes funny, sometimes sad, always evocative, the story keeps us close to the emotions of the two protagonists, Michael, a boy with a strong sense of tradition and family loyalty, and Jack, a boy drawn to new horizons, pulling us into their world and leading us to truly invest in them and their experiences.

As a member of a Dales family, Chris said: 'I was able to draw on precious memories whilst writing The Butcher Boys. Though purely fictional, the novel is partially influenced by my childhood experiences of playing out in the Yorkshire Dales countryside with my mates. Climbing trees, swimming in the river, building dens, going on adventures, getting up to mischief'. This boyhood life, coupled with Chris's fond memories of frequent visits to his extended family, who lived in Grassington in the heart of the Dales, has imbued his novel with depth and authenticity.

Returning to the Dales as an adult, Chris was reminded of his childhood and struck by the sheer beauty of the limestone landscape of picturesque places like Settle, the richness of the local dialect and the importance of strong communities. These aspects of Yorkshire life, now central to the story of The Butcher Boys, were later to inspire him to vividly visualise the novel as he wrote it. Chris believes that 'this has resulted in a powerfully 'visual' story which feels very real to readers. A realism that has translated into a book with a powerful sense of time and place'.

Chris's earliest memory of writing creatively is writing poetry as a child and he always remembers enjoying the experience of losing himself, dreamlike, in other worlds. However, it wasn't until he began travelling overseas and reading extensively in his twenties that he felt the urge to write again. Upon returning to the UK from his travels, he studied for a degree in Politics and English at York University. It was there that he discovered a passion for playwriting and 'The Picnic' won a 'Commendation for Outstanding Writing' from the National Student Drama Festival.

After university, when he was working as a teacher, Chris began writing the semi-autobiographical novel, 'Back Road', about the battle between altruism



and egotism. This debut novel was subsequently traditionally published by Fisher King Publishing. Encouraged by this, Chris then began writing 'The Butcher Boys', which took eight years to complete, before it was published by Fisher King in 2023. He is currently working on a novel about the lives we portray to the world as opposed to the actual lives we live.

The Butcher Boys achieved notable acclaim in 2025. The UK's biggest selling regional magazine, The Yorkshire Dalesman, praised the book in its 'Literary Odyssey' article alongside the works of James Herriot and Julia Chapman, referring to it as a 'clear-eyed yet tender story of friendship'. The novel also appeared in its first literary magazine article last year, with Spilt Ink Magazine devoting a full page to praising the book: 'The Butcher Boys is a compelling read

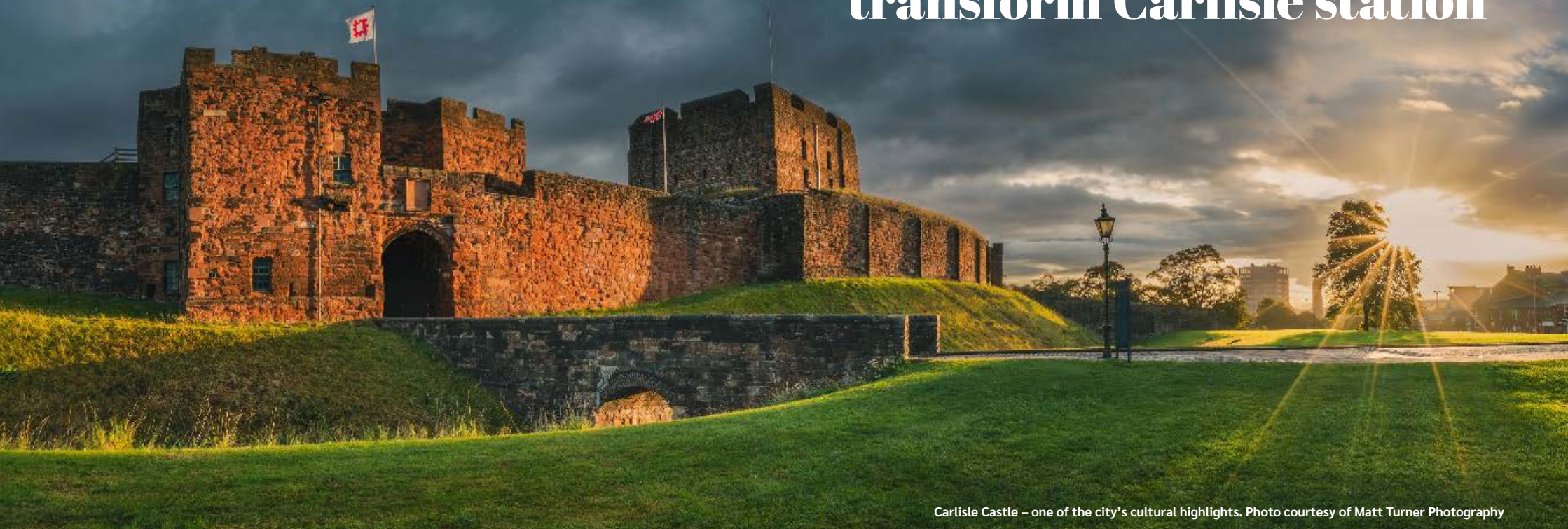
that combines powerful storytelling with profound insights into the human condition.'

The novel continues to sell well in bookshops throughout the Yorkshire Dales and was the bestselling book at Paper People Books bookshop in Pateley Bridge in 2024. Chris has been invited to hold author events, at which he gives talks about his novels and writing life, by many of these shops over the past couple of years, including Limestone Books in Settle, where the novel is on sale.

The Butcher Boys is also being well received by readers, achieving an average 4.7 stars out of 5 rating across all its reviews in its first two years since publication.

As well as being on sale in bookshops throughout the Yorkshire Dales, the novel can be ordered from any reputable bookshop or from Amazon.

£13.5 million additional government investment to transform Carlisle station



Carlisle Castle – one of the city's cultural highlights. Photo courtesy of Matt Turner Photography

Passengers using Carlisle station will benefit from the latest phase of the Carlisle Gateway Project – a £13.5 million government investment to transform the historic station into a modern transport hub that's easier to use and better connected to the city.

First reported in the Feb 2025 issue of FoT, further major upgrade

work will create a modern, accessible gateway to the city with better parking, easier navigation and restored heritage features.

The improvements will make it easier for passengers to get in and out of the station, navigate between platforms, and access better facilities; all while preserving the building's Victorian heritage. In the coming months, passengers will see:

- **Spring 2026:** Work begins to improve public space to the south of the station, and build a new customer car park.
 - **Summer 2026:** Pedestrian-friendly reconfiguration of the north station entrance.
 - **February 2027:** Completion of the pedestrianised station entrance to the north and relocated car parking to the south of the station.
 - **Into 2027:** New lifts, staircases and a southern entrance to make the station fully accessible.
- Hannah Clarke, Network Rail's project sponsor, said: "Carlisle station is a beautiful piece of railway heritage and an important gateway to the city. We're working closely with Cumberland Council and Avanti West Coast to deliver improvements that passengers will see and feel from spring 2026."



A new role for our railway at a time of world crisis

By Colin Speakman, writer, transport campaigner, Chair of the Action for Yorkshire Transport network & founder member of FoSCL

What, might you imagine, is the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to do with the Settle-Carlisle railway? What relevance have drones and missiles in the Middle East for Dent Station and Ribblesdale viaduct?

Not much you might imagine. But you would be wrong. If, as most the commentators believe, the war of attrition between the USA, Israel and Iran continues into the summer and beyond, its impact on almost every aspect of our lives could be overwhelming. There is serious talk of fuel shortage with diesel and petrol not only increasing astronomically in price but conceivably being rationed. Knock-on effects will be huge, with potential shortages of many basic items of food as fertiliser runs short and transport costs rise, with even, it is predicted, shortages of key pharmaceuticals. Faced with rising prices, people will have less money to spend, and businesses will be hit hard.

Areas like the Yorkshire Dales and Eden Valley could be especially vulnerable, as tourism is now crucial for their local economies. There is always the hope however that faced with escalating costs and flight cancellations, many British people may be forced to cancel their holidays abroad and visit resorts or the

countryside in the British Isles. Where nicer than a week in the Dales if your planned dream holiday to Mauritius or the Seychelles is postponed?

There is no escaping the fact that the prime source of income for the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle railway is leisure. People travel the line because of its remarkable heritage – magnificent feats of Victorian civil engineering through some of England's wildest and most beautiful landscapes. But they also use it as means to access the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Eden Valley for walking. These are the core reasons why the line was safeguarded in the 1980s, in particular for its value

to the many small businesses among communities on or close to the line as well as in Carlisle, a core destination.

We're a vital Inter-Regional route

The S&C has other crucial functions. It is part of the national rail network, a vital Inter-Regional route, still the most convenient way from many parts of the East Midlands, South and West Yorkshire,

to the west of Scotland. It is also there at times when for whatever reasons, the West Coast Main Line is closed as a critically important diversionary route. It has important, locally generated freight trains. And finally, though sometimes forgotten, it is also a rural railway, a lifeline for local communities, a key transport link for Upper Ribblesdale, Dentdale, Wensleydale and the Eden Valley.

But over recent decades, the number of people living in rural communities relying on the train for essential journeys for work, education and leisure has dwindled. There are two prime reasons for this. First is the near universal ownership of cars among rural communities in areas like the Dales (88% of households in the Dales own at least one car) and secondly in recent years cuts in early morning commuter services into the main work centres of West Yorkshire together with the myopic removing of the validity of the Dales Railcard on weekdays before 0815 (in effect to discourage rail commuters). This has reduced the value of the railway to many communities.

Faced with an impending national economic and transport crisis, a radical new approach to local transport provision is required, especially in heavily car-dependent

rural areas such as the Yorkshire Dales.

FoSCL member John Carey has repeatedly argued for the S&C to be perceived as the spine of a Swiss-style integrated local travel network, designed primarily to meet the core needs of local communities but in so doing also the needs of visitors and the vital visitor economy.

The present weekday timetables on the S&C and the adjacent Bentham line are however less than ideal for commuter purposes. Both provide arrivals in Leeds within 10 minutes of each other at 0834 and 0843 yet most offices and even shops require staff to be there by 0830, so to allow travel time between rail station and office even in central Leeds, an arrival around 0800 – 0815 is necessary. The corresponding arrival in Carlisle is 0802.

But how do people reach the railway from outlying communities within the Dales? This where a revolution is required, away from the 'poor law' provision of public minibus services designed to provide mid-morning shopping services for pensioners and little more besides. What is required is a root-and-branch examination – as matter of urgency – of the actual travel needs of communities in the western Dales area, whenever possible to replace car journeys and lift-giving with

a combined timetable of fully integrated bus and rail journeys to link rural communities to the main Regional centres of work, education, health provision, business and leisure, including links to the wider national rail network. Well-timed these same returning services can bring visitors to the National Park to support the local economy.



Two Northern 158's cross Ais Gill Viaduct. Photo courtesy of Ian Dinmore

Devising connecting bus timetables to and from key railheads along the railway – Skipton, Settle/Giggleswick, Ribbleshead, Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen to provide key inward and outward journeys seven days a week is not rocket science. Indeed, it already happens to some degree at weekends with DalesBus, managed by the inspirational volunteers of Dales & Bowland CIC. DalesBus 80 provides a summer Saturday link to and from Hawes at Ribbleshead with the Yorkshire Explorer train from Manchester. On Sundays from May until October DalesBus 830 provides one of the most beautiful bus journeys in England meeting trains at Ribbleshead station for Hawes and over Buttertubs Pass to Swaledale. There is also the S1 Saturday bus from Dent Station to Dent, Sedbergh and Kendal and daily the 563 links Kirkby Stephen Station to Appleby and Penrith. Little White Bus also provides the valuable 113 Garsdale Station–Hawes link.

But these are all relatively small scale, middle of the day and weekend services, primarily serving the leisure market. What is needed is a radical new vision – a combined all-day, all-year timetable with integrated ticketing systems valid on feeder bus and trains which will be truly affordable. What is required is a Regional Travel Pass to cover the whole of the Dales, in various Day, Week, Month and even annual Tarif Zones so people can board their bus in Askrigg, Gunnerside, Hawes or Sedbergh safe in the knowledge that they have a total pre-paid journey package to their key destination covering the Dales network plus the cost of the onward railway journey at a price which is highly competitive with the cost of using the car – at a time of rapidly escalating energy costs and fuel shortages. The same offer could then be available to people coming into the Dales.

Such urban/rural zonal ticketing systems to cover both commuter and leisure inter-modal travel are common in many other European countries.

A network of scheduled bus services integrated with the railway might vary, from shared taxis to the current 16-seater LWB/ NYC minibuses, but hopefully a new fleet of electric powered 25/30 seater buses with space at peak time for standing passengers and their luggage. This could be operated by a company or partnership created between Northern Rail, current local bus operators such as Little White Bus and indeed North Yorkshire Council, who are already bus operators in the Dales.

The biggest problem is the mind-set not only of the now nationalised Northern Railway, but the London Treasury who remain fearful of any theoretical ‘abstraction’ of revenue if people actually start using rail services by paying less than the quite extortionate cost of rail tickets in the UK, now one of the world’s most expensive railway networks. In effect successive Government policies have priced people off the railway towards private car dependency with all its massive hunger for energy and other resources, which, as a nation faced with a combined energy and economic crisis, we can no longer afford.

Who has the imagination and the power to actually deliver a Swiss-style Freedom of the Dales network in which the Settle–Carlisle line would play such a vital role? One person might – the Mayor of the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

FoSCL is rightly credited as one of the key organisations that helped saved the Settle–Carlisle line in the 1980s. Could we now join forces with other transport and conservation groups to persuade Mayor Scaife that the time has come to deliver a radical new role for England’s most scenic main line railway?

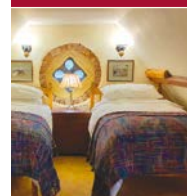
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Dalesman at Crosby Garrett.
Photo courtesy of Nigel Capelle.

On the Rails to the Dales



UNLOCKING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

By Keith Watts

In this article I have sought to identify ways that railways should be much more used by visitors to access the beautiful areas served by the Settle–Carlisle railway and its sister line between Leeds–Lancaster/Morecambe.

Much invaluable promotion of the Settle–Carlisle railway has been undertaken by the Community Rail Development Company, the Community Rail Partnership, the Railway Trust and the Friends. But I am seeking to identify more radical ways of encouraging people to use the railway.

“The provision of ample car parking at railway stations has proven nationally to be a great way of getting motorists to transfer to rail transport.”

My starting point is that there are an estimated 5–6 million visitors to Yorkshire Dales National Park and 900,000 to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) each year. The 2022 survey by the Yorkshire Dales National Park revealed that 89% of visitors came by car. No doubt figures will be similar for the Kirkby Stephen and Appleby areas.

Approximately 200,000 people walk the 3 Yorkshire peaks alone each year. Yet the starting and end point for the walk, Horton in Ribblesdale, had only 23,176 people use the station in 2024. At visitor hotspot Ribblesdale 33,182 used the station. It is clear that the vast majority of 3 Peak walkers come by car.

How can more people be encouraged to leave their cars at home and use public transport? I suggest eight ways.

- 1. Direct Running from other parts of the country to reduce journey times:** Running a greater number of trains beyond their normal destination and starting point has proved highly successful elsewhere on the rail network. For instance, there are now six direct trains from London to Harrogate each day and four direct trains between London and Halifax.

Running direct trains to tourist hotspots such as Settle, Clapham, Horton in Ribblesdale and Appleby could be beneficial. These should not solely be London trains. Other starting locations in the East Midlands and other parts of Yorkshire should also be considered for through running beyond Leeds and Skipton. With an increasing number of dual or multimode powered trains entering service soon this should become increasingly possible.

- 2. Line Speed.** There has been much talk of raising the Settle–Carlisle line speed of 60mph. Despite the importance of shortening travel times this has not happened although evidently National Rail is considering this. The current journey time between Leeds and Carlisle varies between 158 minutes to just under 180 minutes (3 hours) for the 113 miles. Those with long memories will know as long ago that as 1937 the steam locomotive 5660 Rooke (Class 5XP Jubilee) travelled in both directions between Leeds and Carlisle in 115 and 117 minutes without for the most part exceeding 75mph. This did not include station stops. But it does show the potential for improvement, especially with modern traction, even if only a modest maximum speed of 75mph becomes the new line speed.
- 3. Increased Car Parking near the Tourist Areas:** The provision of ample car parking at railway stations has proven nationally to be a great way of getting motorists to transfer to rail transport. I would suggest that by providing increased parking where possible for the stations between Hellifield and Appleby. This would give the opportunity for many tourists staying in the area to sample the classic scenery of the Yorkshire and Westmorland Dales by train.
- 4. Park and Ride Schemes:** Park and Ride should be provided, from the stations and new car parks mentioned above, to the Tourist Hotspots in the Yorkshire Dales National Park which could include Malham, Clapham, Ingleton, Hawes, Kirkby Lonsdale and in the North Pennines AONB the Dufton and Ravenstonedale areas.
- 5. Road Pricing, Park Passes.** Consideration could also be given by national and local government to the introduction of road pricing in tourist hotspots and to having National Park Passes (as used in USA and Canada) for motorists, with exemptions for local residents. Park and Ride can very much be seen as an important part of this strategy.
- 6. Integrated Transport:** Integrated public transport must not be solely the preserve of urban areas. In the May 2025 “Friends on Track” John Carey’s developed an integrated transport strategy for the Leeds–Settle–Carlisle and Morecambe lines. John’s article provides

invaluable details of all the bus service available from rail stations on the Settle to Carlisle route to the towns and villages in the areas served nearby.

7. **Traveline:** In terms of integrated transport Traveline www.traveline.info gives comprehensive details of public transport options for bus, train, cycle and walking in all areas of Great Britain. This undoubtedly is a very useful existing resource that needs much greater promotion.
8. **PlusBus.** The PlusBus service <https://www.plusbus.info> run by Traveline seems a very useful innovation giving through ticketing by various modes of transport, similar to the Oyster card in London and the new Bee Network in Greater Manchester. But whilst PlusBus covers all West Yorkshire, including rural areas, it only covers the Harrogate area and the City of York in North Yorkshire.

I have contacted PlusBus who have explained that there are no immediate plans to introduce Plusbus schemes in the areas covered by the Settle-Carlisle line. PlusBus schemes are ultimately initiated by local bus operators who must prove a business case. This needs to demonstrate that minimum criteria are met, including population size, passenger demand and potential uptake. Discussion with the local authorities and bus operators is needed to develop a PlusBus scheme in the areas along the line. Maybe the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire could be a help in this regard.

One obstacle is that the PlusBus initiative is focussed on residents and not tourists.

The points made in this article are very much my own. My aim has been to prompt far greater attention to the need to greatly improve rail services in rural areas with very high tourism. New rail investment should not solely be concentrated on the London to Birmingham and the Oxford-Cambridge corridors and the Northern Powerhouse areas. Tourist hotspots, such as the areas served by the Settle-Carlisle and Leeds-Morecambe lines, must be given the same priority. Especially if we want to significantly increase rail use and reduce the high social and economic costs of road transport.



Reading Rocks Podcast

Ian Jackson has just launched podcast versions of his Rock Book series. These short stories approach the geology of the north of England in a different way to the books – a chronological theme. The first – Time Travelling – describes sites from deep time up to the present day.

The podcast is available on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#) and [Amazon](#), and if you subscribe, on Audible too.



The Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line March 2026

By John Carey

March has seen excellent performance on the railway with zero cancellations, albeit there were some operational challenges caused by the heavy rainfall on 24 March.

Indeed, recent performance compares quite favourably with the rest of the network. Meanwhile, there were a number of infrastructure issues which have inevitably impacted upon services. Carriage allocation remains a concern in the medium to longer term.

There were no cancellations in March despite the challenges of the extreme weather on 24th March as compared with 2.89% in February. Part cancellation or early termination accounted for 1.13% (6) of services actually running, as compared with 3.62% in February. Reasons were mostly consequent upon the flooding experienced in late March plus Significant issues:

- 4 March: slow freight 6C52 causing long delay to 2H90.
- 4 March: suspected signalling issues at Blea Moor area causing delays.
- 9 March: suspected signalling issue at Blea Moor causing delay to 2H97.
- 12 March: 50mph speed restriction due to forecast high winds causing delays.
- 12, 21 and 27 March: late 2Y01 ex Morecambe causing delays to 2H94.
- 16 March: suspected signalling issue at Hellfield area causing delays.
- 21 and 25 March: late presentation 5H10 from N Hill causing significant delay to 2H10 and return 2H85.
- 22 March: suspected signalling issue at Blea Moor causing delay to 1E20.

- 24 March: heavy rainfall in Cumbria leading to flooding of track at various locations together with significant disruption and delay to afternoon and evening services.

In addition to the above, train crew allocation issues would appear to be the cause of delays on 6 occasions, usually at Leeds, Skipton or Carlisle. This is much improved on previous months.

A significant issue was the unexpected heavy rainfall across Cumbria and the Dales on the afternoon of 24th March. Despite the challenges of flooding, Northern managed to run without any cancellation of services albeit there were severe delays to services in both directions. However, a number of services were terminated at Skipton for operational reasons, in order to regain timetable or to accommodate crews. This is becoming an increasing occurrence and inevitably adds to the inconvenience of already delayed passengers in having to wait up to a further 30 minutes for a Leeds-bound electric and with the possible loss of onward connections thereafter. Anecdotal evidence suggested that trains were not held at Skipton in order to facilitate connections. It demonstrates the inter-dependencies between services and crews operating on different routes.

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Dentdale's Lost Secrets

By Simon Pearce

The Editor has asked for articles about issues around the line, but not always about trains and stations, such as social history, environment, etc. I would like to share a flavour of a book I happened upon a decade ago called *The Yorkshire Dales*, a rich social history published in the early 1956 by two superb local researchers, Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby.

The book covers their travels talking to the old folk, sharing tales from their childhoods in the late 1800's and tales passed down from even earlier! For space reasons, just one area has been selected – Dentdale. The authors describing it as full of interest: the sound of running water, harmony of colour, in spring the tang of peat fills the air on the fells, in summer the scent of hay lingers.

Descending from the Station, we learn that the roughshod half mile steep ascent path was repaired and tarred in 1954. Into the dale itself, we read of the varied ways of earning a living. Two kinds of limestone were quarried on the hills: 'black marble' and a 'grey fossil' limestone. The removal of import tariffs on Italian marble saw the industry die out but Dent marble can be seen on staircases at the Inns of Court, Manchester University and the Cartwright Hall at Bradford. Many marble chimney pieces are to be found in the dale – the vicarage at Cowgill has five and Broadfield House has a pink one, not forgetting the fireplaces in station waiting-rooms along the S&C.



Dent – always worth a visit. Photo courtesy of John Bentley.

There is also mention of land north of Cowgill Church, with unmarked graves to victims of a smallpox outbreak of the 1870s.

One of the charms of Dent is its many gills. Harbour Gill House, once the home of the Quaker family of Thistlethwaite, with 'WT 1700' on the porch. The house suffered severe damage from a flood of heavy rain and snow melt in January 1752, and farther up the dale a house was

submerged claiming the lives of seven in the same dreadful storm.

Halfway to Dent Town is Greenwell, illustrating varied past occupations. Once an inn, the whitewashed farmhouse had dye-vats where cloth was stretched to dry, lime kilns at the roadside and a marble quarry and small copper mine were worked in the 1890s. High Hall farmhouse on the north side of the valley, reached by a bridge over a gorge, was originally

the chief house of the dale. Here lived Richard Trotter, whose initials 'RTD 1665' can just be seen on weathered stone on the house front. He led the 'statesmen' in negotiations with the Crown for the sale of Dent in the 17th Century.

Of industrial interest is the tale from 1835 of William Armstrong, then twenty-five, on holiday fishing in the Dee. He witnessed water power in action at the High Mill, a carding/spinning



works, fed by dams and via a system of underground culverts. Returning home, Armstrong abandoned being a solicitor and invented hydraulic machinery founding Armstrong's engineering works on Tyneside. His Cragside house is now owned by the National Trust and is well worth a visit as it showcases some of his innovations.

Close to Dent is Deepdale, once known for spinning wool. Elderly people told the tale of up to 40 Sunday churchgoers setting out for Dent on a Sunday morning, some carrying their week's knitting to leave at a depot in town. Dent Town surpassed Sedbergh until 1863 in importance as the polling station for the entire district. A busy place, carts converged on the town in the 1800s and farmers' wives laid butter on tables on white cloths. Adam Sedgwick described many trades – wig maker, tailor, 4 or 5 blacksmiths, several bootmakers and a cooper (barrels used for butter and sent all over England in the early 1900s). By the early 1950s, the authors write of great changes made - the wooden galleries that formed workshops pulled down, houses cleared yet assuring that the village still remains a sight not to miss!

Around the 1870s, Dent Fair drew large crowds. People and horses thronged the street and stalls lined it on both sides. At times it had swing-boats, hobbyhorses (roundabouts), shooting galleries and donkey rides for children. Sports began at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. There is also mention of the hamlet of Gawthrop just beyond Dent, said even to pre-date it, once having a corn mill.

To end with a human tale that touched me greatly. The authors relay a personal story which vividly illustrates past hard times. Talking to a local woman, who told of her family of 14, 7 brothers older than her, all of those hired as farm servants. She was hired at 12 to work for a schoolmaster with many children at Burton-in-Lonsdale. 'I was only a child myself,' she said earning 3s a week and stayed 18 months with no holiday. When she returned home her parents were almost strangers to her.

¹"The Yorkshire Dales" (pub.1950's) by Marie Hartley & Joan Ingilby (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1956)

²www.cumbria-industries.org.uk – The Dentdale Marble Industry by Ed Dennison, Ed Dennison Archaeology Services Ltd



Free Guided Walks: April 2026 to September 2026

When	Station	Time	Walk	Distance	Category
Sat 05 Apr	Garsdale	10:52	Garsdale Circular	8mi	Walker
Sat 11 Apr	Horton	08:58	Horton to Clapham via Nappa Scars	8mi	Hiker
Sat 18 Apr	Ribblehead	10:37	A Longhouse, a Chapel and a Shanty Town	7mi	Hiker
Sat 25 Apr	Kirkby Stephen	09:34	Kirkby Stephen Circular	9mi	Hiker
Sat 9 May	Settle	10:21	Smearsett Scar and Catrigg Force from Settle	12mi	Explorer!
Sun 10 May	Ribblehead	10:33	Gunnarside Circular via Melbecks Moor	7.5mi	Explorer!
Sat 16 May	Horton	08:58	Magic Roundabout	14mi	Explorer!
Sat 23 May	Settle	10:21	Wandering Around Winskill	8mi	Walker
Sat 30 May	Lazonby	10:07	Lazonby Circular	10.5mi	Hiker
Sat 6 Jun	Horton	08:58	Ingleborough	12mi	Explorer!
Sat 13 Jun	Horton	10:30	The First Step is a Biggie!	9.5mi	Hiker
Sat 20 Jun	Kirkby Stephen	09:34	Kirkby Stephen Circular via Smardale	10.5mi	Hiker
Sun 21 Jun	Ribblehead	10:33	Around Kisdon Hill	7mi	Explorer!
Sat 27 Jun	Dent	09:16	Great Knoutberry and Wold Fell	10mi	Explorer!
Sat 04 Jul	Ribblehead	09:06	Ribblehead Circular via Dentdale	15mi	Explorer!
Sat 11 Jul	Kirkby Stephen	11:04	Kirkby Stephen Roam	8.5mi	Walker
Sat 11 Jul	Langwathby	10:01	Cross Fell: 150th Anniversary Walk	13mi	Explorer!
Sat 18 Jul	Ribblehead	09:06	Whernside	11mi	Explorer!
Sat 25 Jul	Clitheroe	11:54	Ribble Valley Line: Clitheroe Circular	8mi	Hiker
Sun 26 Jul	Ribblehead	10:33	Fremington Edge	8mi	Explorer!
Sat 01 Aug	Ribblehead	09:06	Ribblehead to Hawes	11mi	Explorer!
Sat 08 Aug	Kirkby Stephen	09:34	We have High Standards	13mi	Explorer!
Sat 15 Aug	Settle	10:21	In Search of the Straw Man	8mi	Walker
Sun 16 Aug	Ribblehead	10:33	Gunnarside to Muker	7.5mi	Explorer!
Sat 22 Aug	Kirkby Stephen	11:04	Westmorland Meander	9.5mi	Hiker
Sun 23 Aug	Ribblehead	10:33	Great Shunner Fell	11mi	Explorer!
Sun 29 Aug	Carlisle	10:30	Carlisle Circular along the River Eden	10.5mi	Hiker
Sat 05 Sept	Ribblehead	09:06	We Talk to the Trees	15mi	Explorer!
Sun 06 Sept	Ribblehead	10:33	Hawes Circular via Hardraw Force	7.5mi	Hiker
Sat 12 Sept	Appleby	09:46	Appleby Circular via Kirkby Thore	11.5mi	Hiker
Sat 19 Sept	Ribblehead	09:06	Ribblehead to Hawes	13mi	Explorer!
Sat 26 Sept	Horton	10:30	Pen-y-ghent and Plover Hill	10mi	Explorer!

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Letters

This month's letters offer forthright views on disruption, diversion, accountability and direction.

No trains until that rain goes away...

I write to reinforce the comments made by Paul Salveson in his article about the fiasco of suspended services on December 14th and 15th last year. I was so incensed by the decision to have what looked like a couple of 'Duvet Days' for Northern and Network Rail staff, that I wrote to our MP. To his credit he forwarded my letter immediately to the Secretary of State for Transport, but the reply he received and passed back to me (signed off in the name of by Heidi Alexander herself, no less) was a masterpiece of excuse and brush-off. Many of the platitudes were the ones we have heard before in response to FoSCL's pressure on timetable anomalies.

The whole episode (and other dissatisfactions) raises questions about who is holding (nationalised) Northern Rail to account for its strategy and decision making, and how we champion routes such as Settle–Carlisle and the Bentham Line that stretch across several local authority areas (compare with the high profile campaign to increase service on the Scarborough line, which falls wholly within North Yorkshire mayor David Skaith's area of responsibility). Perhaps those of us who live in our area should be pro-active and persistent in badgering parish councils and other local authorities to speak up when a local public service such as transport is treated as marginal. Ironically, the fact that these routes are heavily subsidised should increase, not decrease, the obligation to see that taxpayer's money yields consistent

benefit to local citizens and visitors alike.

Extreme weather events do seem to be posing a more frequent threat to rail services (note the recent problems in Devon and Cornwall), but the response needs to be positive, dynamic, and proportionate – not just throwing in the towel every time there is a whiff of a problem. We must continue to speak out!

Phillip Hinde
(Settle)

Managing decline or managing growth?

In the August issue of the magazine, we had two outstanding contributions, both based mainly on fact rather than opinion. Firstly, by Phil Hinde on 'A Crossrail Engineer in Settle' and then by Stephen Abbott 'Lining-Up for the Future'. The latter being a very well researched article on the S&C markets and station footfalls.

Both articles illustrated, in various ways, what must change if the S&C is to continue and prosper. The subject was concluded by a very good letter from David Ward in which he postulates that the only real hope for the future is for the S&C to have a dedicated Line Manager – albeit only for maybe a couple of years or so.

I could not agree more with David on this point. The S&C needs an experienced Manager (A Ron Cottan Mk 2?) whose sole duty is to sort out the S&C and produce a more attractive and economical railway

fit for the future. There is plenty to keep him busy as described in the two articles I've mentioned earlier. He would really have to be a GBR man otherwise train operation and engineering aspirations would still be inclined to continue in their own introverted ways.

We then come to the November issue with the news that the S&C is to be used once again for WCML diversions 7 days/week in January. This is great news to hear that at long last the regular mantra from both NR and the TOC's: 'We know from industry research that during planned disruptions that customers prefer to stay on trains and avoid lengthy bus replacement journeys.' A phrase that is regularly repeated throughout the country – but then nothing ever happens. The easy way out – 'Bus Replacement' continues.

It is however, disappointing to learn that NR have been unable/unwilling to carry out any route improvements before the diversions start. Speed improvements would have been an obvious start as would some heavy maintenance of the line's old mechanical signalling. It would be a great shame if appalling performance meant that the 'experiment' would not be repeated again in the future. Speed improvements would, of course, benefit all users of the line – not just the Avanti diversions.

Perhaps in due course we will learn why there have not been any Line Speed increases back to what existed pre-1970? Particularly as the basic infrastructure of the S&C today is probably in better condition than it has ever been since WW2. Would a dedicated S&C Line

Manager have helped, or is it simply that NR would have had to employ expensive Engineering Consultants to tell them what to do. An expenditure they simply could not afford?

Am I wrong David?

Roger Bastin
(York)

Diversions hit the national press

Oh dear. The Feb 2026 issue of a quality monthly railway industry magazine carried a report by one of its insightful columnists. A former BR career works engineer, now retired industry analyst Mr Walmsley, travelled on the diverted Avanti, firstly up from Preston. Whilst appreciating the opportunity, we learned of short formed packed coaches, limited catering, some seats on the Hitachi with a 'no window' bulkhead and windows filthy and not ideal.

I imagine it's unfair to expect a busy Depot to prep diverted trains specially for the route.

Including selected sets going through the auto soap wash plant. Northern no doubt don't bother much with the Cl 158s. Moreover, we can imagine most Avanti passengers busy gawping at smartphones and laptops – no interest in scenic views.

The reality of the diversions is perhaps not as beneficial for repeat new visitors as hoped for. Avoiding a coach from Preston might be it.

Simon Pearce
(Bolton)

Wild Ingleborough



SPRING QUIETLY ERUPTS ACROSS THE LIMESTONE, WOODS AND HIGH CRAGS

By Ellie Parker, Wild Ingleborough Community Engagement Officer

On Ingleborough, spring announces herself subtly at first: the pale green fuzz of hawthorn leaves here; a light dusting of hawthorn flowers there – these hardy, scrubby trees are abundant on the limestone pavement and their berries have sustained our overwintering birds throughout the colder months.

By mid-April, that subtlety has given way to an explosion of spring colours, with purple saxifrage appearing on the high crags, while primroses, bluebells and early purple orchids adorn the lower slopes. These well-known favourites are all woodland indicator plants – their presence in today's landscape tells a story of ancient wood pasture, where patches of mixed, native broadleaf trees and scrub intermixed with clearings created by ancient herbivores – aurochs, wild ancestors of modern cattle, who roamed Northern Europe between the ice ages.

Other lesser-known, more secretive woodland indicator species include moschatel (pictured), also known as 'town hall clock' due to its four distinctive 'faces', and herb-paris, whose pleasing symmetry appealed to medieval herbalists. These small green flowers are tricky to spot, but all the more rewarding for it.

This is an exciting year for Wild Ingleborough, as our upland plant nursery is beginning to bear fruit, so to speak – with young plants, grown from seed

collected on and around Ingleborough, beginning to be planted out on the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve. The purpose of this project is to boost populations of some of the many plant species that are found on Ingleborough, some of whose numbers have dwindled to single figures. Through this work we hope that local icons such as purple saxifrage, globeflower and spiked speedwell, along with specialist montane willows such as dwarf (or least) willow, and rarities like holly fern and limestone fern, will in the future be far more commonly seen, and their increased abundance will make them more resilient to extreme weather events.

Things to look for in May: as well as the flowers mentioned above, Sulber (on the way up to Ingleborough from Horton in Ribblesdale) will be carpeted in beautiful bird's-eye primrose from the beginning of the month. This delicate pink primula is easy to find here, but is nationally scarce – this is one of the best places in the country to see it.



Top: Bird's Eye Primrose.
Photo by Finn Varney.

Above: Herb Paris.
Photo by Philip Precey.

Left: Moschatel.
Photo from Wildlife Trusts.

Introducing two new board members

Chris Gee, Non-Executive Director



Chris worked on the railway for 35 years before retiring last year, the last seven years as Operations Director for the North & East Route of Network Rail. Between 1998 and 2003 he was lucky enough to be the Maintenance Delivery Manager for Cumbria, with the Settle & Carlisle falling under his remit, a role he thoroughly enjoyed. As an enthusiast for rail, Chris loves walking in the Yorkshire Dales with his family and dogs. The Settle & Carlisle Railway is therefore close to his heart for a number of reasons.

Chris is realistic when it comes to investment in rail and says that *'being an enthusiast for rail does come with its challenges. By that I mean there are things I personally would like the railway industry/government to do, but there has always been a world of difference between those aspirations and what was affordable. It's an industry with constrained finances and resources, competing against other government/industry spending priorities.'*

That's not to say that ambition should always be limited, it's just that sometimes you have to be realistic in terms of what can actually be achieved and what takes priority.

The other thing about working in the railway industry is that – other than being a football manager – I cannot think of any other industry where you are observed or scrutinised by fans, all with different views and ideas on how best to run that railway. All potentially valid views and opinions of course, but see the note above re finite finances and resources!'

Iain Gould, Non-Executive Director



Iain has a public sector career spanning 48 years in heavy rail, the NHS & local government.

'I come from a family with transport connections – my grandfather on my mother's side worked on the Tram system for Manchester Corporation with his brother's uncle. My paternal grandfather worked as a guard on the LMS and of course British Railways, amassing some 50 years prior to this retirement. I worked in the Rail industry for some 15 years in various guises across both the former BR organisation and post privatisation for Network Rail. I have a keen interest in the industry and have travelled the Leeds–Settle–Carlisle Line on many occasions. I was fortunate to be on the first steam train over the S&C route in 1977 (post 1968 and the steam ban) with 4771 Green Arrow on the Norfolkman.'

I am more than happy to provide my skill and expertise to the promotion of this priceless national asset and to see it grow and thrive for many years to come. I also see this route as being a vital piece of the national railway infrastructure, not purely a tourist/heritage railway.'

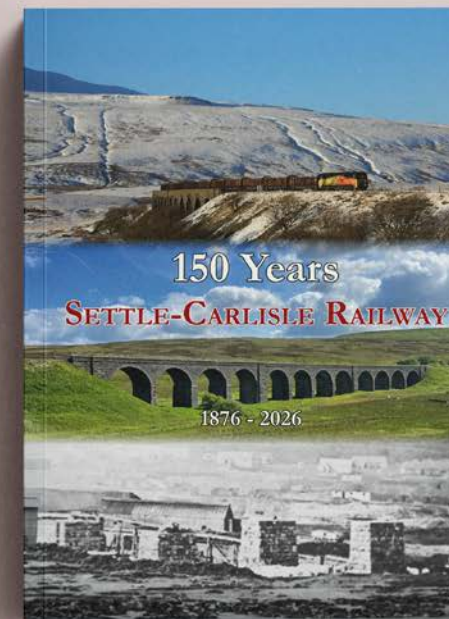
150 Years of the Settle–Carlisle Railway

A NEW BOOK BY ROGER HARDINGHAM

A special publication dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the line has been published in time to celebrate the first passenger train to operate over the route. Roger Hardingham has compiled a series of articles from local supporting groups and provided a host of photographs of the line from its construction in the 1870s through to the latest improvements to freight traffic with the opening of sidings to transport stone from the quarries near Horton in Ribblesdale.

It was in 1875 that the first goods movements operated over the new Midland Railway route to Scotland but it would be from 1st May 1876, the public were able to board the first trains which operated from Leeds, through Skipton and up to Settle and the border city of Carlisle.

This special tribute book covers the 150-year history from its 6-year construction showing very rare new photographs from that period, through to operations and gradual decline in the 1970s. The line made headlines in the early 1980s when efforts were made to close it completely, but fortunately local opposition would come to oppose that. With a starring role by the Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line and other local organisations and individuals, the line was reprieved for good and is now a vibrant route with huge numbers of people travelling and a large freight train business.



Special Reports are from David Martin about freight operations. Managing the line post-reprieve in 1989 by Geoff Bounds, a British Rail Manager. Supporting the line today by Bryan Gray, Chairman of the Settle–Carlisle Railway Trust. The book delves into all those fascinating aspects and is full of colour and black & white images. Edited by Roger Hardingham

Large format paperback – £9.95 (175 mm x 273 mm) 48 pages
Available local shops or from
www.railwayvideo.com

Turning the Tables



POSSIBLE RESTRUCTURING OF THE TIMETABLE TO IMPROVE SERVICES & BEST USE OF RESOURCES

By Stephen G Abbott

In my article ‘Lining up for the Future’ in Friends on Track August 2025, I expressed the view that the Leeds–Settle–Carlisle Line needs something better than the existing train service, if it is to serve various markets well and grow passenger numbers. The present timetable seems to have developed historically and haphazardly, resulting in random timings with little repeating pattern.

Ideally, there should be a regular local service with superimposed fast trains, the latter preferably running through from somewhere south of Leeds to somewhere north of Carlisle. With current financial pressures and the upheaval of creating Great British Railways, such a scheme is unlikely in the near future, but it must remain an aspiration. Meanwhile,

I have turned my thoughts to what could be achieved to improve the self-contained Leeds to Carlisle service, through a mix of stopping and fast trains and more trains serving the most used stations.

The present timetable provides eight trains each way calling at all or most stations north of Skipton, plus an evening working from Leeds to Ribbleshead and back – almost halfway to Carlisle, so let’s say the train mileage is equivalent to 8.5 full line round trips. Local traffic is unlikely to be able to support an hourly service, so one solution might be to run eight all stations trains at two-

hourly intervals, roughly equivalent to the present service, plus perhaps three additional fast trains. This would amount to 11 or 11.5 round trips, a significant increase in mileage needing more trains and crews.

I looked, therefore, at timing trains at 90-minute intervals, integrating into this standard pattern a few running fast in the middle of the day when tourists and long-distance passengers are most likely to want to travel. Between Skipton and Carlisle the fast trains would call only at Settle, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby. The Table shows a summary of this putative timetable. For simplicity and to save space it gives times only for Leeds, Skipton and Carlisle but readers can work out approximate times at other stations of interest. The key to the column headings gives the stopping patterns, fast trains are shown in bold type.

Whisper it gently, some passengers do find a whole line day return journey, both ways by stopping train, a bit tedious!

In constructing this timetable I have made assumptions as follows:

- Skipton to Carlisle calling at all stations takes 2h 3min.
- Skipton to Carlisle calling at only three stations takes 1h 40min.
- Times are standardised at Skipton rather than Carlisle, to minimise the impact on other Aire Valley train services.
- Train paths at 18 and 48 minutes past the hour from Leeds to Skipton, and 29 and 59 minutes past the hour from Skipton to Leeds, are available. If services north of Leeds are revised in future, then the timings of Carlisle trains can be adjusted to suit.
- All trains continue to serve Shipley, Bingley and Keighley. Although there is a case for the fast trains not calling at Shipley or Bingley (passengers – and those from Bradford – could make a same-platform change at Keighley), pathing issues might prevent any time savings.
- Signal-boxes from Hellifield northwards are open from 06.00 to 22.00 or thereabouts, as at present.

The timetable provides 10 return services between Leeds and Carlisle, with three each way fast. Early and late trains serve all or most stations north of Skipton, to meet local needs outside the period of expected demand for fast journeys. Trains are timed at 90 minutes intervals at Leeds and Skipton, except that the first two northbound and last two southbound are two hours apart to extend the service day. The first train northbound is a little later than now, to give an arrival time in Carlisle likely to be more attractive to commuters. The last trains each way miss out a few stations likely to have low late evening demand, and to ensure that the northbound train (the former Ribbleshead working extended) reaches Carlisle before the line closes for the night. Not everything is radically changed – some of the departure times may look familiar as they are close to ones in the current timetable. Each way, compared to the current timetable, the small stations would lose either no trains or just one, but the busiest three stations would gain two.

Readers with detailed knowledge may identify a significant local need which the suggested timetable does not meet. If necessary, one of the fast trains could squeeze in an additional stop, either by adding a few minutes to its schedule or by cutting out the stop at Kirkby Stephen. However, I would urge restraint as the compelling need is for a few fast trains. The mix of services would give the opportunity to promote day trips one way by fast train – giving the ‘heroic main line through dramatic scenery’ experience otherwise only obtainable on charter trains – and one way by stopping train to admire the small stations and their surroundings. Whisper it gently, some passengers do find a whole line day return journey, both ways by stopping train, a bit tedious! So, too, do long distance passengers from, say, Glasgow to Leeds, especially those who make the journey regularly.

Choosing which trains to make ‘fast’ has a bearing on resource

utilisation. For example, if the 09.18 from Leeds were to call at all stations, it would not reach Carlisle until 11.58 and could not then work the 11.55 back. The timings give mostly 20 min turn-rounds in Carlisle, where all trains could use platform 6. At present some use platform 5, causing confusion to Newcastle line passengers whose trains normally depart from there! Turn-rounds are 43 min in Leeds, giving time for cleaning and providing a buffer for recovery from delays. The suggested timetable requires only a modest increase in train mileage, and could be operated using only five train sets, each making two round trips totalling 452 miles per day. Two trains would stable overnight in Carlisle. New more powerful trains, and an increase in line speed from 60 to 75 mph, would allow further reductions in journey times.

The 'sister' train service from Leeds to Morecambe would continue to use some of the standard paths between Leeds and Settle Junction not needed by Carlisle trains. There are eight trains each way between Leeds and Lancaster or Morecambe, with some three hour gaps. This service is able to accommodate current traffic on the route, but if and when the Eden Project at Morecambe is completed more frequent trains may be justified.

This article aims to encourage the debate which we need to have if the Line is to survive and prosper for another 150 years. I look forward to readers' comments.

Suggested Timetable

	A	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	A	C
Leeds Dep	05:48	07:48	09:18	10:48	12:18	13:48	15:18	16:48	18:18	19:48
Skipton Dep	06:25	08:25	09:55	11:25	12:55	14:25	15:55	17:25	18:55	20:25
Carlisle Arr	08:28	10:28	11:35	13:28	14:35	16:28	17:35	19:28	20:58	22:18
	D	D	D	E	D	E	D	E	D	F
Carlisle Dep	05:55	07:25	08:55	10:48	11:55	13:48	14:55	16:48	17:55	20:02
Skipton Arr	07:58	09:28	10:58	12:28	13:58	15:28	16:58	18:28	19:58	21:58
Leeds Arr	08:35	10:05	11:35	13:05	14:35	16:05	17:35	19:05	20:35	22:35

Stopping patterns between Skipton and Carlisle:

- A** All stations.
- B** Settle, Kirkby Stephen, Appleby.
- C** All stations to Ribbleshead, then Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Appleby.

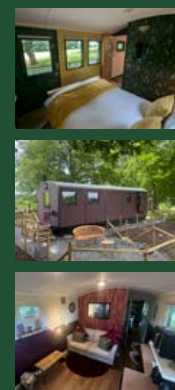
Stopping patterns between Carlisle and Skipton:

- D** All stations.
- E** Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Settle.
- F** All stations to Garsdale, then Ribbleshead, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Settle, Hellifield.



Riding up the Hill by Nigel Capelle

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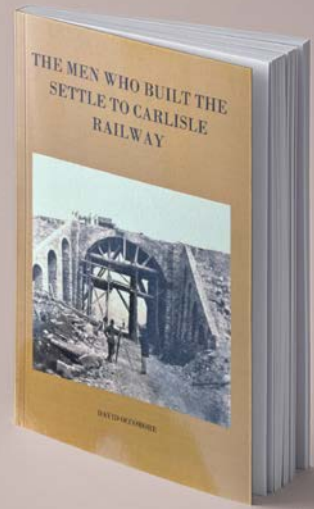


www.settlecarlisletrust.org.uk | enquiries@settlecarlisletrust.org.uk
 The Settle and Carlisle Railway Trust is a Registered Charity, no 702724.

David Occomore talks about his book...

Members who live at the north end of the S&C may want to make a diary note for 7pm May 20th at Penrith Library. Author David Occomore will be talking about his new book, *The Men Who Built The Settle to Carlisle Railway*. The event is part of Penrith Library Local History Month.

Penrith Library can be found at St Andrews Churchyard, Penrith CA11 7YA.



No 4 SALT LAKE COTTAGES

Ribblehead, Yorkshire Dales

Enjoy a self-catering break at this Settle-Carlisle Railway cottage, situated at the heart of the Three Peaks area of the Yorkshire Dales. The row of six cottages has spectacular views over the surrounding limestone scenery and is close to the Ribbleshead viaduct and station, and Ingleborough National Nature Reserve.

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7 DAY STAYS






Trains on Track

WHEN AND WHERE TO VIEW SPECIAL TRAINS

By Chris Gee

The following is a summary of special trains expected to run over the Settle and Carlisle line over and above the regular Northern passenger service and the regular freight traffic. It does not include trains that will use the route between Settle Junction and Carnforth. Please bear in mind that although some of the excursions are advertised by the promoter, they can often be cancelled, so please always check in advance before making travel plans.

The above list is correct at the time of going to print. West Coast Railway Company have yet to confirm the dates of their summer 'The Dalesman' tours. In previous years they have operated on selected Tuesdays and Thursdays between June and September.

Note: Belmond's Britannic Explorer operates south to Appleby on the Saturday dates where the train then spends the night before continuing its journey south via Ribbleshead on the Sunday dates. In order to facilitate essential repairs to the retaining wall in Birkett Cutting, Network Rail have proposed an emergency closure of the route between 8 and 12 May 2026. Details regarding alterations to train services were not available at the time of going to press, so travellers are encouraged to check before they travel with their train operator.

Lots of special train workings are planned within very short timescales and



The afternoon log train rolling through Settle behind a class 70. Photo courtesy of Richard Gardner

the best way to look for these is using the **Realtime Trains** website. These include additional freight trains, particularly those serving the new Horton in Ribblesdale quarry terminal, engineering trains, rail tours, the inspection saloon or movements of rail vehicles for repair.

realtimetrains.co.uk/search/detailed/

- > In the location field type 'Settle Jn'
- > In the When? field choose 'All Day'
- > Set the date to a date in the future that you want to view
- > Click on the WTT and VAR filters to remove these, leaving only the STP filter highlighted
- > Click the [Search](#) button

This will give you a list of all special workings for that particular day. You can amend the location to choose somewhere else, such as Appleby or Kirkby Stephen.

Date	Train	Direction	Promoter	Locomotives
Sat 2 May	Historic Edinburgh	Both Directions	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Diesel
Mon 4 May	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Mon 4 May	Engineering train	Southbound (early hours)	Network Rail	FOC Class 66
Tues 5 May	Engineering train	Southbound x3 (early hours)	Network Rail	FOC Class 66
Sat 9 May	Cumbrian Mountain Express	Southbound	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Sun 10 May	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 23 May	The Lakeland	Southbound	Saphos Trains	Locomotive Services Group Steam
Mon 25 May	125th anniversary special	Both directions	Settle & Carlisle Partnerships	West Coast Railway Co Tangmere
Mon 1 Jun	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Weds 3 Jun	The Fellsman	Both directions	Saphos Trains	60532 Blue Peter
Sun 7 Jun	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 20 Jun	Cumbrian Mountain Express	Southbound	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Mon 29 Jun	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Weds 1 Jul	The Fellsman	Both directions	Saphos Trains	60532 Blue Peter
Sat 4 Jul	The Lakeland	Southbound	Saphos Trains	Locomotive Services Group Steam
Sun 5 Jul	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sun 19 Jul	The Waverley	Both directions	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Tues 21 Jul	Ultrasonic Test Train	Northbound (early hours)	Network Rail	Colas class 37 or HST
Weds 22 Jul	Ultrasonic Test Train	Southbound (early hours)	Network Rail	Colas class 37 or HST
Mon 27 Jul	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 1 Aug	Cumbrian Mountain Express	Southbound	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Sun 2 Aug	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Weds 5 Aug	The Fellsman	Both directions	Saphos Trains	60532 Blue Peter
Sun 9 Aug	The Waverley	Both directions	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Sun 23 Aug	The Waverley	Both directions	Railway Touring Co	West Coast Railway Co Steam
Mon 24 Aug	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 29 Aug	The Lakeland	Southbound	Saphos Trains	Locomotive Services Group Steam
Sun 30 Aug	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train



Walk and Ride by Nigel Capelle