



# RIBBLE VALLEY RAILNews



**Ken Roberts**

**A Founder Member of RVR  
and railway photographer extraordinaire  
12 September 1928 - 26 May 2024**

*Photo: P Eastham (October 2008)*





## Hellifield Station

- as rarely seen, basking in glorious summer sunshine.

Known as “a cowl ‘ole at best o’ times.”

*[Just imagine how a 3-year old felt in January 1947!]*

These days, home to a warm welcome in Shed 24H cafe.

*Photos: courtesy of Mrs K Harrison*



## **Minutes of the Ribble Valley Rail Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 23 March 2024 held in Trinity Church Hall, Parson Lane, Clitheroe at 2.00pm**

**Present:** P Eastham, DJ Butterworth, G Dudley, P White, PM Corlett, W A Briggs, J Moore, JA Cox.

**1. Apologies for absence:** J Dickinson, N Weaver, E Buckley

**2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM** (previously circulated) were accepted. (P:WABriggs, S: G Dudley)

**3. Matters arising:** DBC proposed that PMC continue as Minutes Secretary. Unanimous.

### **4. Chairman's Report to AGM**

May this year marks the 30th anniversary of the reintroduction of the passenger service between Blackburn and Clitheroe. So, it is perhaps a good time to take a look at where we've come from, why we're still here 30 years on, and what the future holds.

Formed in 1986, Ribble Valley Rail was committed to re-establishing rail passenger services to the Ribble Valley line. Several charter trains were organised to demonstrate the feasibility of such a service and these proved highly popular. Pressure was put on the then British Rail, greatly assisted by local councillors and Lancashire County Council. In 1990 LCC commissioned a feasibility study into the viability of reopening the line, and Regional Railways, the local operator, timetabled a Saturdays-only service between Preston and Clitheroe, "The Saturday Shopper" which was inaugurated on 19 May 1990. and also proved successful. Finally, in May 1994, after long negotiations between LCC and Regional Railways, strongly supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council and RVR, a new weekday passenger service between Manchester Victoria and Clitheroe was introduced to the line with its four newly rebuilt stations, Ramsgreave & Wilpshire, Langho, Whalley, and Clitheroe.

Following this, there were further developments with the addition of a summer Sunday service, originally 2-hourly, but now all year round with an hourly frequency.

DalesRail [*see RVRNs 37 and 38*] was a special service for ramblers and walkers supported and sponsored by LCC on summer Saturdays, and later Sundays from 1975. DalesRail remained popular, extending to a second train, but, in recent years, various issues concerning rail staff and the operators resulted in a very poor performance and reliability record. As a result the DfT instructed the operators not to run the service in 2023.

So, what is happening at present?

The longer trains, giving the increased capacity particularly necessary between Blackburn and Manchester, required longer platforms at several stations. Unfortunately, the programme to lengthen them progressively from the Bolton end ran out of money, leaving Langho, Whalley, and Clitheroe with short platforms and requiring passengers at this end of the line to travel only in the front two carriages. RVR will continue to press for the completion of this programme.

I have already mentioned the demise of the DalesRail service in 2023. The sudden announcement of its withdrawal caused great consternation, particularly among the ramblers' groups who had organised guided walks programmes which had to be abandoned. Co-operation was again the order of the day and a meeting between representatives of the Ramblers, RVR, and the Settle & Carlisle Groups formed a pressure group to aim for its reinstatement. Following the resulting involvement of local authorities, MPs, and the DfT, eventually a formula to avoid the problems of 2022 was found and a new service is to run on Saturdays beginning on 8 June 2024, and running all year round between Rochdale, Manchester, Ribble Valley, and Ribblesdale [*with connections to/from Carlisle*]. I hope you will support this new Yorkshire Dales Explorer service. Timetables are available today.

Another new service, announced this week, is a Hodder Valley bus service between Clitheroe, Dunsop Bridge, Slaidburn, Settle, and Horton-in-Ribblesdale advised by Lancashire and North Yorkshire Councils. Our Friends of Stations member who looks after R&W station for RVR is also Chairman of the Ramblers and was not happy when the buses were not timetabled to co-ordinate with the trains at Clitheroe. I am pleased to be able to say that his advice to LCC brought an apology and a revised timetable that now gives 10-minute connection times. Again, some timetables are available today.

All local train services were badly hit during the COVID pandemic and, like other services country-wide, have been taking time to recover, since. Again, it is pleasing to report that the RV service has been the fastest to recover, ahead of the Blackpool North - Leeds, and well ahead of the Blackburn - Todmorden - Manchester - Kirkby service and the Colne - Preston.

As reported at a previous AGM, Northern Railway, our train operator, in common with many others lost its franchise owing to financial difficulties partly caused by COVID, meaning that Northern is now controlled by HM Govt with the DfT making the big decisions on financial matters and future policy. This year, Northern was asked by HMG to advise on the most efficient improvements to rail connectivity in their areas. Three routes were put forward for what were termed “service uplifts”, these being three routes showing the largest growth over the past decade. Again, the Clitheroe - Rochdale route was in the top three - others being: Kirkby - Todmorden - Blackburn, and York - Blackpool. There had been much discussion previously between RVR, our rail, and Local Authority partners in preparation for RVBC’s “Restoring Your Railway” bid for the RV Line (under Boris Johnson’s scheme), and this work became useful in preparation of this Service Uplift bid, commissioned and funded Blackburn-with-Darwen BC, Burnley BC, Community Rail Lancashire, Lancashire CC, and RVBC.

A summary of the document’s content and what it could mean for our line in the future. The case for change listed a number of socio-economic challenges. Operationally, there was sufficient capacity to extend all the Rochdale - Blackburn services to Clitheroe. This would call at all stations between Blackburn and Clitheroe and give a half-hourly service. There was also sufficient capacity to extend Clitheroe services further to terminate at, and start back from, Hellifield. An additional diagram was required which equated to two additional 2-car units plus staffing for the additional half-hourly service to Clitheroe and an additional diagram equating to a 2-car additional unit, plus additional staffing for further extension of services to Hellifield.

No immediate infrastructure requirements had been identified to enable the running of a second train per hour between Blackburn and Clitheroe. However, the upgrade to the signalling required to facilitate the extension to Hellifield would require careful planning and collaboration with Network Rail. Extending services to Clitheroe and Hellifield saw a demand forecast of up to 133,000 passengers *per annum*, with an industry revenue uplift of £0.7m *per annum*. 1.9m car-kilometres would be taken off the road. User and non-user benefits would equate to £2.1m *per annum* with a projected annual operating cost of £5.5m *per annum* using existing rolling stock.

The direct linking of Greater Manchester and Lancashire with the Yorkshire Dales would support future growth of both off-peak leisure markets and employment options between the regions. Northern Trains Ltd and Lancashire stakeholders needed to continue engagement where needed and promote these aspirations.

Hopefully, this would be our future to look forward to.

*Peter Eastham*

## **5. Treasurer’s Report and adoption of accounts**

The statement of Income and Expenditure was distributed, showing an income of £1,352.50 and an expenditure of £1,279.04, with a total account balance of £6,072.80. There was an excess of Income over Expenditure of £73.46. The sources of income and expenditure were explained. Acceptance as a true and correct record (P: W A Briggs, S: G Dudley) All in favour.

Following the change from Yorkshire Bank to Virgin Money, it appears that the original signatory mandate has not been passed on. A new mandate was acquired and the inclusion of P M Corlett as second signatory was approved by the Committee. The Treasurer should now be able to access and monitor the account on-line.

*David Butterworth*

## 6. Membership Secretary's Report

As of 21 March 2024, RVR has: 107 paid-up subscribing members, 4 Hon Life Members: Total 111. Of the 45 Members whose subs were due by the end of January 2024:

Two had already resigned but remained members until their subs ran out at the end of January 2024.

One has resigned after the reminder issued in February 2024.

One death (from April 2023) was recorded post-renewal form.

One, thought to have defaulted, was discovered to have paid his subson 2 Jan 2024 but, unfortunately, had failed to inform me by returning his Renewal Form.

So, only four have defaulted who, if not paid up by RVRN139, will be removed from the Mailing List.

During the year, we have two new members. So, the total reduction in Membership amounts to six.

### RVRNews

24 RVR members receive RVRNews exclusively by email, with another 7 both Post and Email.

Of the Extras (Rly, other Rly Assocs, LAs, MPs, Govt Bodies, etc) 28 receive RVRNews exclusively by email, 17 posted, and 6 hand-delivered. Thought 85 RVR Members' hard copies per edition are posted, generally another 10 are hand-delivered.

As far as the production of RVRNews is concerned, I still have difficulty getting text into Pagemaker. Microsoft has altered the character set and, although I can transfer text to the RVR laptop, Pagemaker will no longer accept it and I have to type in all the text, myself. Nor can I, personally, convert the Pagemaker to pdf. As a result of all this, I investigated Publisher but it was nowhere near as easy to use as Pagemaker, and now Microsoft no longer supports it.

However, my daughter Kathryn, has investigated Microsoft SWAY as an alternative to pdf. This has been tried out by all the members who are on email. The results have been well-received and are discussed in a separate paper. Even Peter Newhouse, the RVRNews printer, like it! It can be accessed securely and can be read easily on a mobile phone and a pdf can be produced from it, if desired.

Contributions to RVRNews would be appreciated sooner rather than later!

*Bill Briggs*

## 7. Friends of Stations

**Clitheroe:** Paul White is looking after the front garden and the watering. The primulas planted in 2023 are still looking good. the new plants in the platform planters are OK, with a couple of gaps to be filled. They have been weeded and tidied up and bulbs were added in the Autumn. the new signs re planting by RVR ar ready to be put in place. The new CIS is much better to read but is out of sight in the shelter. Rubbish bags are being used. The tannoy is working, but faintly. The shelter on the Hellifield platform is to be replaced by one more weatherproof. DJB put posters relating to strike days on the ticket machine. PMC is to try a vinegar and salt solution to kill weeds.

**Whalley:** New planting to be done at the end of March. The Community noti ceboard was damaged and has been replaced by a new Northern board.

**Langho:** There is a Government fund to improve station access, but it doesn't cover everything that is needed. PE will ask about this at the next CRP meeting.

**Ramsgreave & Wilpshire:** PE will write to R&W Parish Council to thank them for the work done at the station.

**Darwen:** GD has made bi-weekly visits usually between 11.00 and 11.25 Mon-Sat. The station is very clean with no graffiti and only one incident of vandalism. Litter bags always in place and being used. Ticket machines are used regularly following the introduction of ticket barriers at Blackburn, although many passengers now use phone apps. Pa system working and new CIS have been reliable. The Blackburn terminating trains have been reinstated. Shelters are clean, with one broken window to be replaced. A timetable is only posted at the entrance to the Blackburn platform; a major inconvenience for Bolton and Manchester passengers. Advertising posters are out of date, but train and maintenance posters are current. Briars and other vegetation was cut back and cuttings removed by ISS. The fence at the north end of the Bolton platform is leaning but still fairly safe. Bulbs in the planters are still blooming but significant weeding is required. Evergreen planters require no attention. Car park little used, although in a recent free week it was almost full. Entwistle station looks in good order when viewed from the train.

### **8. Other reports:**

Neil Weaver is keeping the website up to date and refers any queries that he is unable to deal with. PE to send him a vote of thanks from the Committee.

Lauren Hall has publicised the new Yorkshire Dales Explorer on Facebook - and should be encouraged to keep doing it.

### **9. Election of Officers and Committee:**

The following nominations were received:

**Chairman:** P Eastham

**Vice-Chmn:** B Haworth

**Secretary:** P M Corlett

**Treasurer:** D J Butterworth

All proposed by DJB and seconded by J A Cox. Elected.

#### **Committee nominations:**

A Bowles, W A Briggs, G Dudley, L Hall, J Moore, A Scholfield, N Weaver, P White.

All elected unopposed.

W A Briggs proposed, seconded by D J Butterworth, that Jeff Dickinson be invited to join the Committee. All in favour.

### **10. Any other business:**

i) WAB to go to Hellifield with magazines and membership forms.

ii) 8 June, first running of YDE, great photo-opportunity. 30 years since the passenger service, with re-opened/new stations, was re-instated from Manchester to Clitheroe on 12 June 1994.

iii) Alex Hynes is to be Director General, Rail Services, at DfT.

**Date and venue of 2025 AGM** will be published in RVRNews.

**Meeting closed at 3.45pm.**

*P Eastham, Chairman*

*P M Corlett, Secretary*

**2024 marks 30 years of the RVL's restored passenger service started.  
Celebrate it on Saturday 8 June!! Don't forget!!**

## From the Chair

Most of “From the Chair” appears in the 2024 AGM Minutes. Thanks to all who attended the meeting at the impressive venue of the Trinity Hub, in Clitheroe.

So far, this year seems to have produced some more positive development than previously. The Spring Northern Stakeholder Conference seemed more upbeat with the investigation and tendering process being put in place for the replacement of over 300 older trains in Northern’s fleet, with new ones. As these are diesel units, presently operating RV services, we can hopefully look forward to new trains - but not until 2028 (at the earliest) when the various options of biodiesel, battery/hybrid, or others have been evaluated, tested, and the trains built.

Another, very welcome, announcement has been about the new service, The Yorkshire Dales Explorer, covered in detail elsewhere in this RVRN, and which commences on Saturday 8 June 2024. Preparations have been progressing well for Blackburn train crews to qualify for operating beyond Clitheroe, with almost daily train crew route-learning trains becoming a regular feature. For further details, including the very reasonable fares, see pages 18-22 of this RVRN or visit: <https://communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/lines/yorkshire-dales-explorer>

If you are able, **please support this service**. At the Conference, our Northern Area Director said that the Company hopes to build on the service, in the future.

*Peter Eastham*

## Membership

Sadly, since the 2024 AGM, I have been informed of the deaths of three RVR Members, Brian Harrison (RVR513), Dallas Hackett (RVR585), and most recently Ken Roberts (RVR016). Their obituaries appear on pages 17 and 18. Ken’s efforts for RVR are legendary and his photographic talents nationally famous. Also, his prodigious memory (akin to that of *New Tricks* character Brian Lane!) is illustrated in Peter Eastham’s article on Page 8. Upto Press, details of Ken’s “arrangements” are not to hand and some of his “fan club” are yet to be informed. *Bill Briggs (Membership Sec.)*

The photo [*below left*] shows Ken at the original Wilpshire Stn (closed 9/62) in early 1965.

He and another photographer had just had an official brakevan ride from Hellifield on an anhydrite train hauled by 9F loco, 92019. The price of the ride from BR was that, for the outward journey, they both bought First Class tickets from Blackburn to Hellifield via Accrington and Skipton.

Taken in 2008, [*below right*] shows him standing (a rather smaller camera in hand!) alongside one of the K&WVR’s two former Bournemouth Belle 1920s Pullman cars, almost the same age as Ken.

*Text and photos: courtesy of Peter Eastham*



## Photographic memories

Peter Eastham

For several years I have been assisting retired *Rail and Steam World* editor, Nigel Harris, in archiving Ken Roberts's large collection of his photographic railway negatives which Ken had handed over to him for the magazine to save for posterity. Nigel scans and emails them to me in batches. Until very recently, I described them to Ken, who could no longer see, but was able fill in the details of location, train etc, from his still fantastic (photographic?) memory. These details then went back to be stored with the negatives.

Already, several photos have been published. All are top quality and date from the 1950s to the 1970s. However, a recent batch included a much older photo of Whalley Station in its Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway days, which Ken could not have taken since it had been taken before he was born!

I described it to him and he told me that he was shown the framed photo by the tenants who had taken over the Down-side station building at Whalley, in the early days of RVR. The lady there at the time, Jane Priestley, was very supportive of RVR [*to the extent of becoming RVR Member 518 in Dec 2004*] and used the service a lot in the late 1990s and early 2000s. She lived on Whalley New Road in Brownhill and would cycle, almost daily, to swim in the pool at the hotel in Langho, travelling home (which would have been nearly all uphill!) on the train from Whalley to Ramsgreave & Wilpshire, with her bike. It was probably she who gave Ken permission to photograph the photo as I believe, at that time, she owned the business in the Whalley Station building.

Items of interest are the intricate ironwork, the black & white station signage (Hebden Bridge station still has its L&Y signage preserved *in situ*, and the "skeleton" of Whalley DOWN platform nameboard still stood until the station re-opened in 1994), ash ballast beneath the track, numerous gas lamps, lower quadrant signals, and the enamel "Pear's Soap" and other adverts. An L&Y locomotive stands in the goodsyard, maybe shunting, or possibly the Whalley "banker". Its exhaust steam and smoke appear blurred, probably owing to the long exposure time required for plate cameras, in those days. PE





## **RIBBLE VALLEY RAIL**

### **a portrait of a User Group in action**

*extracts from a paper prepared by David Butterworth and revised in 1999  
[with some minor additions from the Editor in 2024]*

#### **Introduction**

The Ribble Valley Line lost its passenger service on Saturday 10 September 1962, when the 23:05 from Blackburn to Hellifield called at Wilpshire, Whalley, Clitheroe, Chatburn, and Gisburn for the last time. The line's other stations had been closed, one by one, over a number of years: Daisyfield 23 Nov 1958, Langho 7 May 1956, Rimington 7 July 1958, and Newsholme 6 August 1957. It was "closure by stealth" by removing the most used trains from the timetable and conducting the passenger survey on a Bank Holiday! No economies had been made and it was steam traction to the end.

Regular non-stop passenger trains used the route until 1964, after which Ribblesdale Cement at Clitheroe continued to provide a source of rail-borne heavy freight. The route also saw numerous long distance trains en route from Scotland to the South and vice-versa.

Platform edges were cut back and stations dismantled &/or left to rot. During the late '60s and early '70s no-one gave much thought to the line's ultimate fate. In the mid '70s there was renewed interest in the possibility of using trains to access the Yorkshire Dales from the Yorkshire and Lancashire towns. Enterprising work by a group of volunteers led to the establishment of the DalesRail services in 1975. In the first instance the service ran on summer Saturdays. The Lancashire portion traversed the Ribble Valley Line and, as part of the campaign to make this service a success, the platforms at Clitheroe were rebuilt at minimum (materials only!) cost, to accommodate a 2-car diesel unit. Nevertheless, this development established the route as an open passenger line with Clitheroe Station open once again, albeit for "occasional use".

In the early '80s, before the formation of Ribble Valley Rail, Peter Moore and Canon John Hudson organised two highly successful rail trips to raise funds for Clitheroe Parish Church restoration programme. The first was to Edinburgh, pulled by *Flying Scotsman* between Hellifield and Carlisle. The second was Clitheroe to York, pulled both ways by *Sir Nigel Gresley*. Both trips were fully subscribed and proved the local enthusiasm for rail travel.

During this time the fate of the Settle & Carlisle Line hung in the balance as it too had experienced the withdrawal of stopping passenger trains and the remaining through trains, which no longer originated from London, appeared to be operated as a token gesture. During the early '80s there were strong rumours that Ribblehead Viaduct was in such a poor condition that, if trains were continue using the route, a large amount of money (£6 million was suggested) would need to be spent on remedial work, or even rebuilding. Given that British Rail was unwilling to justify such expenditure, on was clearly a lightly-used railway, the only course of action was to recommend closure of the central section of the S&C and, with it, the section of the RVL between Horrocksford and Hellifield. The rest of the RVL would have been reduced to a single-track siding from Daisyfield Jet to Horrocksford cement works.

Ironically, Ron Cotton, the BR manager ostensibly appointed to oversee the closure, actually succeeded in attracting many more people to use the trains, particularly after reinstating day return tickets between Leeds and Carlisle and re-opening many of the wayside stations. When the formal notices of closure were eventually published there were sufficient people with first hand knowledge of the unique attractions of the Settle & Carlisle Railway and there was an overwhelming reaction to the thought of closure. Signatories to petitions against closure totalled around 11,000 (+ Ruswarp's paw print). After a lengthy public enquiry the Secretary of State changed his mind and was minded to allow the line to remain open and, in doing so, reprieved the RVL. On 11 April 1989, Michael Portillo MP, made a personal visit to announce the good news to Committee Members of the fledgling (but very active) RVR, assembled in Clitheroe, before heading on north to meet the people of the S&C.

## Class 88s on the Ribble Valley Line

*Ted Buckley*

On the cover of RVRNews 138 the question was posed as to whether 88002, photographed on 4 October 2023, was the first Class 88 to traverse the RVL. I'm afraid that it wasn't. I witnessed a Class 88 traversing the RVL on two previous occasions; 12 August 2017 and 30 December 2022.

On Saturday 12 August 2017, running five minutes early at 17.36, an almost brand new 88004 *Pandora*, accompanied by 68016 *Fearless* was observed approaching Langho station with 1Z40, the return leg of Pathfinder Tours' *The Settle & Carlisle Explorer*, running from Appleby to Newport (South Wales).

The Class 88s were manufactured by Stadler at Valencia in Spain, and delivered to the UK in the spring of that year. After testing an running-in trials, they commenced service with DRS in June 2017. Consequently, Pandora was almost "fresh out of the box" when traversing the RVL. A "Glorious Twelfth", indeed!

On Friday 30 December 2022, 88006 *Juno* passed through Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station in the company of 66433. This was the daily Engineers' train [*aka* 6K05] from Carlisle to Crewe Basford Hall, running light engines as 0K05. This working had caught me by surprise, as it was not due to pass R&W until 16.06, yet was seen at 14.54, 72 minutes early! I was on Platform 1, camera in hand, awaiting the four-weekly Fridays-only Network Rail test train, which passed through in the opposite direction nine minutes later (3.5 minutes late), topped and tailed by Class 37s.

### June 2024 Timetable Change

Along with the rest of the industry, Northern's next timetable change takes place in June 2024, rather than in May, but will revert back to changing in May in 2025.

The June timetable is largely similar to the current timetable, maintaining the changes introduced throughout 2023 and the route capacity changes introduced in December.

Timetable information is available on June timetable change webpage, along with the Timetable comparison tool. Key changes affecting the RVL are:

#### **Leeds - Carlisle**

From March 2024 an increased capacity is running along this route, increasing from a mix 2- or 3-carriage trains to a mix of 3- or 4-carriage trains. This is to support increased seasonal demand.

#### **Manchester - Ribbleshead (Saturdays-only, all-year-round, from 8 June 2024)**

Northern will introduce two services every Saturday in each direction, called **The Yorkshire Dales Explorer**, linking Rochdale, Manchester, Salford, Bolton, and Clitheroe to the Yorkshire Dales. This brand new service will increase connections between the Manchester area and the Yorkshire Dales, again in-line with seasonal demand.

Whilst it is not exactly like DalesRail, it's the best available replacement at the moment and it deserves the support of RVR members.

**In order to give this new service real support, please use it!  
Remember that bums on seats make all the difference!**



### **Class 88s on the Ribble Valley Line**

*Above:* On 12 August 2017, 88004 *Pandora* and 68016 *Fearless* approach Langho with 1Z40.

*Below:* On 30 December 2022, 88006 *Juno* and 66433 pass through Ramsgreave & Wilpshire, light engines, with 0Z05.

*Photos: Ted Buckley*





34046 *Braunton* enters Clitheroe, with the first “Fellsman” of the season, at 09:15 on 1 May 2024. There were twenty passengers waiting to board. Some will, no doubt have used the new shelter.



Northbound Midland Pullman passes Rochdale-bound 150113 in Clitheroe station on 27 April 2024.



Battle of Britain Class 34067 Tangmere, with steam to spare, hauls a southbound steam special through Clitheroe on 20 April 2024.

*Photos:  
Graham Dudley*

68005 heads the engineers' train, 6K05, through Clitheroe on 26 February 2024.



On a sunny spring day, with Kemple end and the Bowland Fells in the background, 66714 takes 6M90, the cement empties, over Whalley Viaduct on 5 March 2024.



Southbound Midland Pullman HST set 43046 & 43055 crosses the A59 bridge at Chatburn with 1Z43, Dundee - Blackpool North special, on 27 April 2024.



*Photos:  
Jeff Dickinson*



**Above:** Part of the RVR logo, Whalley Viaduct stretches away, across the evident flood plain of the R. Calder, over the “ecclesiastical” arches (partially hidden by the trees), to the distant Whalley Station [top right of picture].

*Drone footage: Network Rail*

## Two long viaducts

**Below:** Interesting atmospheric conditions for this classic view of Ribblesdale Viaduct. Whernside, the highest of the Three Peaks, forms the terrestrial background. For the fit walker(s), catch the YDE connection to Dent (arr 10:47) climb Whernside, and return from Ribbleshead (dep 18:05) or, for the super fit, include Ingleborough, and return from Horton-in-Ribblesdale (dep 18:12).

*Photo: Michael Bryan*



## Whalley and Ribblehead Viaducts - a comparison by Kathryn Ball

Anyone travelling along the A59, between Northcote and Bramley Mede roundabouts, couldn't fail to notice Whalley Viaduct but may not appreciate that it is the longest brick-built viaduct in Lancashire. At over 600m long and 21m high, its 49 arches span the River Calder between Billington and Whalley and was Grade II listed in 1986. Whilst it is not as high as its better-known counterpart, Ribblehead Viaduct, it is 50% longer and has twice as many arches. The 49 round arches on battered piers took three years to build, at a cost of £40,000 (equivalent to £6.7m, today), using 12,300 cubic yards of stone and 7 million bricks. Both red and blue bricks were made locally, on the site of what would become a First World War military hospital and, later, Calderstones Hospital, with its own branch line. Six thousand metres of wood were used for supports and scaffolding.

In 2017 Network Rail spent £1.2m to reinforce some of the arches with steel, to help stabilise the viaduct when the Calder floods. In 2022 Network Rail commissioned, from Commendium, a LiDAR survey of the whole structure. Previously, only manual checks were possible, with surveyors abseiling or perched on scaffolding to survey the brickwork. The LiDAR data is much safer, more detailed, and enables a better plan for on-going maintenance over the coming years, ensuring that this marvel of Victorian engineering continues in its primary purpose for years to come.

**Whalley Viaduct** 53° 49' 14" N, 2° 24' 54" W.    w3w tens.reckons.sprinkle

Crosses the River Calder

Owned and maintained by Network Rail

Designed by Terence Wolfe Rattigan

620 metres long, 23 metres high

49 arches (48 in brick, one in stone)

Construction started 1846, line opened 22 June 1850

*Photo: Network Rail*

**Ribblehead Viaduct** 54° 12' 37.44" N, 2° 22' 12.72" W.    w3w waving.such.spectacle

Crosses Batty Moss

Owned and maintained by Network Rail

400m long, 32m high

24 stone arches

Construction started 1870, opened 3 August 1875

*Photo: Michael Bryan - originally posted to Flickr as "Here comes the sun...", CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8367658>*

*Drone footage: <https://bit.ly/4dUbPP6>*

*LiDAR footage: <https://bit.ly/3WTD71R>*

*Thanks to Chris Denham, Senior Media Manager at Network Rail, for permission to use Network Rail images and video. KJB*

## Obituaries

### Brian Harrison (RVR 513) >>>>

Brian Hollins Harrison, who joined RVR 12 June 2004, passed away on 9 March 2024 after two years of respiratory problems.

Brian was born 20 October 1937 and lived in Brennand Street, Clitheroe. He was educated at Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. Instead of going into the Sixth Form he went to Boots Chemists at Burnley as an Improver, after which he took a course in Pharmacy at Heriot Watt in Edinburgh, qualifying in 1959 as a Member of the Pharmaceutical Society.



After several spells in the Lake District, he applied to P&O and succeeded in gaining a position on the cruise liner *Arcadia*, where he was the resident pharmacist for approximately a year, enjoying a world cruise! Subsequently, he obtained a position in Skipton but felt the cold badly there, after being on board ship.

Eventually, he went to Edinburgh to a job in the Co-op. It was during this time, 1962, that he met Katy and subsequently married in 1965. After a couple of years he bought his own business, in which Katy was pleased to help. They had two sons. Sadly the elder son died only thirty.

Brian is survived by his widow, Katy, their younger son, Neville\* and family, two granddaughters, and a great-granddaughter aged 4!

Brian had very strong roots in Clitheroe. Following a chance encounter with RVR Memb Sec at a Wensleydale Railway Association AGM, he took up a Family Membership of RVR on 12 June 2004. He was a member of the Friends of the Settle & Carlisle Line, the Wensleydale Railway Association, Old Clitheronians' Association, Clitheroe Civic Society, and loved coming to stay at his Mum's house in Brennand Street. He is sadly missed.

*\* Katy tells me that Neville is engaged in a somewhat unusual engineering project. Several years ago he bought an old dredger, and has been renovating it. At present, he has been fitting it with legs to enable it to rise up to the harbour and load up directly. A huge job, not quite finished, yet. She has promised to let me know how it goes! It sounds like a project with which my grandson, Richard, would love to have been involved. Ed.*

### Dallas Hackett (RVR 585) >>>>

Mrs Dallas Hackett, who was born on 9 July 1939, lived at Sawley. She joined RVR on 28 April 2013, being the first member on the (then) new Membership Application Form.

Her step-daughter, Lindsay Raison, informs me that Dallas had been an English teacher and, subsequently, a Head Teacher. She died unexpectedly, but peacefully, on 23 April 2024, leaving 4 step-children, 9 grand-children, and 3 great-grandchildren.



*Though I never had the pleasure of meeting Dallas, in person, I'd spoken to her on the phone on a number of occasions. Living in Sawley, she was always keen to hear of any progress on a new station for Chatburn. She was also enthusiastic about the new format for the emailed RVRNews. Ed.*

**To the relatives of both our deceased members RVR extends sincere condolences.**

*Bill Briggs (Membership Secretary)*

**Jacques Cooper** (not an RVR Member) died on 16 April 2024, aged 93. Of British parentage, inspired by his design of the limited-edition 914 Murene Porsche, he designed the distinctive aerodynamic shape of the orange TGV high-speed train, which has been a source of intense national pride in France since it entered service in 1981. [*Info: Daily Telegraph 20 May 2024.*] Ed.



## **Ken Roberts (RVR 016)**

A Founder Member of RVR, Ken Roberts died in hospital on 26 May 2024, aged 95 years. He was born on 12 Sept 1928. Upto aged five, he lived with his parents in a rented cottage in Knowsley Rd, Wilpshire, with the original railway station on the hillside above. One day, his mother reported the young Kenneth had “gone missing”. Father guessed correctly that Ken would be watching trains from the station platform. Future solo excursions were prevent by father escorting Ken to the station. One such, involved Ken’s first trip on the RV Line. They were sitting at the north end of the DOWN platform when the train drew up alongside them. The driver asked if the young lad would like a footplate ride to Langho. Father agreed and Ken got on the footplate and his father got in the first compartment of the first carriage. One of the station staff must have witnessed this and phoned ahead as, on arrival at Langho, father was “collared” and his ticket fare demanded. Ken was underage. The event being totally unplanned, father was carrying barely enough money for the single journey which resulted in a long walk back to Wilpshire and some very tired little legs for Ken which he remembered for the rest of his life. Later, the family purchsed a house at Roe Lee in which Ken lived for the next 90 years, until recently.

One of Ken’s early jobs was a junior position with British Road Services. One of his tasks was to stand at the roadside and flag down passing BRS lorries to advise the drivers of addition pick-ups from the nearby depot. No mobile phone communication between depot and driver, in those days!

Later, Ken’s main employment would be at the CPA Print Works at Barrow, near Whalley. This involved photographic skills as Ken had to photograph the colour separations for textile designs created by the in-house artists. These were then photographically etched to copper plates which were fitted to rollers which applied the different colours to the textile. Only just as Ken was reaching retirement did the Swiss invent a multi-million pound machine that could do Ken’s job to a thousandth of an inch accuracy.

His skill and interest in trains and photography led him into railway photography and, as early as 1953, he won the national prize in an Ian Allan magazine competition, for an atmospheric shot of Hellifield loco shed taken from the brakevan window of a ramblers’ excursion from Blackburn to Settle.

I first met Ken in 1965, getting off a train at Keighley on a visit to the, then embryonic, Keighley & Worth Valley Heritage Railway. We became life-long friends. Later, in the 1980s, we saw an advert in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* for a meeting in the Swan & Royal Hotal in Clitheroe for anyone interested in re-instating the passenger service which had been lost in September 1962. We were both impressed by the determination of those present at the meeting. It was voted that Ribble Valley Rail should be formed - and the rest is history!

Ken was a long-serving RVR Committeee Member and a Friend of Ramsgreave & Wilpshire Station, loyally attending each morning to do cleaning, litter-removal, and reporting defects and damage, until a few years ago when he was registered blind.

Ken was also Chairman of the Carriage & Wagon Dept of the Keighley & Worth Valley Rly, again for many years. His front page picture is taken from one, taken in 2008, standing (camera in hand, as usual!) alongside one of the K&WVR’s two former Bournemouth Belle 1920s Pullman cars, almost the same age as Ken.

*Peter Eastham*

**Fondly remembered and sadly missed by all.**

*[A retrospective selection of Ken’s photos will appear in RVRN140. Ed.]*

## Yorkshire Dales Explorer (NORTHBOUND)

		2N60	A	2N61	C
<b>Rochdale</b>	<b>dep</b>	<b>07 52</b>		<b>14.52</b>	
Castleton	dep	07 55		14 55	
Mills Hill	dep	08 00		15 00	
Moston	dep	08 03		15 03	
<b>Manchester Vic</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>08 13</b>		<b>15 13</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>08 15</b>		<b>15 15</b>	
Salford Central	dep	08 18		15 18	
<b>Salford Crescent</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>08 21</b>		<b>15 21</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>08 22</b>		<b>15 22</b>	
<b>Bolton</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>08 34</b>		<b>15 35</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>08 35</b>		<b>15 35</b>	
Hall i'th' Wood	dep	08 40		15 40	
Bromley Cross	dep	08 44		15 44	
Darwen	dep	08 56		15 56	
<b>Blackburn</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>09 03</b>		<b>16 04</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>09 08</b>		<b>16 15</b>	
Ramsgreave & Wilpshire	dep	09 14		16 21	
Langho	dep	09 19		16 26	
Whalley	dep	09 24		16 31	
<b>Clitheroe</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>09 30</b>		<b>16 37</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>09 31</b>		<b>16 38</b>	
<b>Hellifield</b>	<b>dep</b>	<b>09 54</b>	1012	<b>17 01</b>	1741
Long Preston			1014		1743
<b>Settle</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>10 01</b>		<b>17 08</b>	
	<b>dep</b>	<b>10 03</b>	1021	<b>17 10</b>	1749
Horton-in-Ribblesdale	dep	10 12	1030	17 19	1758
<b>Ribblehead</b>	<b>arr</b>	<b>10 19</b>	1038	<b>17 26</b>	1806
Dent			1047		1815
Garsdale			1053		1821
Kirkby Stephen			1105		1833
Appleby			1119		1846
Langwathby			1133		1900
Lazonby & Kirkoswald			1138		1905
Armathwaite			1146		1913
Carlisle	arr		12.01		1928

Notes: A = from Leeds (0919)

C = from Leeds (1648)

For connections into Blackburn see next page.

## Yorkshire Dales Explorer

### Services from Preston direction connecting into the Northbound YDE at Blackburn

	A	B	YDE	A	B	YDE
Blackpool North		0809			1519	
Poulton-le-Fylde		0825			1525	
Kirkham & Wesham		0833			1533	
Preston	0823	0844		1525	1544	
Lostock Hall	0830			1531		
Bamber Bridge	0833			1534		
Pleasington	0841			1541		
Cherry Tree	0844			1544		
Mill Hill	0847			1547		
<b>Blackburn</b>	0850	0900	<b>0908</b>	1550	1600	<b>1615</b>
Stations to						
<b>Ribblehead (arr)</b>			<b>1019a</b>			<b>1726a</b>

A = to Colne, B = to York

### Services from Burnley direction connecting into the Northbound YDE at Blackburn

	C	D	YDE	C	D	YDE
Halifax	0728			1430		
Hebden Bridge	0741			1441		
Burnley Manchestr Rd	0802			1502		
Colne		0752			1452	
Nelson		0758			1458	
Brierfield		0801			1501	
Burnley Central		0806			1506	
Burnley Barracks		0808			1508	
Rose Grove		0812			1512	
Hapton		0815			1515	
Huncoat		0819			1519	
Accrington	0812	0824		1512	1524	
Church & Oswaldtwistle		0827			1527	
Rishton		0830			1530	
<b>Blackburn</b>	0821	0836	<b>0908</b>	1521	1536	<b>1615</b>
Stations to						
<b>Ribblehead (arr)</b>			<b>1019</b>			<b>1726</b>

C = York to Blackpool North, D = to Preston

## Yorkshire Dales Explorer (SOUTHBOUND)

		B	2J22	D	2J26
Carlisle	dep	0927		1618	
Armathwaite		0942		1632	
Lazonby & Kirkoswald		0949		1639	
Langwathby		0955		1646	
Appleby		1010		1701	
Kirkby Stephen		1023		1715	
Garsdale		1037		1728	
Dent		1042		1733	
<b>Ribblehead</b>	<b>dep</b>	1051	<b>11 08</b>	1743	<b>18 05</b>
Horton-in-Ribblesdale	dep	1058	11 13	1749	18 12
<b>Settle</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>11 22</b>		<b>18 19</b>
	<b>dep</b>	1106	<b>11 22</b>	1758	<b>18 21</b>
<b>Hellfield</b>	<b>dep</b>	1113	<b>11 30</b>	1807	<b>18 28</b>
<b>Clitheroe</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>11 53</b>		<b>18 52</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>11 54</b>		<b>18 52</b>
Whalley	dep		12 00		18 59
Langho	dep		12 04		19 04
Ramsgreave & Wilpshire	dep		12 09		19 09
<b>Blackburn</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>12 16</b>		<b>19 16</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>12 18</b>		<b>19 18</b>
<b>Darwen</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>12 25</b>		<b>19 25</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>12 28</b>		<b>19 28</b>
Bromley Cross	dep		12 39		19 39
Hall i'th' Wood	dep		12 42		19 42
<b>Bolton</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>12 47</b>		<b>19 47</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>12 49</b>		<b>19 49</b>
<b>Salford Crescent</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>13 00</b>		<b>20 02</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>13 01</b>		<b>20 02</b>
Salford Central	dep		13 04		20 05
<b>Manchester Victoria</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>13 07</b>		<b>20 08</b>
	<b>dep</b>		<b>13 09</b>		<b>20 09</b>
Moston	dep		13 16		20 16
Mills Hill	dep		13 20		20 20
Castleton	dep		13 26		20 26
<b>Rochdale</b>	<b>arr</b>		<b>13 29</b>		<b>20 29</b>

Notes: B = to Leeds (1204)

D = to Leeds (1908)

For onward connections from Blackburn see next page

## Yorkshire Dales Explorer

### Onward services at Blackburn connecting from the Southbound YDE

	YDE	A	B	YDE	A	B
<b>Ribblehead dep</b>	<b>1108</b>			<b>1805</b>		
Stations to Blackburn						
<b>Blackburn</b>	<b>1218</b>	1221	1236	<b>1918</b>	1921	1936
Mill Hill			1239			1939
Cherry Tree			1241			1941
Pleasington			1244			1944
Bamber Bridge			1251			1951
Lostock Hall			1254			1954
Preston		1240	1303		1939	2003
Kirkham & Wesham		1250			1951	
Poulton-le-Fylde		1258			2000	
Blackpool North		1304			2007	

A = from York, B = from Colne

	YDE	C	D	YDE	C	D
<b>Ribblehead dep</b>	<b>1108</b>			<b>1805</b>		
Stations to Blackburn						
<b>Blackburn</b>	<b>1218</b>	1250	1304	<b>1918</b>	1950	2004
Rishton		1255			1955	
Church & Oswaldtwistle		1258			1958	
Accrington		1302	1313		2002	2013
Huncoat		1306			2006	
Hapton		1309			2009	
Rose Grove		1313			2013	
Burnley Manchester Rd			1322			2022
Hebden Bridge			1343			2033
Halifax			1354			2054

C = all stations to Colne (arr 1333 and 2033)

D = stations to York

**Sample day return fares overleaf. >>>>**

## Yorkshire Dales Explorer

### Sample adult day return fares

**NB - the DIRECT service MUST be specified when obtaining ticket(s)**

	Hellifield	Settle	Horton	Ribblehead
Rochdale	£20.00	£23.60	£24.90	£25.30
Manchester Vic	£19.70	£23.30	£24.70	£25.00
Bolton	£16.70	£20.30	£21.60	£22.00
Blackburn	£11.30	£14.90	£16.30	£16.70
Clitheroe	£7.50	£11.50	£13.00	£13.40

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DIARY DATES

RVR bi-Monthly meetings will be held at The New Inn, Parson Lane, Clitheroe, 7.00 pm on the second Monday of alternate months. Next meeting: 8 July 2024, *Provisional dates for 2024, 9 Sept, 11 Nov. If in doubt, check the RVR website.*

### RVR WHO'S WHO & OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Hon Life Vice-Presidents: Alan & Sheila Kay

Chairman: Peter Eastham, 79 Rogersfield, Langho, Blackburn, BB6 8HD      01254 240830

Hon Sec: Pam Corlett, 37 Bleasdale Ave, Clitheroe, BB7 2PR      pamcorlett@msn.com

Hon Treasurer: David J Butterworth, 72 Fairfield Drive, Clitheroe, BB7 2PS      01200 425750

RVR Membership Sec & RVRNews Compiler: Bill Briggs      01254 854474

55 Bank Head Lane, Hoghton, PRESTON, PR5 0AB      e-mail bill.rvrnews@gmail.com

FoR&WS: Peter Eastham      01254 240830

FoLS: Brian Haworth (FoS Co-ordinator)      01254 247844

FoWS: Alan Scholfield      01254 823140

FoCS: Lauren Hall      07788732663

BT Police: Railwatch Freephone      0800 40 50 40

Network Rail National Helpline      08457 11 41 41

Network Rail NW Press Office, Square One, 4 Travis Street, M/c, M1 2NY      0161 880 3142

Northern Rail customer helpline      0845 600 1159

Train running information      0870 602 3322

RVR website:      www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk

**Community Rail Partnership Website:      www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk**

### RVRNews copy dates

**RVRN140 needs to be ready by November 2024.**

If submitting **photos** for publication, please send **unreduced** material (if necessary, 1 email per pic) each with **caption** containing information as to **Who took What, Where, and When**. Photos, taken on a mobile phone and reduced for email don't reproduce very well. *Ed.*

*N.B. Views expressed in RVRNews, ascribed or otherwise, are to be taken as those of the writer and may not represent either the views or policy of Ribble Valley Rail itself, unless otherwise specified.*

150108 & 156405, on a special  
“wrong line” working, passing  
through Mitchell Street cutting,  
towards Low Moor level  
crossing, Clitheroe,  
on 5 February 2024.

*Photo: Jeff Dickinson*



West Country Class 34067  
*Tangmere* “coal-gobbling”  
through Whalley with 1Z71  
Carlisle - Coventry on 27 April  
2024

*Photo: Jeff Dickinson*



West Country Class 34046  
*Braunton* hauling the first  
“Fellsman” of the year near  
Rimington on 1 May 2024’

*Photo: David Roberts*





### “We’re going NORTH! to .....”

No, not “...to Alaska” but, at least, to Ribbleshead. Upper photo [26/3/2024] shows preparation of the site for the new construction [below] on Clitheroe’s northbound platform that will give shelter to passengers waiting for the Saturdays only 09:31 and 16:37 departures. It’s fully equipped with seats, lights, and upto-the-minute CIS, plus the HELP point in the foreground. Roll on the first Yorkshire Dales Explorer on Saturday 8 June 2024. A similar shelter couldn’t be located on the other platform as there would be less than 1.5m from its front to the platform edge, where 150115 is about to load on 20 April 2024.

*Photos: Upper: David Butterworth Lower: Graham Dudley*

