

friends on track

Adventures and experiences on the Settle–Carlisle line

**Taking 8,000 trucks off the road –
we follow the log train's success story.**

**Ian Jackson reveals the geology
of the Settle–Carlisle.**

**Traveller insights – Alison Booth journeys
from Leeds & savours Settle.**

Industry Insider's go back to the future.

August 2025

Scenic. Historic. Sustainable.



friends on track

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Town Hall, Market Place, Settle, North Yorkshire BD24 9EJ

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 foscl.bsky.social



Arten Gill seen from Cowgill
Cover photo courtesy of
Brian Jackson

Friends on Track is the members' magazine of the Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line

Editor

David Owen
editor@settle-carlisle.com

Production Editor

Jo Mansfield

President

Michael Portillo

Vice Presidents

Lord Inglewood DL;
Edward Album OBE; Ann Cryer;
David Curry; Douglas Hodgins;
Philip Johnston; Eric Martlew;
Richard Morris; Mark Rand;
Pete Shaw; Ken Shingleton; Brian
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Board of Directors

Allison Cosgrove (Chair)
chair@settle-carlisle.com

John Carey (Community,
Integrated Transport, Services &
Dent Station Representative)
john.carey@settle-carlisle.com

Mark Chung (Communications &
Marketing Director)
comms@settle-carlisle.com

Richard Morris (IT Manager)
webmaster@settle-carlisle.com

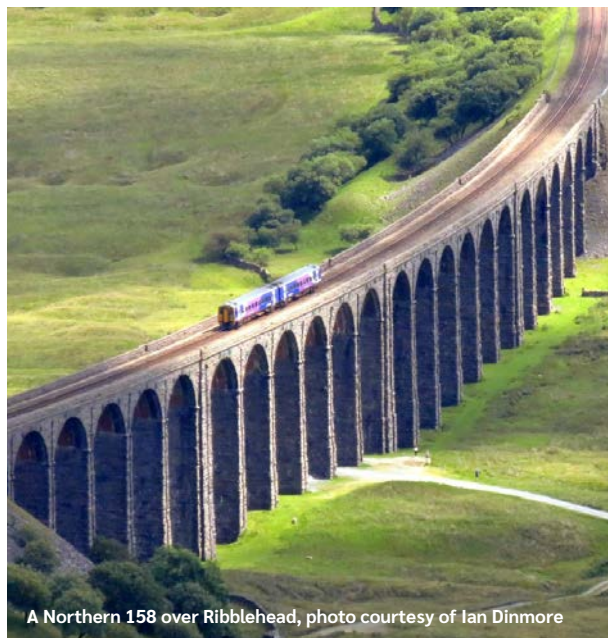
Pete Myers
(non Executive Director)
pete.myers@settle-carlisle.com

Damian Smith (Treasurer)
treasurer@settle-carlisle.com

Jill Tiernan
(Access and Inclusion Director)
jill.tiernan@settle-carlisle.com

Jon Tomlinson (Volunteers
Director & Vice Chair)
volunteers@settle-carlisle.com

James O'Ryan (Secretary)
secretary@settle-carlisle.com



A Northern 158 over Ribbleshead, photo courtesy of Ian Dinmore

FoSCL contacts

Volunteering
volunteers@settle-carlisle.com

Membership/FoSCL Dalescards:
membership@settle-carlisle.com
telephone: 07436 159110

On-train Guide Co-ordinator: Nick Abbey
otg@settle-carlisle.com

Trading Enquiries including
Settle and Appleby shops
sales@settle-carlisle.com

Health and Safety Officer: Ian Ambrose
ian.Ambrose@settle-carlisle.com

Schools Liaison Co-ordinator: Jill Tiernan
jill.tiernan@settle-carlisle.com

Assistant Secretary: David Verity
david.verity@settle-carlisle.com

Settle Signalbox
settsignalbox@settle-carlisle.com

Other useful contacts

Settle–Carlisle Railway
www.settle-carlisle.co.uk

Northern Rail
enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk
telephone: 0800 200 6060

Group bookings
grouptravel@settle-carlisle.co.uk

Steam train
www.railtourinfo.co.uk

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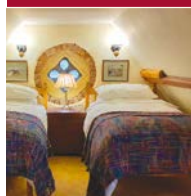
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Welcome

A note from our editor, David Owen, as August carries us through landscapes, time and tales of travel.

The August edition of *Friends on Track* has travel at its heart. Whether focussing on economic, geological or visual journeys, our contributors have it covered. You've probably wondered where all that wood goes on the daily log train, so I've delved into the full story from forest to factory floor. Published author Ian Jackson takes us on a journey through geological time as seen through the window of the southbound train and British Guild of travel writer Allison Booth goes north, from the urbanisation of West Yorkshire to the Dales uplands.

The debate over how the line might evolve – and the very state of rail travel

itself – is exercising members' minds. Phil Hinde draws on his international rail career, Stephen Abbott considers a more local reshaping of services & Chris Gee touches on friends, freight & the future. The letters pages are awash with thoughts and suggestions to widen the discussion.

And who can ignore a visit by Sir Nigel Gresley? We've given him a double page photo in recognition that he's a railway icon from the Art Deco design age. The loco made one of his not uncommon visits to the line in June and Martin Holden of Kirkby Lonsdale shows him off in all his streamlined glory.



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Bradford to Carlisle in style

SECOND STEAM TRAIN CELEBRATES HISTORIC MILESTONES

Following the success of the West Yorkshireman steam train in May, Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company is releasing tickets for a second celebration train from Bradford City of Culture to Carlisle.

Setting off from Bradford Foster Square and joining the Settle Carlisle line through to Carlisle with time to explore the Border City before the return journey back down the famous line, travelling over the Ribbleshead Viaduct.

Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company are running the steam charter train, The Border City Express on Saturday, October 4, 2025 to mark three special events – Bradford's year as City of Culture, Rail 200 celebrating 200 years of passenger rail and the Settle Carlisle line's 150th anniversary. Passengers will have the opportunity to travel either in Premier Dining, First Class or Standard class, in heritage carriages through the Yorkshire Dales and Cumbria Lakeland countryside. Tickets are on general sale via the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company website: www.settle-carlisle.co.uk.

New fleet of refreshment trolleys is boarding the Settle Carlisle Railway for 150th anniversary year.

The refreshment trolleys that provide a daily service between Carlisle and Settle were starting to reach the end of their working life. Thanks to funding from CrossCountry, Avanti, Northern Trains, and Travel Watch, the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company, which runs the refreshment service, were able to commission a new fleet of trolleys. Working with local engineering firm J Mortimer Fabrications, based at the Old Station Yard at Kirkby Lonsdale, the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company has developed the new trolley design. Extra space has been created for hot drinks dispensers, snacks and a collection of Settle Carlisle souvenirs.

Following test runs, the design has been further improved, and the new trolleys are now in service, in time for the busy holiday season this year. Settle Carlisle Railway Development Operational Manager, Susie Payne, started her career in the rail industry as a trolley service operator on the line. Susie said: 'Our trolley service provides a little extra to our customers, and we are very proud of our team. We aim to enhance the journey for local people and tourists using our internationally famous line and support communities with our line service by sourcing local produce benefiting the local economy. The service also provides employment for local people.'



Partnered working is the key...

A note from Anna Jackson, our new Commercial Manager

Hello Everyone,

My name is Anna Jackson and I have recently come into post as the new Commercial Manager working across the family of organisations supporting the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Railway.

With the development of the Leeds Settle Carlisle Association and the movement towards much closer working between all those involved – FoSCL, The Development Company, the Trust and the Property Company – it was decided that it would be a strong step forward to recruit a role which works across all the agencies and can provide capacity and support to move forward joint initiatives.

The role has the same key objectives as the Association and many overlap with the priorities of the other bodies: Increasing ridership on the line, developing and improving the customer experience for anybody interacting with the line and speaking with one voice about Leeds Settle Carlisle Railway and the future.

I'm a local lass, having lived in Ingleton most of my life, I have enjoyed the railway from a variety of angles: Using it to commute to work meetings in Leeds, visit friends in Carlisle and admiring it whilst on local walks with my beloved dogs – firstly Lily and now Molly. I feel very proud to have something of such importance, heritage and value on my doorstep and I feel privileged to have taken on this role, which will help others become more aware of the line and bring them along to enjoy it.

I've spent my first few weeks in the role getting out and about along the railway and meeting the people who make it what it is. I've shadowed on-train guides, sampled the delicious treats on offer at Ribbleshead and Horton, somehow masterminded the technology at the FoSCL AGM, visited the holiday lets and launched a new Facebook page to help showcase them, nervously watched the judging of the Yorkshire and Cumbria in Bloom alongside the very dedicated station adopters, painted unknown bits of rusty 'railwayana' with Dementia Forward members at Settle Station, joined forces with Railcam to launch the new webcams at Horton, helped on a stall promoting FoSCL at Embsay Steam Gala and even done a podcast to shout about all of this with Dales Radio. I am in awe of the commitment and enthusiasm of the fabulous volunteers who make all this happen and I'm looking forward to much much more for the rest of this 150th 'freight' Anniversary year and next year's 150th Anniversary of passengers on the line which is going to be huge for everyone.

I'm very happy for anyone interested in my role or who has questions to contact me on anna@settlecarlisletrust.org.uk and if anyone wants a lineside stroll with a very handsome labrador then please do drop me a line.

Logging onto Kronospan

A JOURNEY FROM FOREST TO FACTORY

By David Owen

The log train running down the S&C is a familiar sight as it makes its stately progress south. It also comes with the heady fragrance of freshly cut Sitka Spruce wafting through the canopy of Carlisle station and beyond. You'd not be alone in wondering where all that wood goes.

I'm most grateful to Kronospan's Timber Procurement Executive, Grant Drury and George Birrell, Forestry Director, who made time to give readers the inside track on how the logs and associated timber from Eskdalemuir & Kielder forests make the 170-mile, 6 hour journey to their plant in Chirk, N. Wales. The Austrian company is the world's leading manufacturer of Particleboard, MDF (Medium Density Fibreboard), tongue and grooved flooring and laminate for worktops.

Kronospan is a significant industrial operation and first started at the Welsh site in 1973. They consume over 1 million tonnes of timber and wood waste every year. Their scale of operation means that rail transport has economic, environmental and sustainability advantages. Following their motto of 'Making Circulatory a Reality,' Kronospan place key sustainability performance indicators at its core. New tree growth, harvesting, transport, manufacturing and utilisation of waste are intrinsic to the companies' manufacturing culture.

Sometimes money does grow on trees.

Kronospan directly own forests and negotiate contracts with other estate

owners to ensure long-term continuity of supply. George Birrell is based at the Kingmoor, Carlisle railhead where the specialist logging trucks bring product directly from the forests. As George says, 'I allocate the loads each Friday for the following week and with a train leaving 5 to 6 days a week, it needs to be a well-oiled operation to bring in 30 trucks per day and to have everything loaded for the 13:00 departure.' It's a super-efficient operation which begins at 05:30. Each driver off-loads directly onto the rail wagons using the truck's in-built HIAB crane. Each is weighed on entry and weighed again on exit to trigger an official purchase and to determine total wood inventory. Running articulated trucks out of sketchy forest tracks in all weathers sometimes causes traction problems for the trucks, so the tyres are fitted with devices that can lower tyre pressure to help gain traction on soft ground. That number of trucks converts to 22 loaded rail wagons by midday. The Kingmoor site also holds a buffer stock in case of interruptions to the supply chain.

Colas Rail are the next vital link as they have the contract to run the train itself and provide the train driver and



Top: One of 30 trucks off-load at Kingmoor, Carlisle. 5-6 days week.
Above: George Birrell, Forestry Director.

personnel for load safety checks. The wagons are cut down KFA box units, with the headboards retained. Movable bolsters are fitted to contain the timber, with the position adjusted depending on the product being carried. Shifting the bolsters requires at least a week's notice as part of the forward load planning. Colas provide the strapping and final safety checks to ensure that the loads are within 'gauge,' in other words to make sure that there's no overspill of stray wood. Safety and security are imperative given that the train is sharing the West Coast Mainline at certain points, especially on return. The train is hauled by one of Colas's fleet of American made General Electric Class 70 locos.

The wood arrives in Kronospan's own siding at around 19:30. The site is equipped with dedicated machines – a single grab will unload each bay of the rail wagon. Once off-loading is completed, the train returns via the WCML overnight to Kingmoor ready to repeat the process.

Massive investment but still a family business.

The company have expanded their small Austrian and Western European base into an international conglomerate, with manufacturing centres across Europe generating billions of euros in annual revenue. The Chirk operation is one of the top 10 manufacturing sites in Wales.

I met Grant Drury in Kronospan's reception, replete with genuine early 20th century rail advertising posters, on a site tour of their manufacturing process - he's responsible for dealing with suppliers for the entire feedstock. But here's a startling fact: the S&C supply line only provides a small percentage of Chirk's overall needs. Additional stock comes from local Welsh

Colas General Electric class 70 locos do the hard miles.





An aerial view captures the scale of the Kronospan plant.

forests via rail from Aberystwyth. More is supplied at scale via imports from Ireland and the West Coast of Scotland into the port of Birkenhead, all under Grant's purchasing remit.

Recycled feedstock is also extensively used but all of it goes through a chipping, sorting and drying process before it reaches the production area. Grant offered an interesting aside in that 'the pre-production cleaning process includes magnets for removing metal objects from the forest such as bullets and nails when taking wood from MOD land.' Recycled wood has other unwelcome

items such as plastics, but I guess they could do without the bullets. Chirk also utilise all waste streams by selling bark for gardeners to keep those pesky weeds at bay, as well powering their own biomass boilers – enough to also export power to the grid.

The site has the largest dryer of its type in Europe, this is an integral and early-stage part of the manufacturing process. Unlike the wet pulp required of paper manufacturing, Kronospan's feedstock needs to be very dry & finely chipped. As Grant said, 'from there on the machinery is not too dissimilar to

a paper-making machine, in that some moisture is added along with binding agents to form a large sheet of the required thickness. That is then cut into large boards, typically for the furniture making and construction industry.'

The good news for the S&C is that Kronospan will soon move into the manufacture of OSB (oriented strand board), made from rectangular wood strands compressed and glued together with resin. That will require an additional supply train along the line from Kingmoor. Bringing wood in by rail eliminates 8,000 truck movements overall and means that

Chirk residents experience 32 fewer trucks through the village on a daily basis. The company also owns a substantial tract of land around the National Trust's Chirk Castle – well worth a visit if you're in the area.

With the prospect of the additional wood train and the new rail connection for Horton quarry, the future of the S&C's freight schedule is looking pretty rosy.

Thanks to Grant and George at Kronospan for giving me so much of their time.

Gift Guide 2025

This year's gift guide includes several items celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Settle–Carlisle Line as well as a range of other gifts and items to treat yourself.

This is your only opportunity to buy the anniversary items via mail order – by next Christmas we will have completely sold out of many, if not all, of the anniversary items. But they will continue to be available from our web shop and our shops in Settle and Appleby throughout 2025/26, whilst stocks last.



This year's Christmas card photo is courtesy of John Bentley and is the Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express, Black Five 44932, crossing Arten Gill.

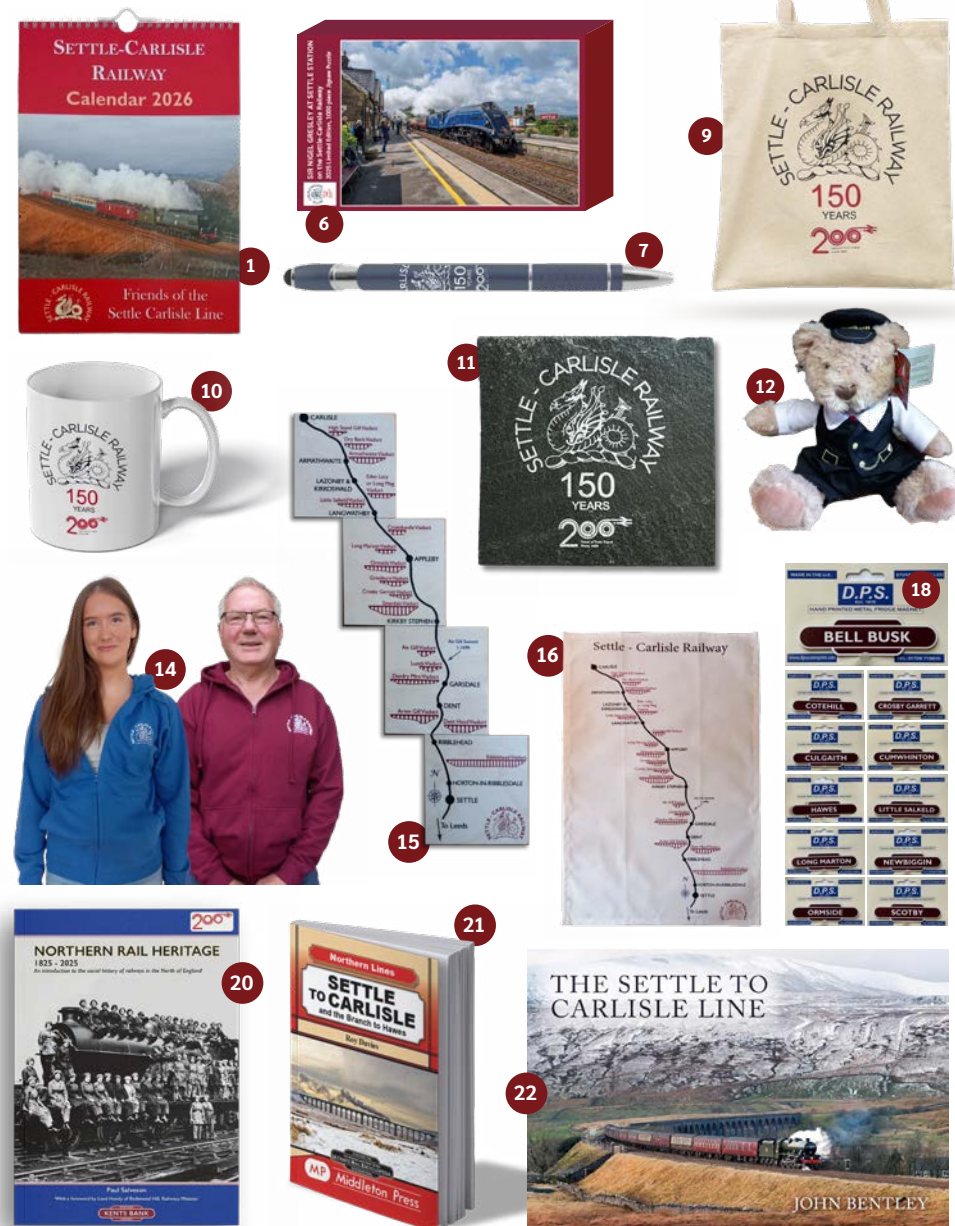
New products perfect for gifts or yourself this year:

The Friends' 2025 bespoke jigsaw, 'Sir Nigel Gresley at Settle Station'. You can read more about our annual jigsaws in the magazine. New totem fridge magnet sets of 'Closed' stations on the line and one of stations between Long Preston and Leeds.

Settle–Carlisle Railway 150 years anniversary items:

Blue ball point pen with texting tip, teddy bear, Linen tote bag, bone china mug, Honister slate coaster. And... don't forget that you can purchase membership of The Friends as a gift too. See membership.foscl.org.uk/giftmemberships

Please note that the last date for orders to be received by us, by post or via the web shop is Monday 15th December 2025 for delivery to UK addresses by Christmas. Whilst we endeavour to carry adequate stock for orders some items may run out as Christmas approaches. Please order early to ensure your item is still available and to secure early delivery. If ordering by post, please ensure to include your phone number.



Some advertised items show the '200 year' train travel anniversary, stock of these are limited, and this will not feature on any new stock. However they will still show our 150th anniversary logo. Item 18 'totem fridge magnets' are also available individually in both Appleby and Settle shops and the online shop.

	PRODUCT	PRICE	
1	2026 A4 calendar	£11.25	NEW
2	2026 A3 calendar	£17.95	NEW
3	2025 single Christmas card	£2.65	NEW
4	2025 Christmas card (4 pack)	£7.87	NEW
5	Pack of 5 previous years' Christmas cards	£5.85	
6	Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line 2025 bespoke 1000 piece jigsaw 'Sir Nigel Gresley' at Settle Station	£24.97	NEW
7	Settle–Carlisle 150th anniversary ball point pen with texting tip, dark blue	£6.07	NEW
8	Settle–Carlisle 150th anniversary teddy bear	£21.15	NEW
9	Settle–Carlisle 150th anniversary linen bag	£14.35	NEW
10	Settle–Carlisle 150th anniversary china mug	£13.45	NEW
11	Settle–Carlisle 150th anniversary Honister slate coaster	£9.45	NEW
12	Railway teddy bear (Choices: Sidney the Signalman, George the Train Guard, Freddie the Fireman, William the Station Master, Kate the Station Mistress, Edward the Engine Driver, Pete the Permanent Way Bear)	£21.15	
13	Burgundy ball point pen with texting tip	£5.85	
14	Settle–Carlisle zipped hoodies: burgundy or royal blue. Sizes: small, medium, large, XL	£32.62	
15	Coaster set of the line (4 coasters make up a map of the line)	£17.55	
16	Cotton tea towel showing the line map	£11.65	
17	Set of 12 totem fridge magnets of stations between Settle and Carlisle plus Settle-Carlisle	£35.55	
18	Set of 11 totem fridge magnets of closed stations on the line	£29.61	NEW
19	Set of 8 totem fridge magnets of stations between Long Preston and Leeds	£23.85	NEW
20	Northern Rail Heritage 1825-2025 by Paul Salveson	£7.20	NEW
21	The Settle to Carlisle Line by John Bentley	£20.70	NEW
22	Settle to Carlisle and the Branch to Hawes by Roy Davies	£23.62	NEW

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Alternatively, order from our shop web site: <https://shop.foscl.org.uk>

Piecing it together: the 2025 Jigsaw

We are excited to tell you about our new 1000-piece bespoke jigsaws – now on sale at our shops in Settle & Appleby, or shop online at www.foscl.org.uk



Our first Jigsaw is of Sir Nigel Gresley at Settle Station, photo courtesy of member and shop volunteer, David Wilkins. It's our initial 150th anniversary issue, celebrating the first goods train travelling on the line. Our next edition, to be launched in 2026, will also celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first passenger train on the line.

Each year we will launch a new Jigsaw design, so we're asking you to send us your photos as long as they're relevant to the line and would make a good puzzle. We would love to see your photographs in preparation for 2026, and if used on one of our Jigsaws you will receive a free version of that edition. Please email your photograph submissions to us at settleshop@settle-carlisle.com. Images will need to be high resolution, as a guide at least 5MB.

Stock levels will reduce as we get nearer to Christmas, so do order while you can. Each edition will have a limited sales life so we will be telling you via social media, our web page and web shop as soon as we launch each new one, with a reminder when stocks are getting low... **Happy Jigsaw-ing and get snapping!**

A big thank you to Paul Kampen for his long service as magazine editor

By Alyson Cadman



Above: Paul, centre, with Pete Shaw left & Mark Rand on the right
Right: The Royal Mail winning front cover - 2001

On the 16th of July at the Ribbleshead visitor centre, Pete Shaw, FoSCL vice president, arranged a surprise presentation for Paul Kampen before a Footsteps in Time event.

Paul retired as editor in 2024 and the surprise presentation was a big thank you for his 32 years of service. Paul had taken over the role from Philippa Simpson all those years ago and she was able to join the event along with many others.

Paul handed the baton to current editor David Owen from February of this year and David would like to express his thanks for that assistance.

In 1992, the magazine was 28 or 32 pages on cartridge paper with occasional black and white photos. Paul worked to increase the budget and expanded the magazine to 44 pages with high gloss art paper and colour photos. In 2001, and with Paul at the helm, it was entered into a national competition with Royal Mail – and won.

As is the nature of the editor's role now, Paul's tasks also meant reporting, news

gathering and picture editing. His skills didn't stop there as he was also hands-on with graphic design layouts, pagination and liaising with the printers.

Paul was presented with a signed thank you card from his colleagues and a very large photocopy of his 2001 award winning front cover, signed by all those attending. Paul was a professional French horn player when not toiling away on the magazine, so his gift was wrapped with music paper. Mark Rand, as a vice president and former chairman, stood to say a few words and to make the presentation of books.

Footsteps in Time provided a celebration cake before those attending headed out on their geology themed Rocks and Rails event which included a study of the Ribbleshead viaduct with the fossil hunt.

Paul isn't giving up Friends volunteering altogether though, he'll still be involved with interesting challenges such as the oral history project, the Settle sales team, Footsteps in Time and intends to write the history of the Friends.

A Crossrail Engineer in Settle!



FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT CHANGE

By Phil Hinde

After a railway career spent mainly in the London area, with some incidental work in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe, and a final flourish of involvement with Melbourne Australia, I find myself living, for family reasons, here in Settle, and hence a fairly frequent traveller on our local lines. Indeed, a course of hospital treatment in Leeds turned me for a month into a regular Northern commuter, mainly from Settle but on occasion from our daughter's home in Ilkley.

So what do I make of it here? My last full time assignment was as technical lead for rolling stock on the Crossrail programme down in London, now operating as the Elizabeth Line. This was my second big involvement with a new train initiative, having project managed the introduction of the Class 375 and 376 trains on the SouthEastern network.

Of course many things here correlate with issues down south and especially from my time at Crossrail; lots of tunnel, and serious gradients, albeit short and very steep ones rather than any 'long drags'. We worried about adhesion and wheel damage, and the imperative of creating a good overall customer experience.

But as an 'off-comer' some things do frustrate me about travelling on the Aire Valley routes, both on the local electrics and on the Carlisle and Bentham Line services. I often feel that I am still travelling on a nineteenth century railway – and I don't just mean the semaphore signalling which in fact seems to work splendidly, and in any case was still very much around in Kent and Sussex when I was introducing the Class 375 Electrostars out of Charing Cross.

The electric services are branded as 'Metro' but I don't get the vibe of the various Metro and S-Bahn/S-Tog type services I have sampled across Europe from Glasgow to Vienna and beyond. In particular the poor management of station dwell time irritates, compounded by the peculiar practice of the guard having to conduct a forensic examination of the platform before the doors can be released for the increasingly impatient passengers. Driver Release/Guard Close has been a standard operating method down south for almost a quarter of a century and while I appreciate that short platforms are an issue at a few locations, technologies such as ASDO (Automatic Selective Door Operation) and CSDE



Class 375 Electrostar – my first 'new train' experience

(Correct Side Door Enable) all ensure the driver does not from force of habit release the wrong set of doors at an island platform such as Hellfield. Indeed, I would argue that this strange ritual of door release detracts from focus on the much more vital task of safe closing and train despatch, which is where mishaps can and do occur.

I also puzzle over the seemingly random platforming of departures at both Leeds and Skipton, not to mention the time that passengers are left shivering in the wind tunnel that is Leeds City before a last minute appearance by a guard to

release the doors and trigger a boarding scrimmage to get the train away on time. This is not customer focussed! The other train planning issues I would like to understand better are the diagramming of staff and stock – too often disruption on one of the Aire Valley routes seems to infect the rest – and the uneven intervals and haphazard stopping patterns on both the Bentham and Carlisle services. I know this last is an issue that FoSCL have regularly pressed – again this does not look like UK, let alone world-wide, best practice, even for rural routes. And it would be interesting to see some Origin

Right: The Crossrail – Elizabeth Line train on the Old Dalby test track

Opposite: Melbourne suburban – my final professional assignment



and Destination data for passenger flows on these lines – does every Bentham line train need to trundle off to Morecambe and could not the marketing of the Bentham line be better promoted and integrated with the Carlisle route. Perhaps Giggleswick station should be reverted to its earlier name of ‘Settle Old’ to stress its potential to residents!

Whatever improvements can be made, the number one priority must be reliability. When I talk to friends as to why they do not use rail more frequently, the first reason they mention, ahead of cost, cleanliness, or the comfort of the seats is that they can’t be sure of getting to their destination on time. It’s all very well having ‘Delay Repay’ schemes but for me a refund definitely counts as second prize in the Lottery of Life! We should never be satisfied with the ‘same old, same old’ status quo of service delivery. At the very least the challenge of coping with climate change induced weather problems will need some fresh thinking

on how to keep things running punctually and consistently.

In my past career I have more than once been frustrated at the difficulty of bringing change on the railway. There seemed to be a middle-management defensiveness, often articulated as ‘The Lads will never agree to that!’ In fact I found front-line rank and file staff very receptive to new ways of doing things once it was clear that we weren’t threatening their livelihoods or compromising passenger safety. I used to remind colleagues of Chairman Mao’s campaign against the Four Olds; ‘Old Ideas’, ‘Old Culture’, ‘Old Customs’, and ‘Old Habits’. While I would not advocate anything quite so brutal here in Ribblesdale, it does seem that we sometimes need a bit of a Cultural Revolution to get things moving. Northern Rail is already a state run, publicly funded service – everything it does should be obsessively directed at what the passenger and taxpayer needs and can

afford. Northern Rail staff always seem very diligent, professional and customer friendly. A new train introduction as I experienced is of course a natural catalyst for change, but even with existing resources and constraints, leadership that takes the team beyond what trade union bosses or old-school managers think, can I am sure move everything forward.

In my past career I have more than once been frustrated at the difficulty of bringing change on the railway. There seemed to be a middle-management defensiveness, often articulated as ‘The Lads will never agree to that!’

A final anecdote about change: in my South Eastern days we were looking at tidying up some early morning services to improve crew diagramming and to give

the civil engineer more time for overnight track maintenance. In particular we were bemused by a very early departure from Faversham to Dover, until we realised it had been originally run to take the miners to work at Snowdown colliery. As the mine had been closed for ten years it was a no-brainer to simplify the timetable without upsetting anyone. The train plan had become fossilised in a previous age.

Plato and the Greek philosophers stated that everything has a cause. G.K.Chesterton (he of the Father Brown stories) came up with a philosophical principle known as Chesterton’s Fence – ‘Never change something unless you understand why it was done in the first place’. Perhaps if we check rigorously if all the Causes still apply, and whether all the Fences are still needed, we will have confidence to manage in a way that keeps the good and necessary, but still reforms and develops our much-loved railway!

Sir Nigel Gresley – the pinnacle of an era that would soon run out of steam.

Built in 1937 by the loco designer Sir Nigel Gresley, it is an homage to the Art Deco design language of the day. Captured here as he took on water at Settle station - it surely has to be a 'he' with a name like that. Sir Nige references the key design queues of the era: bold colours, sharp lines, symmetrical patterns and, of course, streamlining. Good aerodynamics are very much part of our current designs, that's why this photo is something to be savoured, at the same time acknowledging the supremacy of the new technologies that take us forward. **Thanks to Martin Holden of Kirkby Lonsdale for the photo.**



Lining-Up for the Future



FORMER INDUSTRY INSIDERS CAN SEE THE POTENTIAL – WHY NOT GREAT BRITISH RAILWAYS?

Stephen G Abbott gives a personal view on ways to reshape services on this much-loved route

The story of the Settle & Carlisle line is well known. Built as a main line through a dramatic landscape, for over a century it served as a competitive Anglo-Scottish route, well known for its scenic splendour. The passenger service comprised several daily expresses from London St Pancras, the East Midlands and Yorkshire, including night sleepers, plus infrequent local trains.

But today services consist of eight workings each way (six on Sundays) between Leeds and Carlisle, calling at Shipley, Bingley, Keighley, Skipton then most or all stations. In addition there is an evening round trip from Leeds to Ribblesdale. There is also an early morning Ribblesdale to Leeds train on Saturdays, when the first two departures from Carlisle run later than on Mondays to Fridays. Journey time is about 2 hours 40 minutes for the 113 miles from Leeds to Carlisle, and 2 hours for 87 miles from Skipton, an average of 43 mph.

The line serves four potential markets:

1. Local passengers between stations on the line, and from them to Skipton, Leeds and Carlisle.
2. Passengers to stations on the line for walking and other outdoor pursuits.
3. Tourists and day-trippers travelling over the line for the sake of the scenic journey.
4. Inter-regional passengers from Skipton/Leeds and beyond to Carlisle and beyond.

The Table shows passenger numbers at stations on the line from Office of Rail and Road data for 2018-19, the last full year before the Covid-19 pandemic, and for 2023-24 the latest year available. The total has grown, but only by about 12% over the 20 years to 2019, and numbers have recovered well post-pandemic. The figures in the Table represent markets (1) and (2) and a portion of market (3). The residue of market (3) plus market (4) – that is passengers from Skipton and south to Carlisle and beyond – will account for probably a similar additional number of passenger journeys.

Passenger numbers at stations between Skipton and Carlisle

Station	2018-19		2023-24	
	Entries plus Exits: Total	Using season tickets	Entries plus Exits: Total	Using season tickets
Gargrave*	30,462	1,946	35,182	1,284
Hellifield*	24,490	54	29,030	1,126
Long Preston*	11,670	402	14,232	442
Settle	139,442	1,322	134,060	1,552
Horton-in-Ribblesdale	16,968	10	20,570	24
Ribblehead	19,260	58	26,374	0
Dent	7,894	0	9,152	0
Garsdale	15,572	62	15,112	44
Kirkby Stephen	27,654	656	33,666	336
Appleby	57,526	3,506	56,512	2,096
Langwathby	18,630	1,400	19,066	140
Lazonby & Kirkoswald	10,774	1,312	17,956	2,808
Armathwaite	7,616	0	11,432	1,132
Total (excluding stations marked*)	321,336	8,326	343,900 (2022-23: 316,646)	8,132 (2022-23: 7,190)

* Also served by Leeds-Lancaster/Morecambe trains

Local stops too frequent

Market (1) is relatively small, no surprise given the low population served. Settle, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby have about 2,700, 1,900 and 3,200 residents respectively. As the figures in the Table show, there are few season ticket holders – the journeys are equivalent to about two year-round users at Armathwaite, three at Settle, four at Appleby and five at Lazonby. As elsewhere, since the pandemic season ticket usage has declined slightly overall, possibly offset by increased use of ordinary tickets. Only one train per day into Skipton and Leeds, and one into Carlisle, is timed to suit daily commuting for work or education; it is difficult to see how any more could be justified. The day-long local service provided is generous for the business on offer.

Market (2) is also over-served – around any time of their choosing walkers can get a train to or from the locality for their activity. The minimum requirement is a morning train each way to get them where they want to go, and a late afternoon train each way to bring them back. However, provision for this market may need to be enhanced at weekends. It may sound patronising but, more than other users, walkers will adapt their itineraries to suit the train service. This was seen in ‘Dales Rail’ days with users of the former Sunday workings from Preston/Blackpool to Hellifield/Carlisle, and now with passengers on the Saturday Rochdale - Bolton - Ribbleshead ‘Yorkshire Dales Explorer’ trains introduced in June 2024.

The reality of current passenger usage

Market (1) is relatively small, no surprise. Passengers in market (3) simply wish to cover the route from Settle to Appleby or Carlisle, with little interest in intermediate stops. Passenger numbers at Settle are high relative to the size of the town, owing to the number of passengers, including coach parties, who start and end trips there. Market (3) is partly catered for by charter trains, both diesel and steam-hauled, but there are many people content to see the Settle & Carlisle line from an ordinary train at normal fares.

A journey from Glasgow to Leeds comprises a fast sprint to Carlisle followed by a jog-trot forward – pleasant enough in summer if you have time to spare, but tedious on a winter evening. Nevertheless, with generally good connections at Carlisle the journey time of about 4 hours is typically 20 minutes faster than via Edinburgh and York. Carlisle connections are less good northbound. The Edinburgh route imposes a distance penalty of 62 miles, and walk-up fares are higher.

Rail travel is crying-out for more connectivity – let’s think Inter-City

A more radical solution for more and better long-distance train services, would be to introduce four trains per day at three hourly intervals, or six per day two-hourly, between Leeds and Glasgow. These might call at Keighley, Skipton, Settle, Kirkby Stephen (selected trains), Appleby, Carlisle and Motherwell with a target journey time of under three and a half hours. Such trains should start back from somewhere – anywhere – south of Leeds. Leicester would be nice, to restore a much-needed direct link with Leeds and Scotland.

Meridians displaced from the Midland Main Line would be ideal interim rolling stock. These services could be complemented by a DMU making two (or two and a half) round trips from Skipton to Carlisle, calling at all stations, and a second DMU making similar round trips starting from Carlisle, to give four or five local trains each way.

This service change needs to be accompanied by an increase in line speed north of Skipton. I am old enough to remember when, despite the heft of ‘Peak’ Class 45 diesel locomotives on jointed track, the line speed was



Bombardier Class 222 Meridians – ideal for the S&C.

mostly 75-80mph. The route is now continuous welded rail throughout, and carries freight trains with 25 tonne axle loads; the signalling, although still absolute block, was upgraded in 2008 with additional intermediate block signals to accommodate the short-lived boom in coal traffic; and there are only two level crossings at Culgaith and Low House, both Manned Controlled Barriers. Yet the line speed is a derisory 60mph, an increase to at least 75mph is desirable. This would also benefit stopping trains and putative diversions from the West Coast Main Line.

Stephen Abbott is a former member of the Midlands Rail Passengers Committee, and was Hon Secretary of TravelWatch East Midlands 2005-2016. He now lives in Skipton, the views expressed are his own.

Letters

Passionate, informed and future-focused – readers offer perspectives and proposals in response to our May issue.

Dear Sir

I must commend Stewart Palmer for his balanced and factual article on the future of our iconic railway. His analysis is comprehensive, accurate and his conclusion reached without prejudice and bias. The question now is, will the FoSCL Committee now pick up the challenge Stewart postulates or just park it as too difficult and do nothing.

So far as I can see the only way forward likely to receive serious consideration is a business plan that significantly reduces the current deficit on the line's operation which probably exceeds £1 million annually bearing in mind the very high civil engineering maintenance costs and the fact that passenger numbers and revenue are at best static and probably declining in real terms.

Doing nothing or tinkering at the edges like increasing stops at small stations will only result in further decline and it would be a big mistake to assume the passenger service North of Settle is safe from withdrawal when the Treasury are looking for every penny of savings they can find to get the country out of an unaffordable level of debt.

It would seem that since Ron Cotton's service improvements now over 40 years ago there has been no dedicated management time put into delivering a plan which will provide a more convenient train service which will produce a lower nett subsidy. Elsewhere on the Network this has been achieved with timetables that offer an hourly frequency at the same

fixed times with skip stops to improve journey times. To get out of the present risks to the future of the passenger service, perhaps it is the time for FoSCL to take the initiative and offer finance to Northern to part-fund a dedicated Line Manager for say 2 years with a remit to examine in detail how the train service and its finances could be improved.

Yours faithfully
David Ward

Dear David,

The selection of articles in the latest 'friends on track' provide different views of the S&C's future – the SWOT analysis, new service offerings and rural transport strategy – and Phil Hind's excellent article on the Rhaetian Railway (RB) in Switzerland highlights lessons to be learned there. Hopefully future editions will include comparisons with other railways, such as longer UK heritage lines and tourist routes, which would add further food for thought.

As user of the RB and other Swiss lines with local and tourist services during visits from home in Germany, I'd like to add to Phil's interesting comments and conclusions. Whilst Swiss railways may not be perfect, the regularity of services, including connections, and their disciplined operation help to overcome such problems as inevitably arise; great efforts are made to prevent delays to one

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train affecting others. The through ICE service from Hamburg in North Germany to Chur in Graubünden, the end of the Swiss (SBB) standard gauge and start of the RB, almost 750 km, will be turned back at the border in Basle if it is running late and would interfere with the Swiss timetable! Passengers change to one of the frequent SBB trains instead.

Phil mentions St Moritz and Davos on the RB, with well-heeled visitors who may even arrive by private plane or helicopter rather than train, but their significance for the local railway shouldn't be underestimated. The RB's marketing attracts a wide range of passengers, and occupants of luxury hotels in St Moritz still use the RB to reach cable cars, ski-lifts and mountain viewpoints, the roads over mountain passes being subject to winter restrictions; furthermore like the S&C, the RB offers many scenic views unavailable to car passengers.

The great volume of hotel and other accommodation in Swiss mountain resorts provides a traffic potential which simply cannot be found in places along the Leeds–Settle–Carlisle line, however major tourist centres such as York or the Lake District, offer a closer comparison, having their own tourist attractions and a developed infrastructure to support them. Organised trips over the S&C for their visitors or, on a smaller scale, those to places like Haworth, could play a role, but would need step changes in marketing and services, together with a significant investment in providing facilities which Phil has noted on the RB.

Secondly, and of great local significance for the RB, apart from the long-distance Glacier and Bernina Express trains linking St Moritz, Zermatt and Northern Italy for international tourists, there is a strong demand for stopping services from other

guests staying in the region, who receive free public transport tickets from their hotels for travel on the RB, as well as on excellent local and regional bus services, all frequent, reliable and coordinated in an integrated system.

There is much to dream about!

Kind regards,
Graham Bocking
Hamburg, Germany

Stewart Palmer in his 'SWOT' analysis made some interesting suggestions for improvement to the S&C line in the May 2025 edition. I would like to make the following observations:

Scope to develop the line for long distance passenger flows

One point that Stewart did not mention is that the ECML is currently full to passengers and freight traffic, and the proposed new timetable for December 2025 has not been finally approved. One of the reasons is the number of trains operating North of York, which is having an affect on local trains in the Newcastle – Morpeth area of the North East. One of the possible solutions here would be to divert a number of the 'Cross Country' services (which are all Diesel hauled 'under the wires' at the moment) to run via Leeds, Appleby, Carlisle and then onward to Scotland. As a number of these already call at Leeds the additional time would be negligible. Indeed, it would give the advantage of direct trains from the North of England calling at Scottish large town of Motherwell again.

W12 Loading gauge

Could not agree more. I made this suggestion in a previous Magazine (Edition No. 143 from February 2016).

Indeed, undertaking a feasibility study to improve the gauge clearance should not be too difficult. This is based on the fact that Network Rail (NR) in the Southern Area of the UK has implemented a 'economic' plan to convert the Channel Tunnel 'classic route' - Folkestone to Wembley via Ashford and Maidstone to be able to support the bigger load units and swap bodies, freight gauge W9a, with minimal intervention. This is being realized through a mixture of track lowering, slight alterations to some structures and imposing speed restrictions in certain areas. No signalling of track through tunnels (as in the case of Tonbridge on the Hastings 1066 line) is required. The rest of it is largely down to some slightly more intelligent tamping through south London station where some of the track is quite elevated in

places, so bringing that back down to get the gauge clearance. The route will be spacious enough to accommodate freight wagons, but there will need to be speed restrictions on some structures that don't have standard clearance. Network Rail hopes to have the route adjusted to W9a gauge completed and carrying freight by the end of Control Period 7, 2024-2029. The estimated cost for the total route is put at £10M.

Passing the S&C for gauge W9a would certainly enable the line to accommodate more Anglo Scottish freight intermodal traffic, and a feasibility study would be a good starting point.

Best regards
Edward Evans

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Time Travelling

Ian Jackson, Fellow of the Geological Society & author of Cumbria Rocks, Northumberland Rocks & Rocks at the Edge of Empire, takes us through geological time down the S&C.

I've always been curious about why my little northern bit of the Earth is like it is. We've farmed and built on it for the last 8000 years, but this article is dedicated to a much longer view of time. True beauty is, as they say, more than skin deep – as deep as 475 million years.

Geology is an interpretive science – variable amounts of facts and expertise and a lot of inference. Britain's landscapes are not like rocky Utah's, mostly our rocks are covered in soil, vegetation and tarmac, so we geologists are like detectives looking for clues.

Folk are chatting, busy on their phones and laptops, people-watching, or just reading books. I don't think I've ever managed to really read a book on a train. I'm a window-gazer. The changing views have me mesmerised. I've always loved landscapes and after listening to a BBC Schools radio programme called How things Began around 1959, I developed an all-consuming interest in their origins, the past – the distant past. And so began my journey as a geologist.

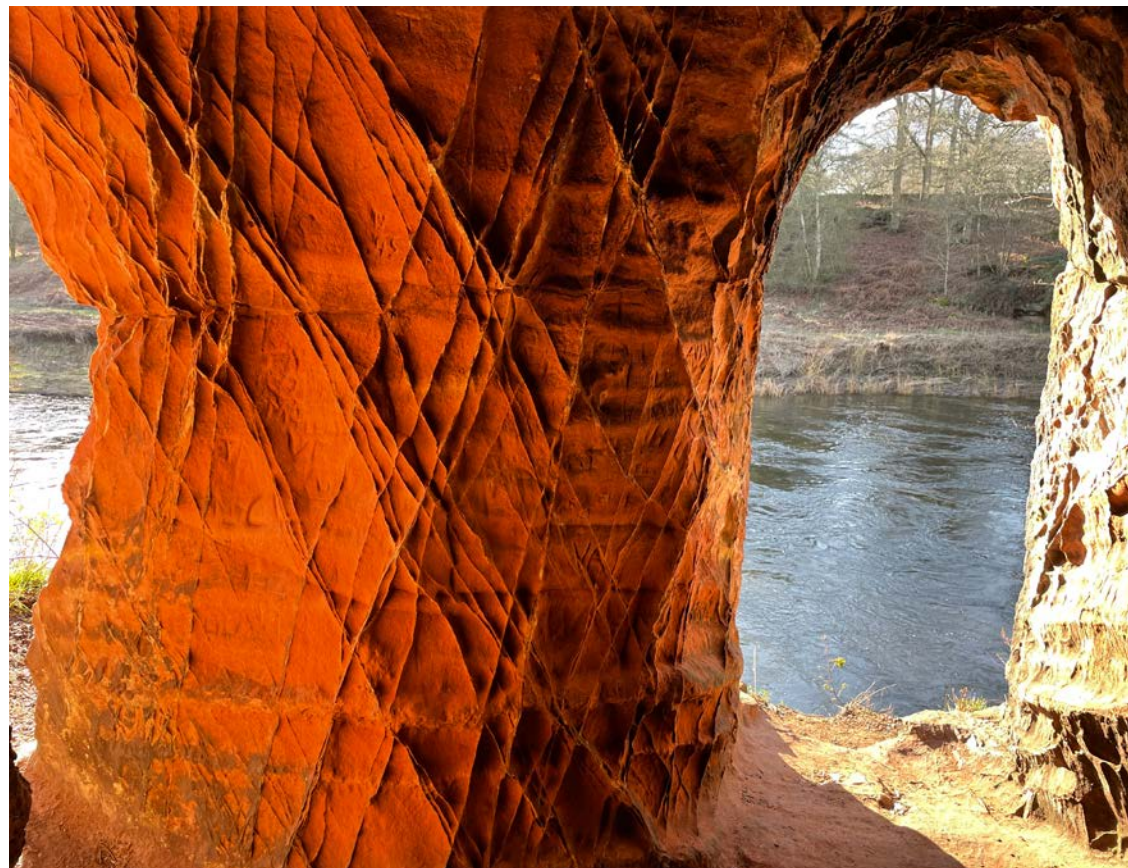
So, let's launch into a geologist's eye view of a journey from Carlisle to Settle. We are about to head south out of Carlisle station and do some serious time-travelling - no Tardis required, the 8:24am Northern service to Settle will do just fine. As we are starting in the north we are, broadly at least, going to be travelling back in time. Set down your book and phone, look out of the window! Even before the driver moves

the train, we have our first clue – the stone of Carlisle station is red (Permian) sandstones from Penrith and the Eden Valley. These rocks were once sand grains blowing around as dunes in a desert 275 million years ago. We were more like Saudi Arabia then, in environment and latitude.

'our San Andreas fault – it still moves and had a little earthquake in the 1970s.'

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Once we've left the Carlisle suburbs behind, we are into hummocky verdant pastures. No red rock to be seen (yet) it's buried under clay, silt, sand and stones left by the last ice sheet 20,000 years ago. Soon enough we get a glimpse (east, that's left window!) of the River Eden, which has cut a deep valley and here and there exposes those red sandstones. This rail line does the same – we speed through rock cuttings as the train heads through Armathwaite, Lazonby and Langwathby. Did you notice that all these stations are still built of local red sandstone?

There were fleeting glimpses of other fascinating (well it is to me) geo-stuff too: brief views of the floodplain of the River Eden – sand and silt deposited in the last 10,000 years; of the Pennine hills and its older, Carboniferous rocks, a 300 metre scarp caused by the Pennine Boundary fault (our San Andreas – it still moves and



Lacey's caves in Penrith Sandstone, near Lazonby

had a little earthquake in the 1970s); the conical hills of Knock, Dufton and Murton Pike – much eroded and dislocated remnants of older, Ordovician, rocks of the Lake District, itself occasionally visible in the west. Did you spot the gorge of High Cup Nick and its lip of Whin Sill – the same rock on which Hadrian's Wall is built.

An industrial history buff would have been on the look-out for the old Long Meg gypsum mine and its siding, but no-one can miss the British Gypsum factory, mines and conveyors at Kirkby

Thore. 270 million years ago the gypsum was 'salt' in a sea that was continually filling up and drying out. While we are digressing into economic geology did you notice how many of the cutting slopes we have been through are covered with a blanket of rocks or gabion (rock) baskets – the sides are susceptible to landslips and rockfalls and need protecting. I bet you didn't look at the rail ballast we've been travelling along either? It's usually crushed granite, an ancient, once molten rock.

The Pickersett Edge Grit, a 326 million year old Carboniferous Sandstone forming the plateau and scarp of Wild Boar Fell to the west of the railway in Mallerstang.



Appleby & south

Back to our journey. After Appleby the landscape becomes more rolling and field walls are starting to look a bit grey, we are entering Carboniferous country. The rock here, limestone, was, 330 million years ago, limey mud in a warm coral sea. Our bit of the Earth's crust we now call Britain was at that time just about on the Equator. Limestone was once marine animals – crushed shells and plankton, that's why you can find fossils in it.

As we head south we've travelled back another 60 million years, but you'd be hard pressed to see that change in the undulating green fields – it's the walls, stream gorges and cuttings that are our clues. Kirkby Stephen station comes to our aid too – it's built, not of red Permian sandstone, but the grey-brown Carboniferous variety.

'155 years ago, geologists discovered bones of elephants, rhinos, hippos and hyaenas.'

Wild Boar Fell

The next section of the journey to Garsdale takes us into the landscape that makes Settle to Carlisle one of the great railway journeys of the world. The views as we climb up the Mallerstang Valley to Aisgill summit and beyond are breathtaking. The valley is overlooked by High Seat in the east and Wild Boar Fell in the west. These fells (just like Ingleborough and Pen-Y-Ghent) are perfect examples of the way rocks are the prime influence on landscape – the hard Carboniferous sandstone and limestone strata alternate with soft shale layers. Erosion by glaciers in the last Ice Age has scoured the hillsides and created the classic

horizontal bench and steep scarp profiles. You can see those same alternations – the influence of hard and soft rocks – in the many waterfalls of the streams in the valley sides.

But not all the hillsides are like these, many have irregular humps, bumps and hollows: they are covered by stony clay smeared by the ice, which with rock debris, then slowly slumped down the slopes. A process encouraged by the thousands of years of freeze and thaw in the tundra conditions that followed. In the last 10,000 years in many of the hollows and on the hill tops thick peat formed to create the mires and mosses that make for such rich habitats for wildlife and wet feet for walkers.

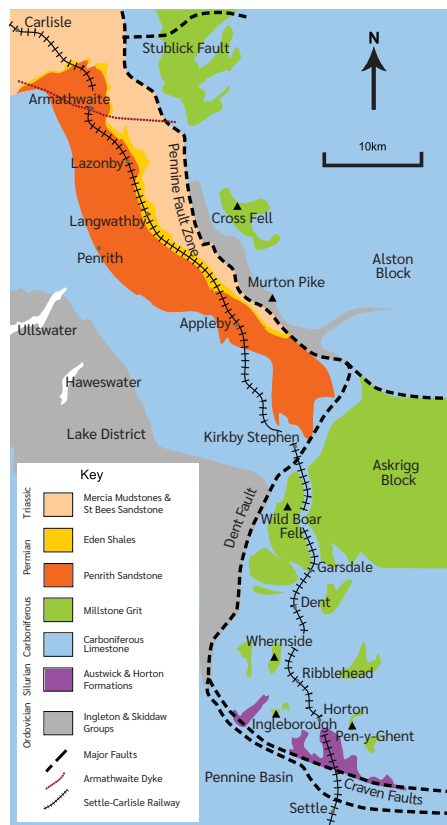
From Garsdale to Dent and Dent to Ribbleshead the beautiful rock-influenced scenery keeps on coming; it's impossible to choose between right or left windows. Soon we enter the Blea Moor tunnel – over two kilometres of extraction of younger Carboniferous sedimentary rock we can't see. But look to the west of the entrance, did you spot the many tons of now grassed-over spoil they dragged out of it? It's a downhill journey now so we are travelling through older rocks again. More limestone country, the same age as the rocks near Kirkby Stephen. They are obvious as pale grey outcrops, walls and buildings that reflect the sunlight (today!) We've swapped moorland for green pastures too and many of those fields have rows of sink (or swallow) holes – places where water has dissolved the limestone and the ground beneath has collapsed. Look west of the Ribbleshead viaduct for some great examples.

After Horton and before we approach Settle, we encounter the oldest rocks on our journey – vertical and broken rocks that look every bit of their 475 million

years. These are ancient sandstones and siltstones from a time when the piece of crust we now call Britain was at the bottom of an ocean and between the Equator and the South Pole. These are Ordovician and slightly younger, Silurian, periods of Earth's history. But these old rocks don't last long and now you've got your eye in you will immediately have recognised that for the last few minutes of our journey we're back in limestone country and its iconic town, our last stop, Settle.

Feel like a 5 mile walk to stretch your legs before you return? A final and very recent, geological tale to round off the day? Head up to Victoria Cave, a limestone cavern above the town, where 155 years ago, geologists discovered bones of elephants, rhinos, hippos and hyaenas. Their finds became central to one of the great 19th century debates and changed forever how the world understood past climates and environments - and debunked any literal interpretation of the biblical story of Noah's great flood.

Next time you're on a train and engrossed in your book spare a thought for the person opposite staring out of the window. They might look as if they are wondering what's for tea, but they may well be puzzling where that hill is and what lies beneath it. And a final revelation: as a boy I travelled this railway by steam train every year for more than a decade. We lived in Carlisle; my grandparents lived in Hull and it was looking out of the window back then that fed my passion for our stunning northern landscapes and their origin. The Settle–Carlisle line shares the blame, or credit (?) for my devotion to rocks... so you Friends only have yourselves to blame if anyone else is similarly inspired.



Schematic of the lines geology.

*If you would like more detailed and technical information on the geology of the route there is a document on the FOSCL website:

<https://www.foscl.org.uk/sites/1/files/drupal/doc/attachments/GEOLOGY%209388-Settle-Carlisle%20Booklet3.pdf>

Northern Rail Heritage

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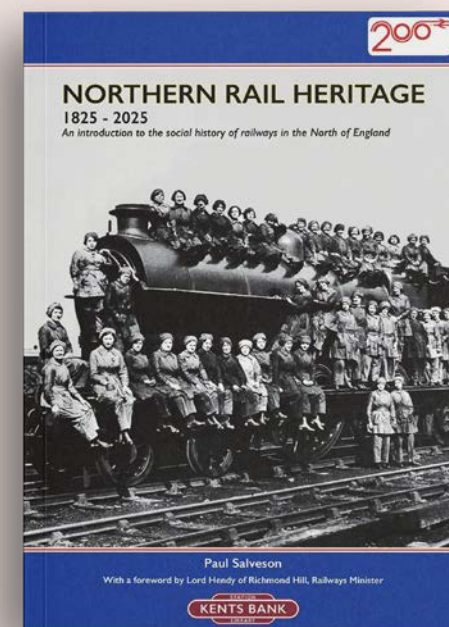
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The book has been sponsored by train operator CrossCountry. Paul Salveson said 'This is our contribution to the wonderful celebrations of Railway 200 this year. We're incredibly grateful to CrossCountry for the generous support they have given us; without them we would not have been able to publish the book at what is a very affordable price.'

There will be a launch event at Daisy Roots Books, Grange-over-Sands on Saturday May 10th at 10.30 to 12.00.



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The Settle and Carlisle Railway: looking to the future

By Chris Gee

I read Stewart Palmer's assessment of the railway in the May 2025 issue with interest and would make a number of observations. The line's primary purpose is to serve its local community, and this is evidenced by the passenger service it has today, largely a stopping service at each of the stations giving residents the opportunity to travel to work, study or shop in the large towns and cities like Skipton, Leeds and Carlisle.

There is absolutely the potential for growth in passenger traffic as the new Labour Government's house building targets apply to the larger settlements like Settle, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby and while these might be modest compared to more urban areas, it is inevitable that these towns will expand, as will the villages in the Eden Valley.

Another primary purpose for the railway is tourism, bringing visitors into the National Park and the Eden Valley, whether that be for walking or sightseeing. The Yorkshire Dales Explorer on Saturdays is a good example of the growth potential here and this train also illustrates the potential for connecting into East Lancashire towns and Manchester.

There is a key role for the Friends here in relentlessly promoting the passenger service it has today, both the core Leeds to Carlisle service and the Yorkshire Dales Explorer. The Friends should work alongside industry partners like Great British Railways, Network Rail and Northern to grow passenger traffic and fill the existing trains.

While I can see the passion for the reinstatement of long-distance passenger services, these have the potential to

undermine the primary purpose of the line serving its community. While through trains and reduced journey times can lead to growth in passenger demand, what is also key is good connectivity at the nodal points like Carlisle, Skipton (for Lancaster) and Leeds.

I wouldn't be surprised though if in the future an Open Access operator made an application to run via the S&C to and from Scotland. Open Access operators tend to tap into passenger markets that are not well served now and compete largely on price rather than journey time.

The line's other primary purpose is to serve originating (or terminating) freight traffic and this is currently very strong with existing freight connections at Hellifield for timber, Newbiggin for gypsum, Arcow and Ribbleshead Quarries for aggregates and the new Horton Quarry connection. This new connection is expected to see up to three trains a day and is evidence that there is always the potential for new originating freight traffic on the line.

There is another strategic role for the Friends here and it should campaign hard to protect and retain the freight facilities, like Ribbleshead Quarry, because it is hugely expensive to reinstate such facilities in the future if they are closed and infrastructure rationalised.

A secondary, but still important role for the Settle & Carlisle line, is as part of national freight routeing. It's great to see it used for freight traffic like timber for Chirk, cement for Scotland from Clitheroe as well as engineering traffic. This is good for the route as it helps with its classification when it comes to Network Rail making



Photo courtesy of Terry Callahan

investment decisions as to where to prioritise renewals.

Railtours, whether steam or diesel hauled, are another key component. I think the line will continue to attract steam hauled railtours and Pullman dining trains because of its scenic qualities and as the landscape is not going to change, I think it's a given that future generations will want to come and travel over the route simply to enjoy the views and because of its iconic status.

Looking towards a potential role for the route, I think it will play a role in the future as a diversionary route again. If the railway industry wanted to make it work as a diversionary route, they would, but until the West Coast TOC has a fleet of bi-mode trains, it is not currently practical or cost effective.

The line already has an excess of capacity for more trains, so there is no case for re-signalling or electrification at the current time. These would unlock capacity if the line was full, but it is not full. First, we must fill the existing trains, then we can lengthen them and still we have to fill the longer trains. Only then can we increase the number of trains and fill those. All of that can be done with the existing infrastructure within the existing capacity, there is no need for re-signalling or electrification.

I don't agree with the proposal to single the line through tunnels to achieve W12 gauge clearance for intermodal traffic. In my experience as a railway operator, singling of once double track railways has always proved to be a mistake in the long term, it reduces capacity and reduces operational flexibility.

Personally, I think ETCS/ERTMS will unlock future capacity on the ECML and WCML for a growing intermodal market and I think the Settle & Carlisle will remain the route for class 6 (or 7) freight trains given the prevailing 60mph linespeed. The WCML and ECML will be the preferred route for intermodal where these class 4 trains can attain their 75mph speeds over greater distances.

In short, there is absolutely a future for the Settle and Carlisle and lots to be positive about. That said, it is wise never to be complacent and that is why there is always a continued role for the Friends, both to promote the trains that we have today and to safeguard the line for future generations. And on that point, the other important role for the Friends is to inspire the next generation of enthusiasts and advocates for the line so that this fantastic railway is forever cared for by a group that will defend its existence with a passion.

From Grey to Green

Alison Booth, member of the British Guild of Travel Writers, rides the line and reflects on the transition from industrial West Yorkshire to the pastoral but gritty landscape of the Dales.

It's famously known as the Settle–Carlisle line. But why? The train sets off from Leeds station and for me, the scent of the Dales fills the air the minute travellers gather on the platform at the journey's start.

First come the long-distance hikers armed with trekking poles and mud-smeared boots, disgorged from trains from London, Edinburgh, Bristol and beyond. Sightseers touting cool bags arrive from equally far-flung destinations, eager to grab window seats showcasing some of Britain's most spectacular scenery. Then, just before the whistle blows, office workers and shoppers leap on board, panting. We're off!

We pull out of Leeds on raised tracks offering fabulous views of glass towers soaring up among stolid Victorian factory buildings. Soon we are threading through the silver birches and willows that shade the River Aire and its adjacent canals. We pass through the World Heritage village of Saltaire where the Italianate textile mill built by Sir Titus Salt in 1853 dominates the track. The neat grid of small houses built for his workers rises up on the opposite slope.

What a treat it would have been to alight at Saltaire station and explore the mill's shops and restaurants, then stroll among the residential streets, named after Salt's descendants—Ada, Albert, Alexandra, Amelia and many more. I would have loved to have then strolled the towpath to Bingley with its famous Five Rise Locks teetering above one another

across the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. But our train presses on, past another formidable flight of locks—all part of the 19th-century spirit of enterprise palpable all around.

Ornate stone chimneys, inspired by Italian Renaissance bell towers, line the track. Many, like Bowling Green Mill's decorative spire, are now listed monuments. Soon they are joined by lofty symbols of another distant land: the green-and-white minaret of Keighley's Jamia Masjid mosque, visible from the train between twin domes.

Then, as we pass beyond Skipton, the landscape suddenly changes. Grey turns green as industry gives way to a vast, sweeping valley that undulates through fields and up towards steep, tree-covered slopes. Sheep graze the pastures and in the distance, purplish escarpments rear up. In winter these are often sprinkled with snow, creating a sudden Alpine feel. We are entering some of Britain's highest terrain, where the Three Peaks of Ingleborough, Pen-Y-Ghent and Wharfedale tempt hardy hikers to a challenge—and sensational views.

Appearing next, the delightful station of Hellifield conjures up the elegance and excitement of late 19th-century railway travel. Its cream-and-maroon canopies, completed in 1880, shade a museum of railway memorabilia, the Shed 24H cafe serving tea and buns and even an apartment for overnight stays. What fun it would be to fall asleep here, wake up to a Dales panorama, and then take the train to visit stations further north.



Grade 2 listed Giggleswick School Chapel.

Now we plunge into Ribblesdale, following its river as it meanders across wide meadows and through oxbow curves. We pass arched stone bridges and patchwork fields. Hamlets and lone farmhouses dot a web of stone walls.

Soon we are pulling into Settle, where the official—and famously scenic—Settle–Carlisle rail journey begins. Many of my fellow passengers, now well-ensconced in their brunch, will simply stay on the train. But for others, like me, this market town is their destination, where their Dales adventure takes flight. We are here to hike, run, cycle or simply to drink in the great outdoors.

As I step from the train just before noon, I get chatting with Aaron, who set off from King's Cross that morning at eight.

Strapping on his formidable backpack, he described his plans for the coming days: 'Now, I'm walking the Pennine bridleway to Malham where I've booked to stay the night.' 'How long will that take you?' He glances nonchalantly at the blustery crags beyond the platform. 'Probably around six hours.' Thereafter he anticipated several days of trekking until he arrived at Ribblesdale station ready to take the train back south.

But for those like me, for whom a super-stuffed sandwich from Ye Olde Naked Man cafe is more than sufficient luggage, there are many walking routes from Settle that starfish out into the vales and hills. I'm spoilt for choice with numerous circular routes that loop past caves and scars to the east, passing limestone crags

roamed by shaggy highland cattle and curly-horned sheep. Another path winds alongside the Ribble past waterfalls where sea trout leap up over the tumbling foam towards their breeding grounds. From wooded valleys up to dramatic, high moors, trails wind through several days' worth of stunningly beautiful, wild terrain—and all from the contrastingly civilised doorsteps of the town's old coaching inns and B&B cottages.

Later, I simply hop on the train from Settle station to many more remarkable walks. None is more thrilling than the Ribbleshead circuit. A trail passes beneath the celebrated viaduct and circles back through the hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale and an enchanting, mossy dell. From the low, marshy valley to the open slopes of Whenside, there are constantly changing vistas of the viaduct's 24 elegant arches, all picked out in changing light. It's arguably a finer way to experience this monumental structure than travelling across it by train. A day's hike inevitably ends at the Station Inn, with a glass of malty Ribbleshead Bitter beside the crackling fire.

Back in Settle, there's no shortage of varied, and indeed unexpected, restaurants. I was excited to discover Bangladeshi restaurant Ruchee, which serves Sylheti specialities cooked by chefs who drive over from Bradford every day. Then there's Darling, on the first floor above the Practically Everything hardware store, where Roz from Hua Hin keeps three woks of delicious Thai food bubbling away. Capturing the vogue for street kitchen fare, food is served in takeaway containers. The couple on the neighbouring table who happily—and perhaps deliberately—over-ordered simply asked for lids to take half their supper home.

On a Thursday night, I head to The Lion's Den at the Golden Lion Inn, where folk musicians gather with strings and pipes, taking turns to lead the music by passing round a spoon. At weekends only, The Little House offers a terrific taste of Yorkshire, with dishes based on ingredients from local lamb to rhubarb.

Inevitably, clouds come rolling in from the west and it's time to head indoors. I repair to The Folly, a remarkable 17th-century mansion, with a museum that tells the story of Settle and its neighbouring Dales life. Across the river, the Giggleswick School Chapel stands proud on a rise. Its distinctive copper dome is visible for miles around, but is even more impressive inside—its glimmering gold mosaics of angels and evangelists create a heavenly atmosphere.

And so back to Settle station—and the journey home. But not before one last, important visit: its historic signal box. Dave and his fellow volunteers welcome Saturday visitors to pull the multi-coloured levers and ding the bells. 'It's all based on nautical procedures,' Dave explains, as he helps me to use these wood-and-brass instruments to guide an imaginary steam train and then hand it over to the next stretch of line. Historic signals outside by the old track shoot up and down, showing my choo-choo when to stop and when to go ahead.

But suddenly I spot my real-life train approaching. I scoot down to the platform and board a carriage packed with happy wanderers recounting their day's exploits further up along the Settle–Carlisle line. I take my seat and get swept up with their enthusiasm as I carry on seamlessly with them back towards Leeds, and then further on south.



Top: Settle station signal box visitor attraction.

Right: The impressive interior and dome of Giggleswick School Chapel.

Above: Coffee and bikes in Settle market place.

Rail link at Horton quarry reopens after sixty years

HORTON QUARRY RECONNECTS TO THE NETWORK, CUTTING EMISSIONS AND ROAD USE

The rail link at Heidelberg Materials' Horton quarry in the Yorkshire Dales National Park has been reinstated after 60 years. When fully operational each rail movement from the quarry will supply around 1,650 tonnes of high-quality aggregate to construction projects across the north west. The rail link will reduce vehicle movements on the wider road network and cut associated CO₂ emissions.

The rail link at Heidelberg Materials UK's Horton quarry has been reinstated as part of the company's strategy to improve its network of rail connected quarries and depots. Horton quarry, which has been producing limestone and high-quality gritstone since 1889, is situated within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and its original rail siding was removed in 1965.

The newly constructed rail terminal at the quarry is undergoing testing as went to press. Once fully operational each rail movement will supply around 1,650 tonnes of aggregate to construction projects across the north west.

'The reopening of the rail link is fantastic news and has been years in the making,' said Becky Murphy, Aggregates Regional Director at Heidelberg Materials UK. 'It will allow us to supply high-quality aggregate to major construction projects by rail, reducing vehicle movements on the wider road network and cutting associated CO₂ emissions.'

The work has been carried out by Duo Group, VolkerRail and AECOM, in partnership with Network Rail, and the trains are being operated by GB Railfreight. **We hope to give a fuller story in the November issue.**

The Dent Marble Industry



HOW A REMOTE VILLAGE CARVED OUT A NAME IN POLISHED STONE

By Bill Fraser

While the primary purpose of the Settle–Carlisle Railway was to provide the Midland Railway their own through route to Scotland for freight and passengers and its construction was instrumental in the growth of the quarrying industries in Ribblesdale and the gypsum mines and plaster works in the Eden valley, there was little else in the way of industry along the route to generate substantial freight traffic, apart from agriculture. One industry that did exist however, and which probably provided a small amount of traffic for a short time, was the Dent Marble Industry centred at Stone House, at the foot of Arten Gill near the head of Dentdale.

Dent Marbles, like most other British marbles, are not 'true' marbles which are metamorphic rocks formed when limestone is recrystallised due to being heated, but unaltered limestones that can be polished to a fine finish. Limestone is abundant in the Yorkshire Dales but the scattered nature of the quarries and the distance some of these were from where the stone was finished suggests that not all were suitable. The limestones that were suitable belong to what is known as the Yoredale Group of rocks which outcrop across most of the Dales and varies between 150–400m in thickness. It consists of repeated sequences of limestone, mudstone and sandstone,

each sequence being between 10–60m thick, that were formed between 335–320 million years ago when deltas were being built out into shallow, warm seas that covered the area only for them to be submerged when sea levels rapidly rose and for the process to start again. Out of the nine most persistent Yoredale Group limestones, only four appear to have been suitable for polishing. These were the blue-black, Hardrow Scar and Simonstone Limestones which, when polished, made the 'Black Marble', and the pale-grey, Underset and Main Limestones which, due to their high fossil content (mostly Crinoids), made the very attractive 'Fossil' or 'Decorative Marble'. The Hardrow and Simonstone Limestones, being two of the older limestones in the Yoredale Group, outcrop close to the valley bottoms while the Underset and Main Limestones, being the youngest, occur high on the valley sides.

The polishing of limestone is believed to have begun in the area around the middle of the C18th on a local scale but in the early C19th High Mill at Stone House, which had been built as a cotton or corn mill, was converted for stone cutting and polishing. This must have been a success as soon afterwards Low Mill was built on the same site as a separate polishing mill. The Stone House location was chosen due to the availability of water to power

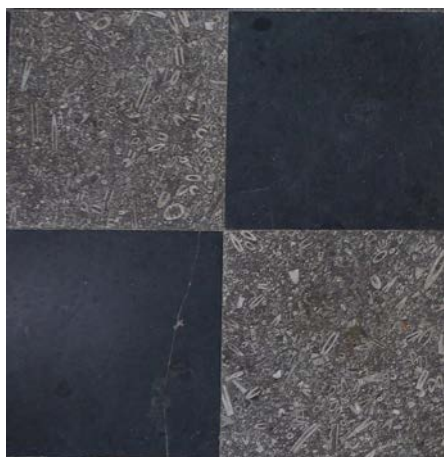
the machinery. This came from Arten Gill but was supplemented with supplies from Widdale Tarns on Great Knoutberry, local springs and Scale Gill, which drained the slopes of Whernside, via specially constructed drains, leats, culverts and launders.

Despite all four of the limestones used for polishing outcropping either in Arten Gill or at its head, no quarries were opened in them here. Instead, Dale Head and Blea Gill quarries were opened 1 mile further up the dale at Dent Head, where Hardrow Scar Limestone was extracted for 'Black Marble'. In 1868 the Midland Railway took over Dale Head Quarry, paying the Marble Works £1300 compensation and, using its stone, built Denthead Viaduct through it. The Hardrow Scar Limestone was also quarried at Deepdale Head and at Gawthrop, near Dent, but it is not known if these also supplied the Stone House works. The only known working in the Simonstone Limestone are some small quarries in High Lathe Gill above Dent which were likely to have been worked by independent operations. Limestone for the 'Fossil Marble' came from quarries working the Underset Limestone at Greenside, high on the sides of Baugh Fell above Garsdale, Binks Quarry below Great Coum overlooking Deepdale, and from the Main Limestone in High Rake Moss and Snazewold quarries on Aye Gill Pike.

The limestones, which occur in horizontal, well-defined beds averaging 40-80cms thick with widely spaced vertical joints, were extracted using hammers and crowbars. They were cut in the quarries using hammers and chisels to drill lines of holes into which 'plugs and feathers' were inserted before being gently hammered to split the rock. These roughly cut blocks were then conveyed to Stone House by

packhorses, horse drawn carts and sleds which, judging by the sizes of some blocks in the abandoned quarries and at Stone House, was no mean feat.

At High Mill water powered saws cut blocks to size before they were transferred to the Low Mill for polishing prior to being cut and shaped to make the finished product. Polishing was done on flat iron plates using different grades of sand, dug from Whernside and Widdale Tarns, as an abrasive.



Examples of the Black and Fossil Marble in the floor of St Andrew's Church, Dent.

Products were floor tiles, chimney pieces, church and cemetery monuments, clock faces, tabletops, inlays, chess tables and pieces and other ornamental work. These were used locally, and examples can be seen today in St Andrew's Church, Dent, Cowgill Chapel and the Sportsman Pub at Cow Dub. They were also exported with some going, by packhorse, to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at Gargrave for onward distribution. Much went to London and the north-east, with some ending up even further away. The Winter Palace in St



Quarried blocks of Hardrow Scar Limestone abandoned at White Shaw Moss Quarry, Deepdale Head.

Petersburg reputedly has a Dent Marble Fireplace and there are even records of it in Australia.

The coming of the railway, as well as it being a customer itself in that Dent Marble fireplaces were initially installed in all the stations along the line, must have made export of the products easier. It also allowed the import of more varied and better quality, 'true' marbles from overseas enabling the works to increase their range of products. Dent station was the nearest rail head but access via the approach road with such heavy products must not have been easy.

Unfortunately, the railway couldn't save the industry, and the works closed in 1907. Changes in taxation had made the import of foreign marbles, particularly from Italy, much cheaper and this small scale, remote industry couldn't compete. High Mill was partly demolished in 1920 with the existing building on the site replacing it in 1984. Low Mill was demolished in 1928 and its stone used to repair the road that had been partly destroyed by flooding. Traces of the water supply system remain as do the quarries where in some, piles of stone ready for shipment still stand.

Members' Christmas Lunch 2025

Join fellow members for the annual Christmas lunch, Saturday 22nd November at Herriot's Hotel, Skipton. Opposite Skipton Station, the three-course lunch will cost £25 per person including tea or coffee to follow. Our after dinner speaker has yet to be finalised, further details to follow. Arrival 12:30 onwards for dining at 1:15pm, finishing at 3pm. Please choose one starter, one main and one dessert from the menu choices...

Starter:

- Roasted Vine Tomato and Red Pepper Soup (GF/Vegan/Vegetarian)
- Pressed Ham Hock and Pea Terrine, dressed leaves, tomato chutney, rosemary and sea salt croutes (GF)
- Chicken Liver Parfait, roast plum chutney, dressed leaves and toasted brioche (GF)

Main

- Roast Turkey, Stuffing* Pigs in Blankets* served with Roasted Potatoes and Roasted Root Vegetables *GF
- Baked Salmon Honey Garlic Butter Glaze and creamy dill sauce with Roast Herby Potatoes (GF)
- Butternut Squash Wellington with Roast Herby New Pots: (Vegan/Vegetarian)

All served with seasonal vegetables

Dessert

- Sticky Toffee Pudding, Butterscotch Sauce and Ice Cream
- Chocolate Truffle Torte with a fresh berry compote (GF)
- Vanilla and Strawberry Cheesecake with fresh berry compote
- Vegan Carrot Cake (Plant based GF/Vegan)

Followed by Tea/Coffee

Please select your menu choices and include dietary needs and food intolerances and send to Janet Benzie by 1st October 2025 to benziej@pobroadband.co.uk and copy Jill Tiernan into the email: jill.tiernan@settle-carlisle.com

BACS Transfer:

Account Name: Friends of Settle-Carlisle Line

Sort Code: 20-78-42

Account: 93121526

Quoting: Lunch and your surname: e.g. Lunch Tiernan

Cheques should be made payable to 'Friends of Settle-Carlisle Line' and forwarded to Janet Benzie, 4 Knowles Cottage, Long Preston, North Yorkshire BD23 4NP no later than 1st October 2025. Please note: If your circumstances change no refunds will be honoured after 1st November 2025 unless we can resell the lunch.

We look forward to welcoming you to Herriot's Hotel on the 22nd November 2025.



Don Jary

All rails led north for a rail industry professional

By David Owen

In November 2024, Don Jary, Trustee of the S&C Railway Trust and Chair of the S&C Carlisle Station Improvement Group, gave an interesting presentation on his long railway career, dating back to British Rail days – a journey that led him to the Settle–Carlisle.

Probably because of his father's and grandfather's career in the rail industry, Don already had railways in the blood from an early age. As a small lad he would be taken to signal boxes, ticket offices, cabs of locos and, one evening, the opportunity to see a steam crane working. The myriad opportunities presented by BR drew him in and he started on the Southern Region with an early appointment being Assistant Station Manager at Gatwick Airport – a fascinating place in the late 1970's as Don said, 'with train movements every 3 minutes or so every hour.'

Moving on, he took the role of Station Manager in the Ascot/Sunningdale/Virginia Water commuter belt. That came with its famous racecourse and the celebrities who frequented the stations. From there he went 'up north' to follow a promotion in Crewe. Don was, as a young manager, initially 'very daunted' with the scale and complexity of this large, operationally and historically significant mainline railway station. Involvement with the local union representatives gave him valuable experience for the future in working and negotiating with people he describes as 'great professionals in their own fields, who bargained hard, made agreements and

expected you to keep them too'

His first contact with the S&C came in Manchester when working with the North West Transport Users Consultative Committee (TUCC) team when the line closure was being considered. Following a move to Newcastle upon Tyne he became involved there with the introduction of the train many loved to hate – the Class 143 Pacer. As he said, 'virtually every aspect of them was re-built over their service lives.' From there he went onto a position as Area Manager, Carlisle – 'a fantastic job' and a huge area of operation including the S&C which had recently been saved from closure but was 'in a pretty rundown state.'

Don said that the S&C 'really shows the power of what volunteers and the railway industry working together can achieve.'

A rich and varied career covering 42 years led him, on retirement, to being invited to join the Development Company and latterly a Trustee with the S&C Trust. Looking at the S&C today Don was very complimentary on how the infrastructure is looking so much better and 'really shows the power of what volunteers and the railway industry working together can achieve.' Don reminded us that when you've got a world-class brand there are so many opportunities to involve the community and 'to make something different happen'.



Lisa & Phil Cottam



Allison Kinder & Colin Stroud



Dot Atkinson



Alan Collinson



John Cunningham



June Smith



Heinz Toller



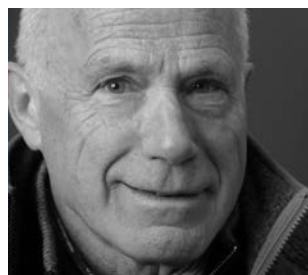
Marge Toller



Peter May



Simon Wraith



Steve Barnes



Tanya Earnshaw

What motivates our volunteers?

By David Owen

Phil Cottam recently organised training and feedback sessions for the volunteer team at Horton station café bar.

The team have put many hours into making Horton station café bar (HCB) an appealing place to be, both for passengers and the many walkers who cross the line on the return from Ingleborough. Having a professional mentor like Alan Collinson has been great – he's run the Featherston Arms in Kirkoswald for the last 15 years.

As a fly on the wall at a recent feedback session, it was interesting to hear why people volunteer their valuable time.

***'I've benefited from people who've given their time in the past and it's good to provide the facility.'** – Simon Wraith*

Simon Wraith travels from Leeds and said he's 'always been interested in railways and at the same time works in another coffee shop as well as at festivals, it's a combination of things and a fantastic place to be with the wonderful scenery' As a member of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) he's well placed to talk about the craft beers that the café

sells and 'it's good chatting with people from different walks of life.' As a keen walker himself he feels he can relate to the tired and hungry walkers who frequent the café.

June Smith has entered a world which she says, 'is totally new to me' and just like Simon she can empathise with the walkers having done the Three Peaks a couple of times. She feels she has 'a bit of a rapport there, which she's pleased about' June goes on to say that she 'knows what they've been through.' I'm sure there'll similar levels of empathy from readers who remember that sense of fatigue with the last descent into Horton!

Lisa Cottam spent her career in financial services and latterly a carer followed by a dose of retail work. She says that now 'she can't imagine life without Horton in Ribblesdale.'

I think we can sum-up by saying what all volunteers would say, perhaps modestly, that it's good to give back. As Simon concluded, 'I've benefitted from people who've given their time in the past and it's good to provide the facility.'

Trains on Track

WHEN AND WHERE TO VIEW SPECIAL TRAINS

By Chris Gee

The Dalesman is one of the special trains due in the Trains on Track programme. Photographed here on Blea Moor, courtesy of John Bentley.



Many members like to photograph visiting trains so rather than report on what's been and gone, we'll try to alert you to upcoming visits.

Opposite you can see the special trains expected to run over the Settle and Carlisle line over and above the regular Northern passenger service and 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 sometimes be cancelled, so please check in advance before making travel plans.

Lots of special train workings are planned within very short timescales and the best way to look for these is using the **Realtime Trains** website. These

include 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
Thurs 7 Aug	The Dalesman	Both	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Sun 17 Aug	The Waverley	Both	Railway Touring Company	West Coast Steam Loco
Tues 19 Aug	The Dalesman	Both	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Fri 22 Aug	Edinburgh Military Tattoo	Northbound	UK Railtours	West Coast Diesel Loco
Mon 25 Aug	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 30 Aug	Cumbrian Explorer	Northbound	Pathfinder Railtours	Colas Class 56 diesel
Sun 31 Aug	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Tues 2 Sept	Pendle Dalesman	Both	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Thurs 4 Sept	The Dalesman	Both	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Sun 7 Sept	The Waverley	Both	Railway Touring Company	West Coast Steam Loco
Thurs 18 Sept	The Dalesman	Both	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Mon 22 Sept	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 27 Sept	Lune Rivers Trust	Southbound	West Coast Railtours	West Coast Steam Loco
Sun 28 Sept	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 11 Oct	Cumbrian Mountain Express	Southbound	Railway Touring Company	West Coast Steam Loco
Mon 20 Oct	New Measurement Train	Southbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sun 26 Oct	New Measurement Train	Northbound	Network Rail	Network Rail High Speed Train
Sat 1 Nov	Peak Settler	Both	Scottish Railway Preservation Society	Locomotive Services class 45 diesel 45118

The West Coast Steam Loco pool currently comprises Black 5 45212, West Country 34067 TANGMERE and A1 60163 TORNADO.

Log train, photo courtesy of Nigel Capelle

