

# friends on track

Adventures and experiences on the Settle–Carlisle line

May 2025

**Integrated transport – John Carey joins the dots.**

**Hydrogen locos – it's elementary.**

**Swiss Rail & the S&C – dare we compare?**

**Spring – new Walk the Line programme inside.**



**Scenic. Historic. Sustainable.**



'Arten Gill'  
Cover photo courtesy of  
David Hayes

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

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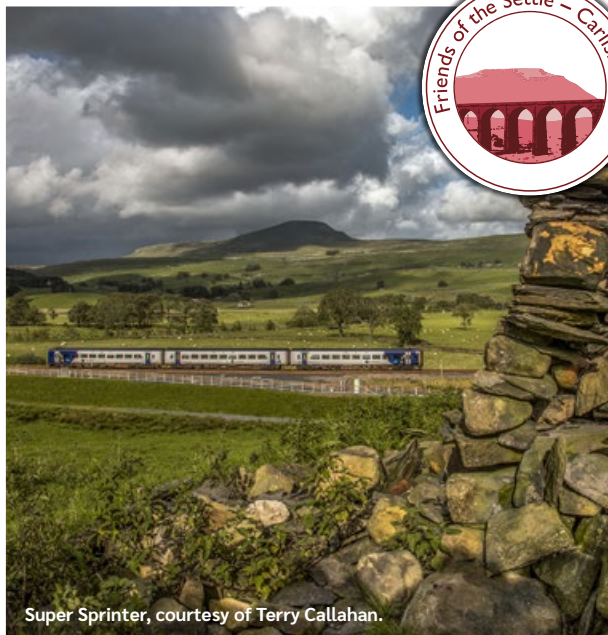
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#### Next magazine

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# friends **on** track

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# HORTON STATION *Cafe Bar*

## Recruiting new volunteers for the 2025 Spring and Summer season!

200 years after the birth of the modern railway and 150 years since the first train ran on the famous Settle – Carlisle line, 2025 promises to be a busy year at Horton station. With walkers, passengers, workers and holiday makers all passing through, our little café provides the much-needed refreshment to see them on their way!

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- Volunteer on one or two days a month. Usually Friday, Saturdays and Sundays, although we hope to open on other days in the summer holidays.
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*If you are interested and would like to know more – just drop Phil a line at [hcb@settle-carlisle.com](mailto:hcb@settle-carlisle.com), or speak to one of the team in the café!*



## Welcome

*A note from our editor, David Owen, as we head into the warmer months with plenty to explore – on and off the track.*

I'm pleased to say that responses to the new look magazine have been **overwhelmingly positive**. Those who noted the absence of a letters page will be pleased to see its return, reflecting both the positive and negative views on the revised magazine format.

The future of the line in terms of usage, operability and motive power are well reflected in the May issue. John Carey focusses on integrated transport but limited space means we can only summarise what amounts to a major piece of work, a document that he is using to lobby all interested parties. We may never enjoy the benefits of electrification,

but Keith Watts looks at the option for Hydrogen powered trains, whilst Stewart Palmer references the Allport Report with his personal review of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities related to the line.

The Walk the Line and Footsteps in Time series move into peak season so dig out those boots as we take a look at the programmes compiled by Susan, Lyndi and Alyson. And, if you happen to be in the Langcliffe area, make sure you visit the Hoffman Kiln – one of only 3 of that size to have survived intact. David Johnson explores the history and economic significance of this amazing structure.



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# Membership Update

**Many thanks to all our members that have renewed their membership. I do hope you are enjoying the new content of our quarterly journal and please remember to take advantage of the extended range of membership benefits detailed online.**

It promises to be a busy year ahead and thank you for your support as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of rail travel and 150 years since the first freight train on the Settle Carlisle line.

## Important information about payments

We are delighted that most of our members have adopted the new membership platform to make payment online and provide us with an email address. Both initiatives have considerably reduced our overall cost of administration, including banking and postage. This means that more of your subscriptions can be used to the work we do to showcase our world famous line.

## Duplicate Payments

We appreciate your support in the transition of our membership renewals process and acknowledge we have also received several duplicate or over payments where legacy standing orders have not been cancelled by members. In all cases we have contacted members offering a refund and we thank the vast majority that have asked us to treat these as a donation. This is much appreciated.

Now that we are two years into the new way of working, we will no longer be contacting members regarding overpayments and will simply regard these as a donation. That said, should any member inadvertently send us a duplicate payment, you are most welcome to contact us and request a refund. Simply use the contact details below and provide your bank account name, sort code, account number and quote your membership number. We will then provide a refund direct to your account.

Thank you again for your valued support.

## How to Make Payment

For any member that has yet to renew, we value your support and continue to offer a range of payment methods to meet the needs of our members. With the continued increases in postage costs and the ever reducing personal services offered by the Banks, most of our members are choosing to renew and pay online. Subscription rates are the same as last year and are detailed at the foot of the inside front cover.

**Online** is the most popular option as it is quick, easy and cheaper for our members. Simply pay your membership at [www.membermojo.co.uk/foscl](http://www.membermojo.co.uk/foscl).

**Standing Order** continues to be used by approximately 18% of our members and no action is required if you have a valid standing order in place.

**BACS** may also be used by crediting the following account: Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line, Sort Code 20-78-42, Account No 93121526. Please quote your membership number as reference.

**Cheques** should be payable to 'FoSCL' and sent to the Membership Office (details below). Due to the ever increasing costs of postage and bank processing, we encourage payment online as this is quick, easy and cheaper for our members.

*Thank you for your valued support as we celebrate 200 years of rail travel and 150 years since the first freight train on the Settle–Carlisle line.*

## Contact Details

If you have a query about your membership, please contact:

### Membership Office:

Email: [membership@settle-carlisle.com](mailto:membership@settle-carlisle.com)  
Phone: 07436 159110  
Address: Friends Membership Office,  
Railway Station, Clifford Street, Appleby,  
CA16 6TT

### Membership Website:

<https://membermojo.co.uk/foscl>

If you have a query about your payment or as an alternative contact for membership queries, please contact:

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The Settle and Carlisle Railway Trust is a Registered Charity, no 702724.

# New Book on the S&C is a Photographic Celebration



John at the recent book signing at the The Folly in Settle

**A new book by local Settle author and photographer, John Bentley, takes us on a photographic journey from Hellifield to Carlisle.**

It's a celebration of all that the S&C has to offer, rather than reprising the already well documented history of the line and threatened closure. As John says, "in the images in this book I've tried to represent the line in the broadest sense, looking not only at trains, but also at the line's landscape

settings, buildings and infrastructure, what goes on around the line and even some of the people involved with the railway." This is a book that will appeal to both enthusiast and casual reader alike. Published by [www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com) it should also be available at the Folly along with his *Hill Farming in the North of England – a chronicle of Dales farming life*. John also kindly contributed the front-page photo for the February issue of *Friends on Track*.



# Coast to Coast Compliance



## THE RIGHT-WAY FOR RIGHTS OF WAY

*Sue Arnott, Senior Rights of Way Officer, Yorkshire Dales National Park.*



For centuries our footpath network has helped hold what could otherwise have been an isolated Dales communities together. Senior Rights of Way Officer Sue Arnott explains how the Coast-to-Coast Path will forge connections with people from further afield.

National trails are long-distance walks through some of the very best landscapes the country has to offer, some of which can also be written by mountain bike or on a horse. They are special routes designated by government, managed collectively by Natural England and its partner or authorities, and maintained to a higher standard. Whilst this sets them apart from other routes in some ways, they are nonetheless an integral part of the local rights of way network.

Not only do National Trails provide a fantastic recreational opportunity for the public, but they also bring local economic benefits through tourism as well as opportunities for improving the environment and for involving local communities in caring for them.

There are 17 national trails across England and Wales, created over the last 60 years to provide access to our most treasured countryside and coast. Here in the Yorkshire Dales, we're already proud to host two of these routes: the Pennine way, the first long distance path designated in

1965, and the more recent Pennine bridleway, added 30 years later. And now, following the recent designation of the Coast-to-Coast Path, we can boast 3, equalling the North York Moors, the only other National Park that claims as many.

What greater complement can there be to the quality of both our landscape and our rights of way network?

It is now over 50 years since the prolific writer of walking guidebooks, Alfred Wainwright, published a Coast-to-Coast Walk, inviting people to follow in his footsteps from St Bees on the West Coast of Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay on the North Yorkshire coast in the east. This 197-mile-long route travels through three national parks: the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors, yet over parts of its length the trail does not follow recorded public rights of way.

### Making it legal

Following submission of a report by Natural England in 2022, the Secretary of State approved proposals to designate Wainwright's route as the Coast-to-Coast Path National Trail. Consequently, to achieve the standards required of a National Trail, the sections that don't coincide with definitive rights of way are being reviewed to ensure the public



Photo by Andrew Bowden



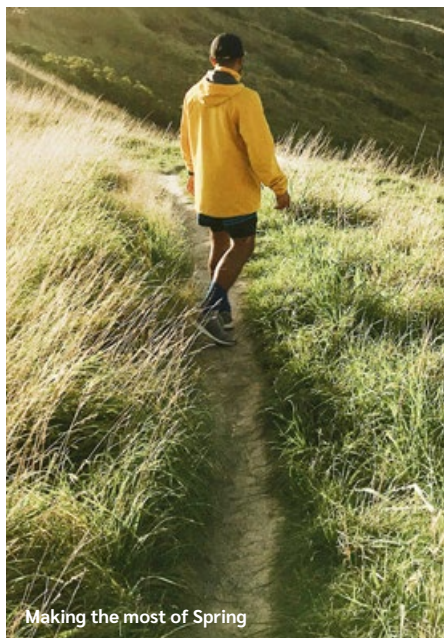
has legal access to the designated route in perpetuity. In essence this means that where the trail does not follow any underlying public rights of way, legal orders and agreements are being pursued to underpin its long-term sustainability.

*“This feels like a very personal journey for me too. I worked for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority from 1978 to 1992 in access and recreation”*

Expectations for the standard of path maintenance are higher too. Sections of the route that have suffered from wear and tear through heavy use in the past - and where maintenance at the public expense has not been forthcoming because of the path's uncertain status - can now be repaired and, where possible, future proofed. With funding currently being offered by Natural England to make this happen by the end of 2025, the pressure is on to get both the paperwork and the works on the ground underway.

Thankfully, within the Yorkshire Dales, no major route changes have been necessary so the National Trail will follow Wainwright's footsteps quite closely, with the addition of a lower-level alternative route through upper Swaledale. So far, the National Park Authority's Coast to Coast team is on track with the legal work - five diversions completed plus seven path creation agreements and six more diversion orders being processed - and a major project underway to provide a sustainable walking surface, over 2km long, at White Mossy Hill near Nine Standards Rigg.

This feels like a very personal journey for me too. I worked for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority from 1978



to 1992 in access and recreation, doing some of the early work on developing seasonal routes to best manage the damage to upland peat deposits near Nine Standards Rigg. I later worked as Rights of Way Officer for the Lake District National Park Authority from 1997 to 2001 before joining the Planning Inspectorate. Coming back to my roots to be part of this Coast-to-Coast project now gives me the ideal opportunity to help finish what I started and connect some of the country's most incredible landscapes through this iconic new national trail.

This article was adapted from a version first printed in the Yorkshire Dales Review, membership magazine for the environmental campaigning charity, Friends of the Dales. Find out more at: [www.friendsofthedales.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk)

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# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats



## PONDERING THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF OUR ICONIC RAILWAY

By Stewart Palmer

**There has probably been more written about the history of the Settle and Carlisle Line than almost any other rail route in Britain, but surprisingly little seems to have been said about its long-term future.**

Readers will no doubt have read the excellent article in the February 2025 magazine commenting on the 'Allport Report'. Whilst I have no wish to criticise the quality of this work, it does seem to me that in terms of long-term strategy this moves to the 'solution phase' without having considered all the possible options first. This article is therefore a wider consideration of all probable likely scenarios, taking account of what we know is planned on the wider network and likely economic and demographic changes. This is designed to complement the Allport Report, not to dismiss it, although I personally have reservations about the commercial viability of the proposed 'Inter City' service it suggests, and my reasoning for that is set out in this article. So, this is an attempt to set down some thoughts on what might lie ahead and the

strategic considerations that may shape the future course of the line. It does not come up with a specific vision but I hope it will at least give food for thought about how all stakeholders involved can reach a consensus about the broad direction of travel in the future.

As I have said many times over the years, it is important to recognise that no railway has a God given right to exist. It will only survive if society believes it contributes in a positive way to the economy and wellbeing of the Country. This is of course not just about pure profit and loss, important as that is, but also about the wider social benefits that arise from a railway's existence. Statutory recognition of the social value of railways and their funding goes back to the 1968 Transport Act, so this is hardly a new concept.

***"The battle to save the line is not the subject of this article and has been extensively chronicled for those who are interested"***

To think about the future, it is necessary to understand the existing railway in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. It was of course built by The Midland

Railway as an Anglo Scottish trunk main line, born out of frustration with the behaviour of the LNWR at Ingleton. Its alignment was therefore determined by the need for high-speed running and a ruling gradient of no steeper than 1 in 100. The result was a spectacular feat of engineering which in truth had very few revenue generation prospects throughout its entire length between Settle Junction and Carlisle. The only three towns of any size, Settle, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby were already rail connected. The remaining settlements were little more than villages. This of course did not matter to the Midland, who were primarily concerned about competing with the LNWR for the Anglo Scottish market. It is sobering to think that if the LNWR had been more accommodating at Ingleton the entire line would never have been built! (For those not familiar with the geography of the area please see the map, reproduced by kind permission of David Joy.)

The main purpose of line was really undermined from 1923 with the grouping of railways into the 'Big Four' when both the LNWR and the Midland Railway became part of the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS). That said, it continued as an important route for both passenger and freight traffic until the general decline in importance of the railways in the 1960's. As early as 1963 the Beeching Report proposed to withdraw all local services on the route and by the 1980's the route was a pale shadow of its former self. The battle to save the line is not the subject of this article and has been extensively chronicled for those who are interested. Bizarrely the line now has a better train service at the local stations than it probably ever had in its entire history. This has been driven by the

growth in tourism in the area and the loss of many rural bus services. There is now very little originating freight traffic on the route and the long-distance passenger services have disappeared completely. Its use as a scenic and nostalgic experience, often steam hauled, was of course not even thought of when the railway was built.

**So, where to in the future? I pose a series of questions for readers to think about in order to assess the likelihood of particular scenarios, before drawing any conclusions about the possible development of the Settle and Carlisle line.**

**Is it likely that locally generated traffic, both passenger and freight will boost use of the line?**

The straight answer to this is 'no.' The line goes through an area of outstanding scenery and is largely protected from development. The probability of large scale residential or commercial development is very small. Environmental concerns and planning restrictions will make the development of large mineral extraction operations, which could generate more freight traffic, very difficult. It is of course possible that large scale planting of trees in the upland areas could generate future rail traffic locally, but of course the harvesting of any timber produced would be 30 or more years in the future. So local rail passenger traffic may well slowly increase, particularly if use of cars becomes more expensive or restricted, but a step change in locally generated use is unlikely.



### Is it likely that externally generated passenger traffic will boost use of the line?

One of the outstanding successes of the line has been the generation of tourist traffic, both on excursions and scheduled services. This trend goes right back to the work of the late Ron Cotton when the line was threatened with closure and has been built on by a remarkable alliance of local people, Councils, train operators and other stakeholders, including of course the Friends of the S and C. Can this market be grown further? The answer to that must be ‘yes’ but of course it will largely depend on the state of the national and regional economy and the extent to which people have money to spend on leisure pursuits. We must not forget that such visits, either for the day or longer, are discretionary expenditure. However, to be positive, it looks as if the cost of foreign travel will increase and taking a break at home may become more attractive. To develop ‘inward’ passenger traffic further will require a long-term plan involving all the players and must be supported by adequate funding. This will need coupling with the development of local attractions beyond those just associated with outdoor pursuits, given the likely age profile of the population going forward.

### Is there scope to develop the line for long distance passenger flows?

Tempting as it may be to wax lyrical about the days of the ‘Thames Clyde Express,’ the harsh truth is that to generate a regular ‘Inter City’ type flow along the line requires large centres of population where no reasonable alternative rail route exists. Within a few years the population centres of West and South Yorkshire will be connected by electrified railways to both the East and West Coast Main Lines

as the Trans Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and the Midland Main Line (MML) electrification connect Leeds, Sheffield and the cities of the East Midlands to Manchester, Tyneside, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland. Whilst of course we cannot know what the train service on these lines will be in say 2035, it seems to me that what most passengers want is the shortest journey time and a frequent service so they have choice of travel times. The S and C will only match these essential requirements with massive investment to raise line speeds above 75 mph and probably electrification. If you want to view the magnificent scenery of the S and C you don’t want to go at 125mph and you can travel by the existing service and admire the view!

### Could ‘Open Access’ be the answer to revising long distance use of the line?

It is my view that as the new structure of the industry emerges under the direction of Great British Railways (GBR) it is most unlikely that a long-distance GBR sponsored passenger service would pass the value for money test with DfT or The Treasury, given that by about 2035 there will be very credible alternatives for the principal potential flows. So, could an ‘Open Access’ operator be persuaded to run a service? To properly consider this possibility it is important to understand how Open Access works. Such services are purely commercial, in other words they receive no subsidy from the taxpayer. Operators have to comply with all the relevant safety and legal requirements to operate on Network Rail controlled infrastructure. They pay track access charges for use of the network and these are, under the new regime, going to rise in real terms over those that applied previously. Access rights are granted by



Photo courtesy of Terry Callahan, Phoenix Railway Photographic Circle.

the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and any proposed service has to pass a series of tests, one of which is that the service does not simply abstract revenue from existing operators. The new Secretary of State, Heidi Alexander, recently wrote to the ORR and made her views very clear that she expected the ORR to consider more rigorously the issue of revenue abstraction in future applications. In simple terms this means that it is going to be more difficult to get access rights approved in the future. On balance I consider it highly unlikely that a regular long distance open access operation will be introduced on the route for the foreseeable future.

### Could long-distance freight make more use of the line?

The S and C was once heavily used by freight and in relatively recent years substantial flows of coal from South West Scotland to the Yorkshire power stations ran over the line as both the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and East Coast Main Line (ECML) lacked capacity for more heavy freight trains. Both the present Government and the previous one have set an objective of increasing rail freight by 50% by the year 2050 as part of the carbon reduction strategy. Long distance flows of both deep-sea containers and internal distribution of goods in containers have risen rapidly

in recent years. There are already signs that the aspiration to grow freight volume is being frustrated by lack of line capacity on trunk routes. It is important to remember that one of the benefits of building HS2 was to free up capacity on the WCML for more freight. This has now been dashed by the truncating of that scheme North of Tamworth. Whilst in theory there are things that could be done to increase freight capacity on both the WCML and ECML, these are likely to be very expensive and given the state of the public finances are not likely to happen. It is my belief that both GBR and The Treasury will be looking for cheaper alternatives to improve freight capacity, particularly between England and Scotland and across England on the Liverpool Hull/Grimsby axis. Without wishing to get too technical, it is important that any freight route is cleared to W12 gauge. This allows a 9'6" container (the modern standard for deep sea containers) to be carried on a conventional flat wagon. Over the last few years key routes from deep sea ports have gradually been cleared to W12 and the Trans Pennine Upgrade will provide W12 loading gauge between Liverpool and Hull/Grimsby via Leeds.

So, could the S and C provide a realistic lower cost solution to the Anglo Scottish freight capacity problem? Firstly, is there capacity on that route? Yes of course there is. The existing train service is very sparse and even with the present signalling, many more trains could be run, particularly at night. Is the line cleared to W12? No, it is not, and if the decision were made to develop the line as a freight route, a detailed survey would be required to establish the extent of the necessary clearance work to achieve W12 gauge. The route was of course laid out to main

line standards and until the run-down of the line, the permitted speed was 75 m.p.h. It cannot be a major task to restore it to that capability, which is of course the maximum permitted speed of most container trains on the network now.

Are there any particular challenges to clearing the route for W12? Well, we don't know of course without a detailed survey, but it is my contention that if any tunnels pose a problem that cannot be resolved by track lowering, then singling through the problem tunnel combined with modern signalling would not unduly impact on the overall capacity of the route. Readers who are familiar with the South of England will be well aware of such a scheme to solve a gauge clearance issue applied on the Tonbridge to Hastings line when it was electrified in the 1980's.

### Some Final Thoughts.

The one thing we can all agree on is that the future is uncertain! As I said at the start of this article, no railway has a God given right to exist. It must justify its existence in both economic and/or social terms if it is to survive long term. Whatever policy those in high places decide upon for the future of the S and C, all of us who love the line must engage constructively and not be blinkered by a nostalgic view of the past.

We need to examine all possible alternatives, including of course *do nothing*, leaving things as they are, but our considerations have to take account of the realities of funding, government policy and local stakeholder input. We must look at these things on the basis of facts and logic, not be swayed by emotional considerations. Just remember a good northern expression, *warm words butter no parsnips*.

# Letters

**Judging by the 43 positive emails received, Friends on Track has been overwhelmingly well received. Here is a selection of comments...**

**Phil Cottam, Horton Café Bar** "Had a few folk in waxing lyrically about the new journal. It has been very well received by the customers here! Liked the title, layout, and quality of the articles. Indeed one came to see the bridge, because of your article."

**Ian McHugh, member 1370:** "May I congratulate you on the fresh new look of the S&C Magazine, with its new title, layout and typefaces. It certainly grabbed my attention! I am glad to see articles about how we can encourage a wider range of people to enjoy the railway and its surrounding countryside, including black communities, people with access support needs and all those without cars who rely on buses. I only hope you will find space for a letters page in the next issue..."

**Richard Wells, member 6738** "Many congratulations on a superb new-look magazine with greatly enhanced content. You've transformed it from a 'club magazine' into a professionally designed periodical that is credible enough, as you aptly put it, to 'pull in new members should they happen to see a copy in the wild'. There's more than a whiff of professional editorial expertise! Not only does this deserve celebration among loyal supporters and volunteers, it will surely earn deserved recognition in the professional rail industry."

**Alan Heeks, life member:** "Think both the content and style of the latest issue is excellent."

**Jon Blyth, Leeds:** "step change from the previous rather tired format."

**David Ellwood, Kirkby Stephen:** "a couple of lines to congratulate you and all involved in producing this splendid new version of the Newsletter for friends of the S & C. It looks great and has plenty of fascinating content. And the photos to go with it."

**Brian Sutcliffe, MBE:** "Having been around to see the Newsletter start from 2 or 3 duplicated A4 sheets, courtesy of the local MPs office duplicator, to progress to A5 black and white print, and then through various stages to a glossy magazine with colour photos. I am impressed with the new format, I personally think it is one stage better. However, since this a magazine for members, I do hope you are going to make provision for members to have their say in future issues?"



**Will Frecknall, Hereford:** “The name is great and the font and page layout much fresher and more readable.”

---

**Stephen Horsfall, Hebden Bridge:**

“Often a newly re-vamped journal results in a ‘dumbing down’ of both content and subject matters. The new version of ‘friends on track’ displays the very opposite of this trend. The articles were informative, interesting, well-written, diverse and liberally enhanced by informed quotations from experts in their respective fields.”

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**Rory Kingdon, Network Rail:** “you’ve certainly done Horton (and Carlisle) proud – I’m impressed with the overall feel and production values of the magazine.”

---

**Kath Smith:** I read with interest our new edition of the Friends magazine. It was OK apart from a few personal items that were missing. I’ve spoken to several people who agree with me that the following should be enclosed in future editions:

- Members letters.
- Obituaries. Older members know loads of people who have been around for many years and show an interest in them. People they have met through social activities, or neighbours and friends or even those they have come across in previous years. It’s good to hear about them.
- A report on special trains visiting the S&C, steam and diesel charters and freight.

With a more personal touch I think the new magazine should be OK.

***Editor’s reply:** Letters – they return after a temporary absence. Obituaries – they have been discontinued because notices are more appropriate to the local area of the deceased, whereas our members are drawn from all parts of the UK and abroad. Special Traffic Reports – this hasn’t been included because I haven’t received any, happy to include them when submitted.*

---

**Noel Herbage:**

Dear editor,

I feel I should register my disappointment at the changes that have been made to the magazine. Items like the letters page which I found interesting and informative and the special traffic report were missing from the new look magazine. Instead there are articles like “journey to a wilder future” and “championing national parks” which have nothing to do with the line.

I do hope this was a one-off and I can look forward to more about the line especially freight usage and services generally in the next issue.

---

**Robert Ryde:**

You asked for feedback so here it is

1. By having a photo on the inside front page you have reduced size of the print and some of it is no longer on white background all of which makes it hard to read and is less eye catching.
2. The AGM was always on Saturday, when those members who work could attend, why has it now been changed to a weekday. (not down to you but I am going page by page)
3. No Volunteer Round Up and mention of Guided Walks, Shops or Cafes only Footsteps in Time.

4. No Special Traffic Report or Seen on the line pictures.
  5. No Letters to the Editor. So how will people know if you had any feedback.
  6. Lastly if this publication is “freely” being distributed to the hospitality sector, tourist offices, stations, etc as per comments in the Journal May 2024 who is paying for it, it should not be the members.
- 

**Philippa Simpson, Farsley, Leeds:**

Thank you David for taking on the challenge of FOSCL Magazine Editor, a position held by Paul Kampen for many years and prior to Paul by myself for not as many years! The magazine has seen many changes over the years and Paul must be thanked for his many years of service both to FOSCL and to its magazine. I understand that the February 2025 magazine is the first magazine produced by yourself without any input/involvement from Paul.

Firstly I am very pleased that the A5 format has been retained. It takes up less storage space and postage costs must be significantly less than for an A4 size document.

Secondly starting with the front cover ‘friends on track’ (all lower case) means nothing. FOSCL has been on track since 1981! ‘Journal’ is sufficient. The round logo formerly on the top left of the cover is much less intrusive but says all that needs to be said. The bottom heading ‘scenic, historic and sustainable’ sums up the Settle to Carlisle line perfectly. The number of this magazine, which would be 178, is omitted from the front cover. This should be retained as it gives an idea of how long FOSCL has been going for. Love the front cover photo.

To turn to the content, I would have

preferred more photos of the new Horton in Ribblesdale footbridge showing how the bridge relates to the station buildings and its setting. The large diagram of the bridge took up a lot of space that could have been used for more text/photos. I also felt that many of the headings to the articles in the magazine were in too large text.

I had already heard about the new Allport Report, and do not fully understand it so I was pleased the magazine covered this. However given we are not all railway engineers, a short explanation about what the railway staff featured in each of the five photos included in this article were doing would be useful. Also found the written content very informative including Mark Rand’s article on 150 years of freight on the S&C, likewise your article on major changes for Carlisle Station. Loved ‘Journey to a Wilder Future’ by Ellie Parker.

Missed Pete Shaw’s special traffic reports as these inform members of what trains, other than the Northern operated service trains, use the line. On the subject of photographs, not all were credited and overall Pete’s photos, in my view, are better than some of the uncredited photos in the new magazine. On the plus side, it is good to see photos from several people.

Most of all I missed the Letters to the Editor. FOSCL continues to exist because of its members and it is right they are given space to air their views, experiences etc. I think some further thought needs to go into the format - more information, smaller (but not tiny) headings. The magazine is an evolving document but collectively the magazines provide a comprehensive history of the Settle to Carlisle line since 1981.

Thank you for an interesting and informative magazine.

# LINESIDER

Railway Films by  
David Ainsworth

Brand new film from the  
maker of '1-in-100' focussing  
on steam in the fells between  
Appleby & Settle Junction

## Settle & Carlisle: Mountains of Steam



The sight, sound & atmosphere of  
preserved steam in the high fells  
between Appleby & Settle Junction

- The most isolated sections of the line captured in varying moods
- Brief, anecdotal commentary
- 9 years to film the material
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Carlisle:  
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# Podium success

## THIRD PLACE FOR JILL TIERNAN IN THE COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2025

The Community Rail Awards 2025 celebrates 20 years of national/regional achievements by a wide range of volunteers who come together to enhance people's lives, add value to local communities and make a contribution to our shared rail future.

Jill was one of eight volunteers shortlisted across the country. Three people were acknowledged as going the extra mile and our Jill was awarded third place for promoting how community rail can help make a positive difference to people's lives.

Jill has been a member of FoSCL and volunteer since 2009. John, Jill's husband, saw an advert in the members magazine for Settle Signal box volunteers at the time. Despite living in Shropshire, they would drive every three weeks to Settle, and the rest is history. Her love of railways was probably inherited from her father, a National Coal Board railway shunter at Littleton Colliery in Staffordshire. Living near the Severn Valley Railway it seemed an attractive proposition to volunteer on the line: playing a small part in the history and longevity of the line, promoting its value and purpose for generations to come. Jill went on to become a member of the FoSCL Board in 2022, championing Access and Inclusion.

Jill has built up a network of contacts with schools along the line, community groups linked to neurodivergence, dementia, mental well-being, as well as



other groups covering Carers, Guiding and Scouting. She has forged links to charities to promote how community rail can become part of the fabric of local life. In partnership with S&C Development Company (our local Community Rail Partnership), she is committed to helping all ages get involved through setting up and creating opportunities for people of all ages with the opportunity to learn more about railway, the history and how S&C was saved from closure. She and her companion volunteers are keen to promote access for all and particularly ensuring a train journey can be a positive and welcoming experience.



# The Yorkshire Dales Explorer



Mossy Bottom, photo courtesy of Terry Callahan, Phoenix Railway Photographic Circle.

**The *Yorkshire Dales Explorer* is an exciting new service that links Greater Manchester and Lancashire to the Settle Carlisle line and the wonderful Yorkshire Dales. It will operate on Saturdays, as an extension of the Rochdale to Blackburn service with two trains a day going on to Ribbleshead via Clitheroe and the Ribbles Valley.**

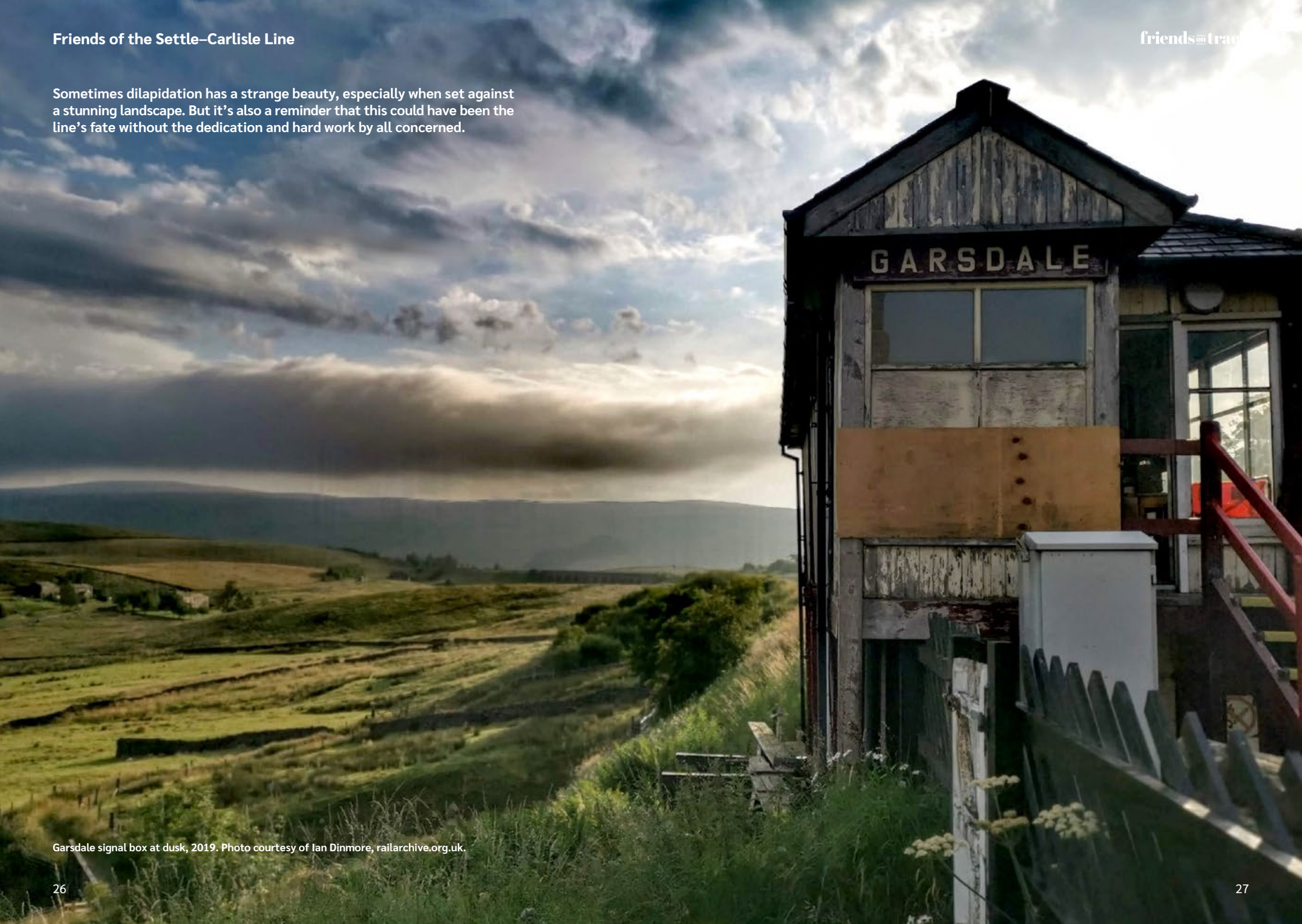
Although trains will terminate at Ribbleshead there will be good connections with the Leeds to Carlisle service for those wanting to travel along Mallerstang to Kirkby Stephen as well as to the Eden Valley, Appleby and Carlisle.

Ribbleshead station offers the opportunity to view the iconic Ribbleshead Viaduct that featured so much when the line was under threat of closure in the 1980s as well as the stunning Ingleborough. Details of the

train service and connections can be found online ([communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/yorkshire-dales-explorer-timetables](http://communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/yorkshire-dales-explorer-timetables)). The Lancashire Rail Ramblers are developing a guided walks programme along with connecting bus services and this will be available to download soon. There is much to see and do along the Settle Carlisle line, so it pays to plan your day and there are many ideas that can be discovered as you explore the website.



Sometimes dilapidation has a strange beauty, especially when set against a stunning landscape. But it's also a reminder that this could have been the line's fate without the dedication and hard work by all concerned.



Garsdale signal box at dusk, 2019. Photo courtesy of Ian Dinmore, [railarchive.org.uk](http://railarchive.org.uk).



# Day Return to Dent

Simon Bradley, Author of *Bradley's Railway Guide: A Journey Through Two Centuries of British Railway History, 1825-2025*



**In 1977, aged eleven and three-quarters, I started trainspotting. Before very long the world of Britain's railways had gripped me.** Extra stimulus came from the shelves of our well-stocked local library (remember those?) in South London, where I was exposed to nostalgic illustrated books devoted to the last days of steam. Many of the best images captured trains in one particularly stern and spectacular northern landscape, with place names of a corresponding terseness: Dent, Garsdale, Blea Moor, Ais Gill.

Northern-born, and familiar with Cumbrian and Northumbrian landscapes from many family holidays, I was captivated by the legends of the Settle & Carlisle. Better still: unlike countless lines lost to the Beeching cuts or otherwise abandoned, the route still existed. There it was: a slim red ribbon on my British Rail network map, though reduced to a single station (Appleby) between Settle

and Carlisle. And there it was again in the railway magazines, in full colour, with blue-and-yellow diesels and semaphore signals standing out boldly amidst the dry-stone walls and tawny moorland grasses.

The S&C had a way of pushing itself to the front of the news, too. It was thrilling when British Rail allowed the line to be used again for steam-hauled specials in 1978. Then came the closure proposals of 1983, the fightback organised by the Friends, the defiant reopening of dormant stations in 1986, and – at last – the reprieve and subsequent revival of the passenger service from 1989.

These stories will be familiar to long-term supporters of the line, and at the time I too could have given a good account of the saga to anyone who was prepared to listen. But something crucial was missing: I still hadn't actually travelled on the railway. Holidays, visits to family and friends, travels in connection with business or research – none of these had ever offered a pretext to take a train through the fells (though I would have been thrilled if they had). On my increasingly tattered BR network map, pencil-marked to show lines travelled over the years, the S&C route still stood out in unsullied bright red.

Finally, in autumn 1999 – at a time when life and work seemed narrowly confined to London and the South East – I decided to put things right. This would be a solo journey made for its own sake, travelling back on the West Coast Main Line. I would watch the forecasts for a dry Saturday, and pay the full fare without complaint. And, I told myself, it would be worth it.

And so it proved. Once past the familiar rails to Leeds, and forging beyond the overhead wires to Skipton, the line became an enthralling cavalcade of locations which for far too long I had known only at second hand. The sense of entering new territory kicked in properly at Hellifield, the big canopied station placed enigmatically on the edge of open country. Then on into Ribblesdale, and the thrilling sense of enclosure as the higher fells rise on either side – and all the time, the steady beat of DMU engines working hard against the famous gradient up to Blea Moor tunnel...

Emerging from the tunnel's darkness, the line becomes more level on the run through Dent and Garsdale, before the final ascent to Ais Gill Summit. Here something strange and unexpected occurred. Gazing out from the carriage windows, it became somehow barely credible that I could be *looking down* at these upland landscapes, at the same time that *I was still travelling on a moving train*. In a car negotiating a quiet fellside road, yes; on a light aircraft, microlight, hang-glider, perhaps; but not a Sprinter diesel unit. Altogether, the outlook from this working main-line railway, making steady progress at over a thousand feet above sea level, challenged my sense of what was possible, even as the famous Settle & Carlisle names and locations continued to roll past. A good job that this was a solitary trip – I would have begun babbling uncontrollably to any travelling companion.

And so onwards to Carlisle, and calmer landscapes that made less impact on the memory (even now, I still have to check which way round Lazonby and Langwathby are placed on the route). Of the stopover in Carlisle, and the return journey via Shap and Preston, I can now remember nothing at all.

Jump forward to Easter 2004. Again, too much time spent in London and the South East had brought a sense of confinement, deprived of long views and wilder landscapes. My future wife was feeling the same. So I put to her a bold plan: a day trip to the Dales, via the Settle & Carlisle. And for maximum effect, we would travel all the way to Dent. Eight and a half hours to and from King's Cross, in exchange for five and half hours in Dentdale. Somewhat to my surprise, she agreed.

***“Gazing out from the carriage windows, it became somehow barely credible that I could be looking down at these upland landscapes, at the same time that I was still travelling on a moving train.”***

Easter Saturday that year brought perfect weather, fresh and bright. And now we were standing for the first time on the lonely platform of that implausibly lofty station, as the Sprinter forged north towards Garsdale. Below lay the road that was to take us through a dale full of daffodils and new-born lambs. Adding to the sense of having entered a landscape rich in tradition, the traffic passing us on the walk down to Dent village – and there wasn't very much of it – included a convoy of vintage Austin 7 cars, drivers and passengers cheerfully waving. The unspoiled village did not disappoint, and there was time for lunch and a drink at the Sun Inn. Here I asked some of the older locals where their county loyalties now lay, after the Sedbergh district of the old West Riding was transferred from Yorkshire to the new county of Cumbria thirty years before. The reply was pragmatic, and perhaps also diplomatic: ‘We just think of ourselves as dales folk here, really’.

With our own time as temporary

dalesfolk slipping away, we strode back up to the southbound platform at Dent, fully 1,150 ft (350 metres) above sea level. At Leeds there was time between trains to explore beyond the station, where we mingled a little self-consciously with the crowds of lads and lasses kitted out for a night on the town – a dress code with no room for walking boots or rucksacks. All vividly recalled, twenty-one years later.

Plenty more trips along the line have followed, both to stay in the dales and to pass right through to Carlisle. Here I must thank my wife for her patience with my unconventional itineraries for reaching other parts of Cumbria by rail, using split tickets and accepting slower journeys in exchange for travel by the most scenic and romantic route. After all, the old Midland Railway never promised to get you to the border more quickly than its rival companies – but it did offer ‘comfortable travel and picturesque scenery’ to passengers going North.



Photo courtesy of Terry Callahan, Phoenix Railway Photographic Circle.

# The Hoffman kiln



## AN EXAMPLE OF VICTORIAN INDUSTRIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By David Johnson

**Alongside the Settle-Carlisle railway, midway between Langcliffe and Stainforth, an imposing 100m-high limestone scar dominates the view to the east. Below the scar, and visible from the train, stands an equally impressive example of late Victorian industrial endeavour – the Hoffmann kiln and Craven Lime Works.**

There were many hundred Hoffmann kilns across the British Isles, mostly firing brick or other ceramic products, with a much smaller number that focussed on firing limestone to produce quicklime. This writer has identified over 20 of the latter of which only three survive more or less intact today: one near Wrexham, one at Ingleton, and the one here at Langcliffe.

Ingleton's Hoffmann is the oldest, Langcliffe's the best preserved and most accessible. Both are here because of the ambition and entrepreneurship of two young men from Austwick, a village between Ingleton and Settle. Born in 1819 or 1821, John Clark started life as a carpenter; Michael Wilson, born in 1816, became an apprentice shoemaker/

cordwainer. They were close friends and shared the same aims in life. After the Leeds-Lancaster railway was opened they hired a train and organised a day excursion to Morecambe which was very successful and profitable for them and the start of a new business venture. In the early 1850s they used their profits to go into partnership with a limeburner who operated a large kiln in what was then Austwick Wood, carting lime to the sidings at Lane Side near Eldroth and then despatching it by train to Bradford to tap into the huge and growing demand there for mortar. In 1856 they left this kiln and took on the lease of Giggleswick Quarry and its large kiln operating as Messrs J. Clark & Co. carting the lime to the former sidings at what is now Giggleswick Station.

Not content with this, they further expanded in 1866 by taking on the lease of Mealbank Quarry and its old kiln at Ingleton. Two years later they formalised this by signing a 21-year lease and took what proved to be a momentous decision: they purchased a patent licence from Friedrich Hoffmann's English patent agent to build a Hoffmann kiln at Mealbank. The licence gave them the exclusive right to operate the Hoffmann principle with a radius of 11km around Ingleton, Settle and Skipton respectively and 8km around Clitheroe. No-one else could build such a kiln in these areas. Mealbank turned out 40-60 tons of quicklime every day,





lime that was marketed under the banner could “not be surpassed” in England. By this time Clark and Wilson were operating as Clark, Wilson and Co. They pioneered a new method of blasting by drilling down 4m into the rock packing the tube with powder: one early blast brought down a staggering 229,000 tons of rock. They exported lime as far as Halifax, Bradford, Widnes and Gateshead using their own rail wagons.

Still not at the limit of their ambition, in 1871 they took on the lease of land alongside the new Settle–Carlisle railway at Langcliffe with a view to exploiting its

massive and readily accessible limestone reserves. To raise the necessary capital to achieve this they transformed the business into the Craven Lime Co. Ltd in May 1872 with no less than 37 shareholders. In the following year they commissioned their new, and larger, Hoffmann kiln. As part of the deal, Clark and Wilson signed over all their assets (and control) to the new company and agreed not to set up in opposition “within a radius of 50 miles from the Post Office in Settle”. However, they were both getting on in years by this time. In 1873 Wildman’s Household Almanac reported that rail sidings were currently being built at the new quarry “to be given” to the Craven Lime Co. who “at present send off quantities of lime, to the iron districts near Bradford” on the line which was not yet open to general traffic.

The Hoffmann kiln at Craven was larger than Mealbank’s, originally built with 16 firing chambers larger in each dimension than at Mealbank. Sometime shortly after 1895 the kiln was temporarily shut down to be extended to 22 chambers, and the internal flue system was modified and improved by installing flues on the outer side of each chamber in addition to the original patent’s inner-side flues. This modification had been patented by a brickmaker called William Sercombe who realised the Hoffmann patent (of 1865) produced lime (or brick) of unequal quality across each chamber as the hottest air was inevitably drawn to the inner side of the chambers. By drawing hot air equally to both sides, a more even quality was achieved. The modified kiln at Craven turned out, on average, 92 tons of lime per chamber per firing with markets secured widely across the north of England.

The kiln worked non-stop from 1873 to c. 1895 and then again until a strike and management lock-out brought it



Hoffman kiln – a photo fails to convey how striking this semi-subterranean structure really is.

to a temporary halt in 1902-03. In the General Strike of 1926 it went down from two fires to only one, thereby drastically slowing down production, not because the men here were on strike but because the company could not get enough coal in. In 1927 the Craven Lime Co. entered into a joint management agreement with two other local lime works, John Delaney Ltd at Horton and the Ribblesdale Lime Co. at Foredale Quarry, Helwith Bridge. As happens in our own time, such agreements often come with unpleasant surprises: rationalisation. Here the Hoffmann kiln was shut down in August 1931 owing to a “downturn in sales”. However, the introduction of generous government grants to farmers for agricultural lime in 1937 saw the kiln fired up again, but only on one fire. Two years later the three companies were formally liquidated and merged as

Settle Limes Ltd: the Hoffmann kiln was decommissioned for good in May 1939. Henceforth, the site was relegated to use as a stocking ground for stone from the new company’s quarries at Helwith Bridge. In 1961 Settle Limes Ltd was swallowed up by ICI Mond and in 1967 the quarry was leased to the council on a 21-year lease as a landfill site. Fortuitously, the Hoffmann kiln was not demolished, as happened at most limeworks, but it gradually (but not seriously) decayed until being ‘rescued’ by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority which took out a 25-year lease from the council that ended in 2025. This is the start of a completely new phase of the site’s life, a story to be continued in the next/a later edition of *Friends on Track*.

David Johnson has published and lectured widely on lime burning and is regarded as an authority on the subject.

# The Leeds–Settle–Carlisle Line: A Rural Transport Strategy



## EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR AN INTEGRATED FUTURE FOR THE S&C

By John Carey

**There is a significant need and opportunity for the development of an integrated transport solution for the Yorkshire Dales and Eden areas based around the Leeds–Settle–Carlisle railway line.**

John Carey and team of fellow experts have produced a paper to focus attention on the many economic, social and environmental benefits.

*“Despite passing through one of the most scenic areas of Britain the LSC fails to fulfil its potential because of the lack of adequate integrated travel to and from the line.”*

The map (right) demonstrates how the line links many small communities in a linear sense, but the challenge lies in overcoming bus services that are fragmented and fragile, often dependent upon short-term funding.

Following the Covid pandemic an increased value was placed on our countryside and National Parks, but limited attention has been given as to how visitors actually arrive. As a consequence, the countryside has suffered from congestion and pollution, damaging the very aspects visitors come to enjoy. There is an urgent need for

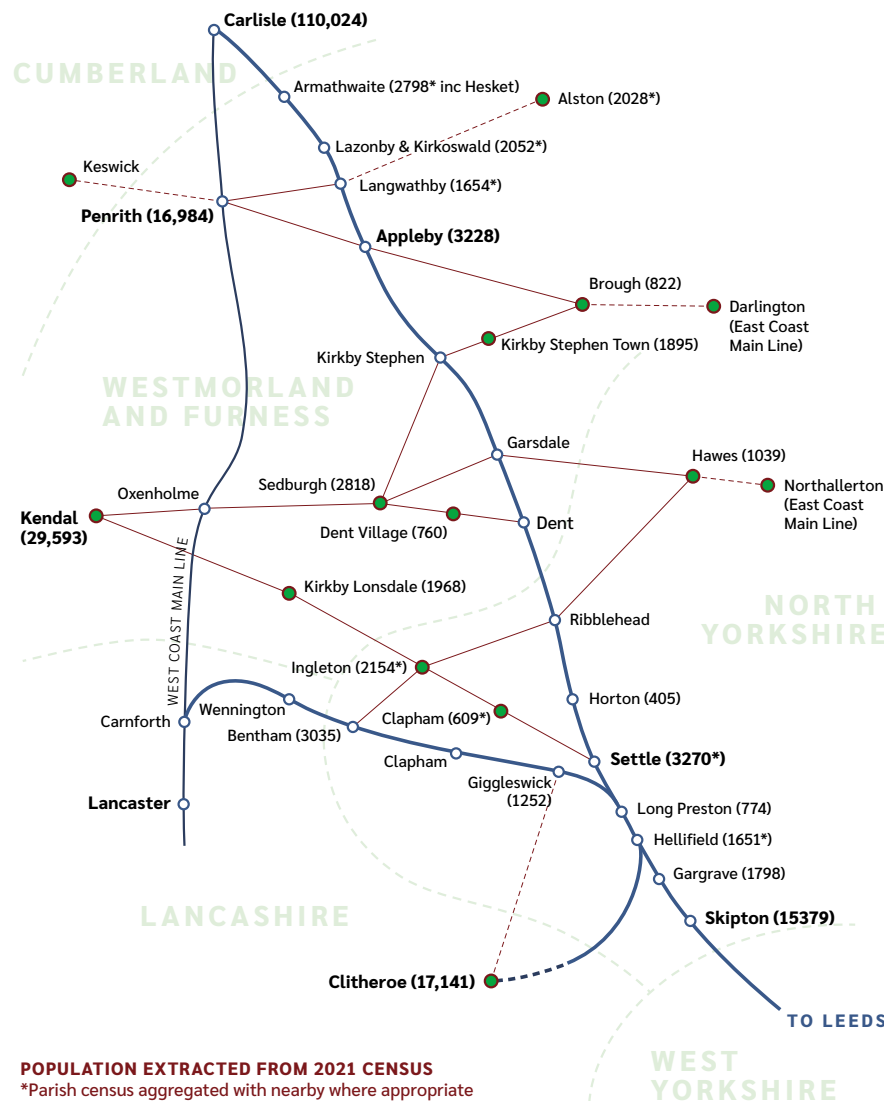
modal shift away from the private car. An integrated transport network centred on the Leeds Settle Carlisle corridor would:

- Benefit local communities providing access to the outside world for leisure, education, health and employment.
- Provide sustainable access to the National Park and Eden Valley to support the visitor economy.
- Encourage modal shift towards public transport helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion.

### Strategy for success:

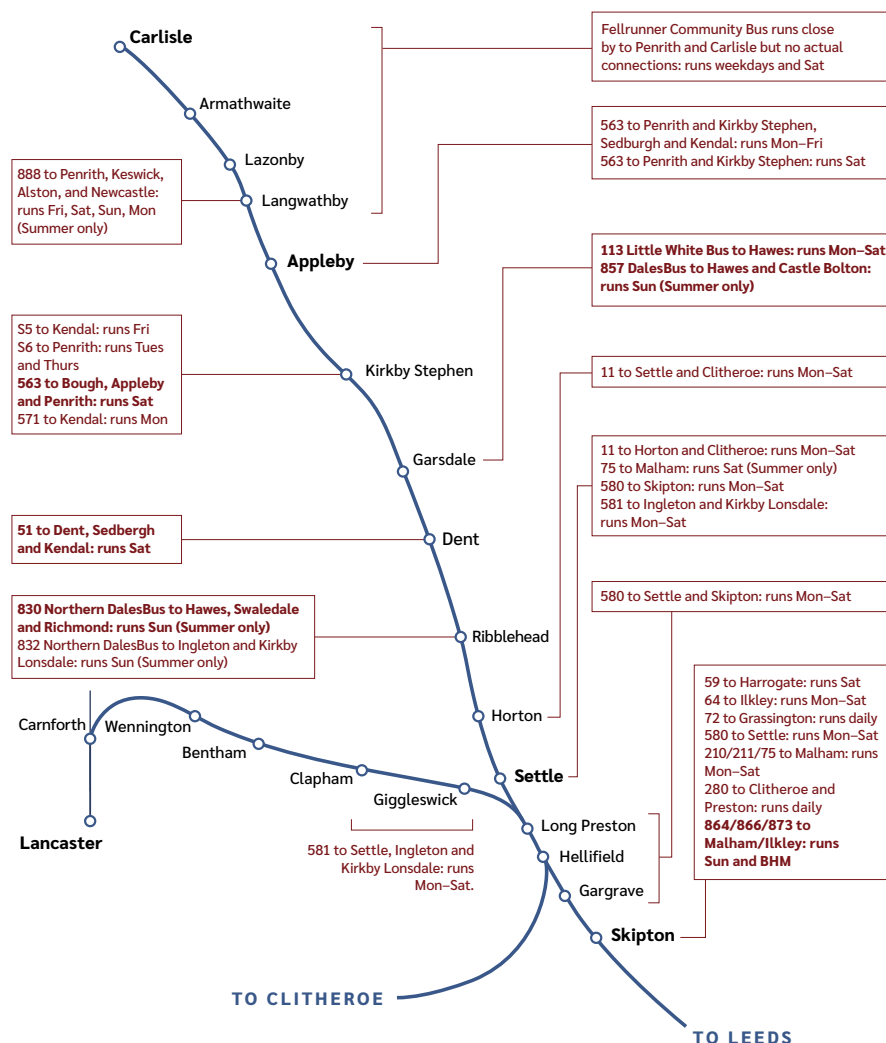
- Secure long-term funding for the existing bus network together with new services.
- Establish a Stakeholder Group, co-ordinated by the Community Rail Partnership.
- Involve and support communities to access the Leeds Settle Carlisle.
- Develop rural transport hubs at LSC stations, with improved integration of bus and rail services to better suit local residents and visitors.
- Optimise the rail timetable, with more regular clockface timings.
- Develop integrated ticketing.
- Expand and refocus marketing and promotional activity.

## LEEDS–SETTLE–CARLISLE STRATEGIC MAP WITH POPULATION





## BUS CONNECTIONS TO THE LEEDS–SETTLE–CARLISLE LINE



## KEY

= Dedicated service timed to meet train

= Service running in close proximity to station with no timetabled connection

Whilst transport opportunities have improved slightly in the intervening period, we remain distant from effective integration of bus and rail services on the LSC, whereas there are excellent examples in other areas. Re-evaluation of the subject is therefore warranted, including the relationship between the railway, its communities and surrounding countryside.

The Leeds-Settle-Carlisle rail line is a nationally important, strategic transport link which has gained increased ridership since reprieve in 1989, both for leisure and local traffic and for longer distance travellers between Yorkshire and Scotland – the Allport Report in the February issue of *Friends on Track* highlighted the significance of its InterCity potential. But, despite passing through one of the most scenic areas of Britain (as illustrated by the above map) the line fails to fulfil its potential because of the lack of adequate integrated travel to and from the line.

Whilst several important bus services were withdrawn post 2010 due to austerity, we have recently seen an attempt to reinstate some of these key routes, albeit on a limited basis in the Eden Valley area. But the bus services which currently exist are fragmented and fragile, comprising a mixture of voluntary sector provision combined with some subsidised and commercial operations. Some Sunday and seasonal services are provided by the DalesBus network. Likewise, bus services in the rural areas north of Skipton are quite sparse, in contrast to the Aire Valley section of the line within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority which is generally well provided for.

As can be seen from the bus connections map (left), bus services are nevertheless a valuable part of the amenity and economy of the Leeds Settle Carlisle

allowing travel to and from some of the intermediate stations which, whilst located in outstanding scenery, can be somewhat isolated from any nearby habitation. Without these services onward travel from such stations would be impossible for visitors and local users alike. Whilst the line will always attract visitors it would be unfortunate if its purpose was merely as an ‘end to end’ ‘heritage’ journey. Indeed, the railway is and should always remain a vital part of the national rail network both for long distance and local travel.

*“It is heavily subsidised, as with other services in the Northern network, and would not be sustainable were it simply a heritage journey.”*

**The car is currently the Connection King**

Our National Parks and outdoor spaces have deservedly acquired increased significance since the Covid pandemic, but travel remains dominated by the motor car, as amply illustrated by the sea of cars at visitor hotspots such as Ribbleshead or Malham on any fine day. Indeed, the most recent Yorkshire Dales National Park survey, carried out in 2022 found that 85% of visitors arrived by private motor vehicle whilst only 4% by public bus and, even worse, 2% by rail. We might reasonably conclude that most of the 2% rail was via the Leeds Settle Carlisle, it being the only railway line within the Dales area.

Most people now accept that we are in the midst of a climate emergency and that there is an urgent need to curb the emission of greenhouse gases. In addition, traffic congestion and pollution are effectively destroying the very aspects of the countryside that the visitors

have come to enjoy. This is simply not sustainable, and we must encourage a modal shift away from the private car.

Effective public transport can also help the rural economy to thrive. The visitor economy is vital to support employment and livelihoods if these communities are not simply to become ‘museums’ of the countryside. We must therefore consider how visitors might reach such destinations by public transport. To this end, the Leeds Settle Carlisle can play a significant role in bringing visitors in a more sustainable way. The potential for connection to tourist destinations is illustrated in the map (right).

Equally, we should consider the transport needs of the local communities along the LSC corridor, many of which have been disenfranchised by the gradual deterioration of rural transport over the years. Indeed, ownership of a car is often regarded as a necessity in rural areas. But for those without their own means of transport, isolation can present a very real problem. Whilst stations such as Settle and Appleby are situated proximate to the communities they serve; this is not the case for most other stations on the line. Indeed, the lack of integrated transport is, without doubt, a significant restriction on the ability of local residents to be able to access the rail services to seek wider economic opportunities, hospital visits or simply to use for leisure.

How rural buses are funded is particularly difficult and difficult to sustain on the basis of fare income alone. A full-sized bus typically costs in the region of £500-600 a day to run. In urban areas fare income can be generated from high volumes of relatively short journeys. Away from urban areas services become less viable. But there are some exceptions such as the central Lake District where

tourist numbers are sufficient to sustain numerous commercial services such as the well-known 555 service from Lancaster to Keswick which are able to pay their way. But even that route has poor evening and Sunday provision.

Most rural bus services therefore require some level of subsidy in order to be sustainable. This is in common with rail passenger services which receive considerably greater public funding from the national purse. Indeed, the government support for bus services in England is currently circa £1.1bn (2025-26) as compared with the last available ORR figures for rail of £10.3bn (2023-24).

### A Vision for the Future – but we’re a long way from an Integrated Network

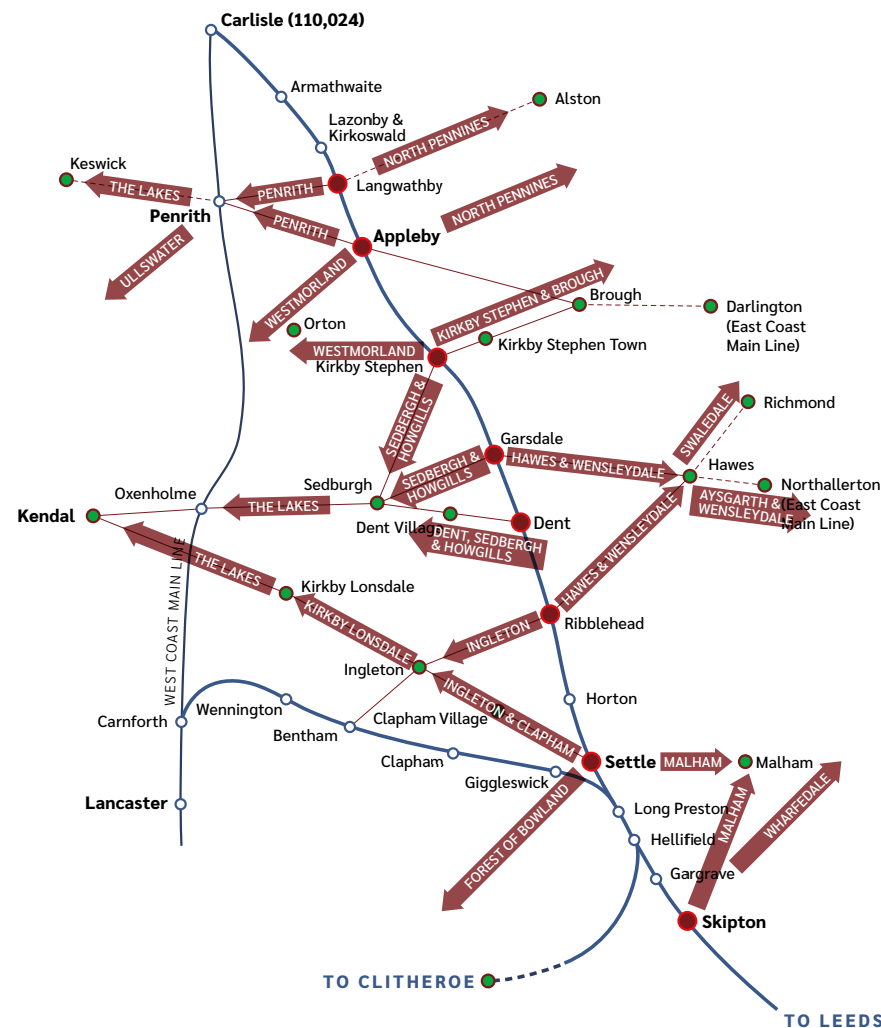
Despite passing through one of the most scenic areas of Britain the LSC fails to fulfil its potential because of the lack of adequate integrated travel to and from the line. But adequate long-term funding from central government will be crucial whether Franchising or tightly framed Enhanced Partnership models are ultimately adopted.

### Securing the Existing Network

A major concern is that funding for many services, in particular services supported by the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from the Department for Transport, including the weekend DalesBus network, is only on a short-term ad-hoc basis. The immediate priority should be to secure longer-term funding arrangements and stability for the existing network.

Whilst rural services have seen some benefit from the recent BSIP funding, concern must be that this is currently only allocated up to March 2026 with

## LEEDS–SETTLE–CARLISLE LINE POTENTIAL TOURISM MAP





no certainty of funding going forward. Security of funding by central government and the LTAs is therefore vital to any long-term planning and continuation of services. To fulfil this vision of integrated services a coordinated approach by the various stakeholders is needed. Due to the geography of the Leeds Settle Carlisle passing through two main unitary authorities as well as the National Park, we suggest that a stakeholder group should be established by the Community Rail Partnership as the accredited body for the line.

We suggest that this should include Westmorland and Furness and North Yorkshire councils, York & North Yorkshire

Combined Authority, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Northern Trains (as the current rail franchise operator), Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line and Dales and Bowland CIC, amongst others. Friends of the Settle Carlisle line, the principal support group for the line of some 2,700 members and a track record of supporting local bus services, can play a significant role.

There isn't enough space here to cover all the details of this significant piece – you can download a copy of the full 72-page report via the FoSCL website at [www.foscl.org.uk](http://www.foscl.org.uk)



# Hydrogen Trains? It's elementary.

By Keith Watts

**Hydrogen could be the answer to producing electricity on trains on non-electrified routes. The hydrogen trains have several fuel cells on board which generate electricity from hydrogen through electrolysis with the only by-product being water which is released as steam.**

Only 38% of railways are electrified in the UK. By comparison the European average is 57%. In Switzerland there is 100% electrification. The advantages of electric power are plentiful, including being cleaner and giving the potential for faster journey times and increased capacity.

The cost of conventional electrification using overhead catenary equipment is, on average, £2 million per kilometre in the UK in comparison to a European average of £1.5 million. With railways in the UK still being largely reliant on government funding for major improvements at the time of severe restrictions on government spending and borrowing, it is difficult to see how increased electrification be achieved. Especially on routes such as the Settle–Carlisle.

There has been some groundwork on the use of hydrogen fuel cells for trains in the UK. Since 2022 Porterbrook rolling stock company has experimented with a “hydroFLEX” Class 799 electric multiple unit. This unit has been converted from a former BR Class 319 unit and is now powered by 4 x 125W fuel cells using hydrogen stored in 36 hydrogen tanks. The unit retains its existing mechanical and electrical equipment and feels little different from the original electric train to drive. The train consumes 0.7kg of hydrogen per mile and has a range of 350 miles. The fuel cells are supplemented by a lithium-ion battery of 350KW which is kept powered up by the fuel cells.

Since the trials began the unit has completed 2000 miles, including travelling from its base at Long Marston to Kidderminster and it has climbed the Lickey Incline. Despite the apparent success of the experiment, Porterbrook do not have plans to convert further units.

However, Vanguard Sustainable Transport Solutions, who helped Porterbrook develop the Class 799, has this year revealed that it has converted an existing 08 Diesel shunter to Hydrogen. This prototype shunter has had its diesel engine replaced by lead acid batteries powered by a 80 KW hydrogen power cell. They claim that refuelling is only necessary after 20 hours and that the shunter will suit industrial use.

## No 4 SALT LAKE COTTAGES

Ribblehead, Yorkshire Dales

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

Visit: [www.aroundaboutbritain.co.uk/North\\_Yorkshire/14009](http://www.aroundaboutbritain.co.uk/North_Yorkshire/14009)

Phone: 07811 384530

Email: [leesjc1@aol.com](mailto:leesjc1@aol.com)

SETTLE TO  
CARLISLE  
RAILWAY



7 DAY STAYS





Class 799 – Glasgow Central. Photo courtesy of Saul O’Kane

Other countries have also begun to explore the use of Hydrogen fuel cells. Manufacturer Alstom has developed its “Coradia iLint” hydrogen fuel cell units. These iLint units have been used in the Frankfurt area of Germany and in Quebec, Canada on revenue earning service on secondary routes since 2022 and 2023 respectively. They are specifically designed for running up to 1000km without refuelling. Unfortunately, the German units have had reliability problems and 18 of the 27 units have temporarily been replaced by older diesel units whilst Alstom overhaul the iLint fleet at their expense.

Spain has taken a different approach. They have sought to introduce high speed hydrogen trains. Stadler Rail has developed the “HYMUCSO” high speed train with local manufacturer Talgo. This also makes use of overhead catenary equipment where it exists and has battery back-up. The Spanish manufacturer CAF has also worked with a consortium in Spain and Portugal to develop a demonstrator train in their “FCH2” rail project.

Further afield a different starting point has been adopted. With a quarter of the world’s copper reserves Chile has developed hydrogen powered locomotives for hauling copper freight trains.

*“Hydrogen power could greatly improve journey times between Leeds to Carlisle and beyond”*

In the light of this worldwide investment in the use of Hydrogen as a power source, it does potentially appear to offer an option for electric propulsion between the end of the overhead catenary equipment at Skipton and it re-starting at Carlisle.

But there are underlying issues that need addressing before hydrogen can be used as a fuel. It has relatively high production costs to produce green hydrogen, and there is the need to transport and store the bulky hydrogen fuel which of course is highly flammable.

Also there is now a major alternative to use electric power on non-electrified routes. Using either bi- or tri-mode trains. The bi-mode units are powered by a combination of conventional electric supply (overhead or 3rd rail) and lithium batteries which enable them to run on non-electrified sections. These can be supplemented by charging points on routes. For instance, in 2024 Merseyrail introduced seven bi-mode units of

Stadler Class 777. This has enabled them to successfully extend their operation on non-electrified routes. Also, during 2024 a TransPennine Hitachi Class 802/2 has had its auxiliary diesel engine replaced by an electric battery with a power rating of 700KW.

Then there is the tri-mode approach. Stadler has developed Class 756 Flirt tri-mode units for Transport for Wales for use in South Wales. These units have back-up diesel engines for charging the electric battery. This tri-mode approach overcomes the battery range issue

but at the expense of having some limited emissions.

But in comparison to Hydrogen powered units these multi-mode units do have a major disadvantage. Use of batteries and auxiliary engines mean that these units are running on reduced power when not connected to electric wires or a 3rd rail.

What of the Settle – Carlisle line? The indications are that Northern (or its successor operating company) are going to introduce new multi-mode trains after 2028. They do not appear to be considering Hydrogen power even though it has the advantage of being able to run on full power and offer a larger range than multi-mode power sources.

Hydrogen power could greatly improve journey times between Leeds to Carlisle and beyond, especially if line speeds are increased as suggested in the Allport report (see the February issue of “*Friends on Track*”). By contrast the current plans to introduce multi-mode units on the route may not significantly reduce journey times as the units will have to use battery or other auxiliary power sources between Skipton and Carlisle.

Is the hydrogen fuel cell approach likely to be adopted at all in the UK, never mind the Settle–Carlisle? The answer appears to be no, unless substantial resources are dedicated to greatly reducing the cost of hydrogen production and infrastructure is put in place for its storage. This would have to be by manufacturers working in conjunction with the soon to be established Great British Railways and the Rolling Stock Companies.



# Walking with Friends: My FoSCL Adventures

*By Yinxiao Zhu, from China now living in Leeds.*

**My name is Yinxiao. When I first joined Friends of Settle–Carlisle Line (FoSCL), I was a student at the University of Leeds. Fortunately, I’m working in Leeds now. To me, the FoSCL Saturday walks are like family gatherings—I never want to miss one.**

My first walk with Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line (FoSCL) was on February 3, 2024. Needing a break from the heavy essays, I discovered FoSCL’s Saturday walks through Rednote, a Chinese social media platform. I vividly remember when I arrived at Skipton train station with my friend, seeing many people in proper walking gear. I was a bit nervous about what to expect, but this group quickly made me feel welcome. On that rare beautiful sunny day, I encountered countless sheep, eleven dogs, and one black cat, and got to know a group of incredibly friendly people. Everything felt so natural, and I could feel that being an introvert wasn’t a problem here. People of all personalities could enjoy the walk, the nature, and the animals together. That wonderful experience made me feel truly included and encouraged me to keep coming back.

In the past year, I explored so many amazing places with FoSCL, and one of

the most unforgettable was the miners’ path around Appleby—anyone who completes that route deserves a medal! It convinced me that walking truly does keep people fit! I also really enjoyed the parks along the walk, especially the playground near Giggleswick, with a large cableway and adult-sized slides! I’ve witnessed the four seasons of Garsdale, had lunch beside the amazing Gaping Gill, and marvelled at the breathtaking view from Ingleborough, all reminded me of how small we are as humans and how awe-inspiring nature is. To keep the memories alive, I collected many “souvenirs,” such as a snowball from Garsdale (which eventually melted in my bathroom), feathers from some beautiful birds, a tuft of sheep wool, and more.

On every walk, walk leaders take the time to share the history behind each place we pass, which is truly valuable—these meaningful stories need to be remembered and passed down. I also learn a little more from different friends along the way. When we pass houses from the 1900s, especially those with modern cars parked in front, it feels as if I can see history unfolding before my eyes. Walking on old Roman routes, and waiting for steam trains gives me a similar feeling. History isn’t just something in books, but something real, still surrounding us. Gradually, I began to understand the deep bond people have towards old buildings, trains, and railways—they are not just structures, but living connections to the past.



High Cup Nick: Yinxiao in her happy place. Photo by Russ Photos.

As time flew, I finally understood what the little fox told the Little Prince: “If you come at four in the afternoon, from three o’clock I shall begin to be happy. The closer it gets to the time, the happier I shall feel.” Every week, the thought of seeing my friends on Saturday filled me with anticipation and joy. But at the same time, by April, I was already feeling the sadness of having to leave in September. While I eagerly counted down the days to our next walk, I was also painfully aware of how few remained. So, after a short visit to see my parents 8800km away, I’m back in Leeds, my second home.

On this long journey, I’ve met so many wonderful people and experienced countless moments that have truly touched my heart—something I never could have imagined. I’ve received more affirmation and encouragement than I ever thought possible. Sometimes, I think this must be the peak of my luck, and I may never meet people as amazing as these friends again. Everyone’s stories here have shown me that life holds so many more possibilities, and I feel inspired by that. There’s so much more I want to say, but above all, I’m incredibly grateful to every leader for each unforgettable walk, and to everyone I’ve met in this big family!





Top: Purple Saxifrage, Flowers, limestone, Ingleborough. Photo by Finn Varney.

Above: Curlew. Photo by Nick Goodrum.

Left: Ellie Parker, Tree Planting at Ingleborough. Photo by Dwayne Martindale.

# Wild Ingleborough

By Ellie Parker

**Spring comes late to the western Dales, and it isn't unusual to be caught in an April snow flurry on the higher slopes of Ingleborough, Whernside and Pen-y-ghent.**

Despite the freezing temperatures that persist in these upland areas, one plucky montane flower signals the end of the long winter - March sees the welcome return of the purple saxifrage. It is found throughout the Arctic and in mountainous areas in the northern hemisphere, and on Ingleborough can be seen at the southern edge of its range in England. It only remains on a few remote, rocky outcrops, although once would have been abundant in the area – and could be again thanks to Wild Ingleborough's upland plant nursery, which is working to restore fragmented plant populations across the mountain.

Continuing the purple theme, early purple orchids begin to appear from the middle of April. These will later be followed by common spotted, heath spotted and northern marsh orchids, as well as several other less common orchid species. A great place to see them is on along the well-walked paths around Sulber and Moughton on the eastern side of Ingleborough, which can be accessed via the footpath from Horton-in-Ribblesdale station. This is also one of the best places in the area to see bird's-eye primrose, another scarce northern species – a beautiful pale violet primula which thrives in limestone grasslands.

Spring brings wildflowers and also the birds. This is a hotspot for breeding ground-nesting birds such as the Eurasian curlew, northern lapwing, and golden plover, amongst others, who move to higher ground for the months of March – August, joining the ubiquitous skylarks and meadow pipits whose calls and songs are woven into the soundscape of the Dales. Hearing the various distinctive sounds of the moorland birds is one of the great joys of spring in the Dales – the Merlin app (other apps are available!) is a great way for beginner birders to get to know the different calls and songs.

Some of these species' populations are in steep decline, particularly the curlew – the UK breeding population has halved since the 1990s, with multiple factors threatening its survival. Wild Ingleborough and the Three Dales Landscape Recovery Scheme led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are spearheading habitat restoration work across this landscape, which will improve conditions for curlews and other ground nesting birds (such as black grouse and ring ouzel, who are both just clinging on in the area).

Every spring Wild Ingleborough and the Yorkshire Peat Partnership hold "Ground Nest Fest", a week-long celebration of our ground-nesting birds and their habitats. This year it runs from May 2nd to May 10th, with guided walks, farm visits, craft workshops and much more – join us and see our website for more details:

[www.ywt.org.uk/events/ground-nest-fest](http://www.ywt.org.uk/events/ground-nest-fest)



# FoSCL Summer Walks Programme 2025



*With walk leaders Lyndi Clark and Susan Way*

**We are now a few weeks into our Summer Walks Programme after a very busy and enjoyable Winter Walks Programme which saw well over 500 walkers taking part in FoSCL's guided walks.**

We have welcomed walkers from all over the world on our walks over the last few months as Leeds University students from China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, India and Peru have been travelling on the S&C to enjoy walks with us. They spend all week studying hard and tell us that they find being in the fresh air and lovely countryside good for their health and well-being.

We think our Summer Programme offers plenty of variety and a good mix of walks to suit walkers of differing abilities; from a strenuous hike over Ingleborough or Wild Boar Fell to a potter around Horton-in-Ribblesdale or a stroll through Settle to see the amazing Flowerpot Festival!

To celebrate the longest day of the year, we are offering two walks from Appleby on 21st June; a challenging route via High Cup Nick to Great Rundale Tarn and a scenic walk to the pretty village of Dufton.

The Yorkshire Dales Explorer rail service, which started last year and runs every Saturday, has been very popular and gives us the opportunity to offer walks in the Ribbles Valley. There are two walks from the YDE on the Summer Programme which start from Langho and Ramsgreave. If you're planning to join us on these walks, check the FoSCL Guided Walks website for

further information about train times:

[www.foscl.org.uk/guided-walks](http://www.foscl.org.uk/guided-walks)

We are very pleased that the 830 Northern DalesBus, which is supported by the Friends, will be running from Ribbleshead every Sunday from April to October and providing access into Wensleydale and Swaledale. We will be running six Sunday walks from the bus giving walkers the chance to enjoy car free walks in some of the loveliest areas in the Yorkshire Dales. Check the FoSCL or DalesBus [www.dalesbus.org](http://www.dalesbus.org) websites for details.

If you come on one of our walks, why not take a photograph to enter into the "Spirit of the Settle Carlisle Line Photographic Competition" run by the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company as part of the celebrations for Rail200 and the 150th anniversary of the Settle Carlisle Line. More information on how to enter is available at: [www.settle-carlisle.co.uk/spirit-of-the-settle-carlisle-line-photo-competition/](http://www.settle-carlisle.co.uk/spirit-of-the-settle-carlisle-line-photo-competition/).

If you plan to join us for a walk, it is always best to check the website for any last-minute changes before setting off. **You can find all our upcoming walks at: [www.foscl.org.uk/guided-walks](http://www.foscl.org.uk/guided-walks) or pick up one of our Summer Walks leaflets at stations along the line.**

Right: Photo by Russ Photos.





# Inspiration from the Swiss Rail playbook

By Phil Hinde

**Did you ever have to do one of those ‘Compare and Contrast’ exercises that were popular with geography teachers and examiners back in the day? Asking students to measure Belgium or Holland against Switzerland or Denmark, were regular favourites.**

But a recent (and most enjoyable, thanks to superb weather and good organisation) winter holiday in south-east Switzerland had me making lots of comparisons between the Settle and Carlisle and the Rhaetian Railways (RB) network. I was left wondering whether promotion of our line could learn lessons from the marketing and operation of the RB, both from their flagship Bernina and Glacier Express trains, and from their other passenger services. There are big differences, but still lots of parallels.

But first some obvious practical points of commonality and divergence. Both the RB and the S&C are renowned for their civil engineering, with gradients, tunnels and iconic viaducts; we have Ribbleshead and Arten Gill, they have the Landwasser, sprung directly off a cliff face as the train curves out of a tunnel 65 metres above the tumbling river below. Many of the tunnels are in fact spirals, designed to ease the gradients up to the summits

but are nevertheless at the mercy of difficult geology; the 5.9 km Albula tunnel has recently been rebored, as the old one, beset by water ingress was being twisted out of shape (and hence out of gauge) by ground movement. The social history of the original construction is comparable, with shanty towns à la Batty Moss established at both ends of the first Albula tunnel. And those gradients – not really any ‘long drags’ but short, sharp steepness, even though the Rhaetian routes are all adhesion worked. As one Brummie in our party remarked when we started the spectacular descent from the Bernina Pass to Tirano, ‘it’s oivan stoyper than the Lickey Incline!’

Both the engineering and the social history are well displayed at the Rhaetian Railway Museum at Bergün. It would be good if the story of the S&C were comprehensively presented at a single location that could become a tourist attraction in its own right. And the Bergün museum has an excellent café attached – I can recommend the rösti!

Like the S&C, the RB was born out of commercial pressures, but has experienced difficult times since. The Rhaetian network was called into being after the so-called Gotthard Disaster – not a train crash, but a regional economic one, when the opening of the Gotthard Railway in 1882 took all the trade away from the routes over the mountain passes to the east. The new lines were promoted by the cantonal authority to re-invigorate



Viewing the glaciers at Alp Grüm

the area, but building and operation was expensive and required bail-out from central government. From the start tourist traffic was crucial, so the end of the ‘Belle Epoque’ high-end tourism business after the First World War brought crisis, only relieved by the growth of mass-market tourism in the years since.

Of course the Rhaetian network is now all electrified, but only the Bernina and Arosa lines were electric from build – the rest started under steam power and some ‘dampf’ excursions are run each year – on the less steep sections of the system! Other heritage trains run featuring veteran carriages and electric locos – including an iconic ‘Crocodile,’ though at time of writing that machine is out of service for repairs. Interestingly these vintage trips are all organised and marketed by RB themselves, as are the

other tourist specials.

We must also acknowledge the gauge – RB rails are a metre apart to allow tighter curves – and the pattern of freight transportation. The difference in gauge limits through freight to some container traffic and carriage of a few standard gauge wagons on accommodation vehicles, but there is local traffic apparent in timber and fuel, helped by the fact that many of the local roads are even more precipitous than the railways! And we note that the RB is a ‘vertically integrated’ system, whereas even the main Swiss network accommodates diverse operators, at least on its international routes.

But to get back to those comparisons and what Northern, FoS&C and Network Rail might learn from them. Let’s start with the basics:



### Comfort and cleanliness

Windows are invariably clean, whether on the prestige trains with their high level glazing or on the regular rolling stock. Importantly recognising that most passengers have come to see the Alps and not a bodyside pillar, seats are well aligned with the windows.

### Punctuality

Contrary to popular belief this is not perfect, due partly to the fact that most of the system is single track with loops, and also that loading hordes of tourists with oversized suitcases (what do they put in them?) often compromises otherwise efficient station working practice – doors release immediately the train has stopped. On my trip we did experience one hold-up at Chur when the Arosa train appeared to be ‘late from depot’. And severe weather does cause problems when it is more than just ‘normal’. The high-tech snow ploughs had clearly been very busy shortly before our visit.



### Speed

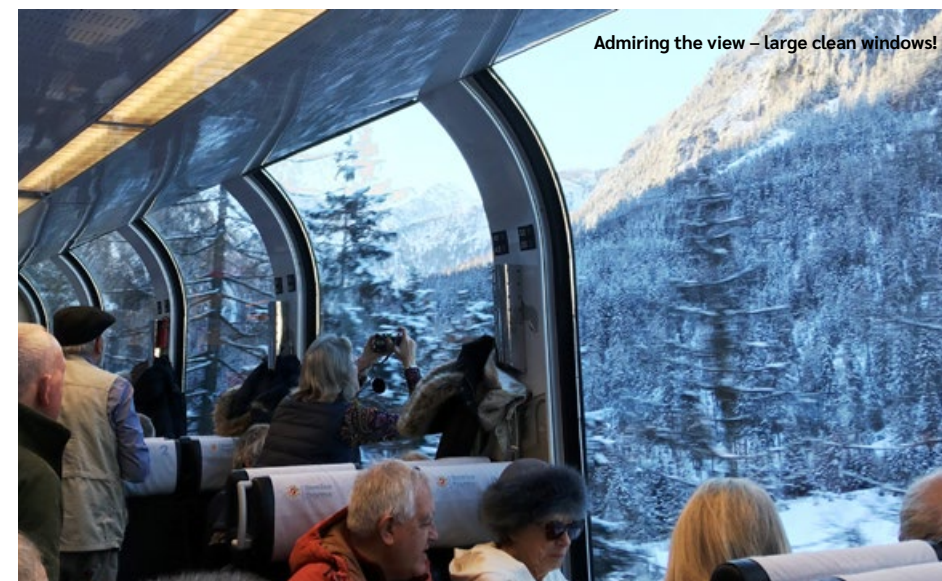
The terrain limits this on many routes and some of the oldest stock has top speed of only 55kph. But the tension between tourists who want to see the views and others who just need to get to their destination is partly resolved by timetabling and regulation in favour of the service trains over the specifically tourist traffic (even if this does lead the Glacier Express to be advertised as the world's slowest express train!). In the main valleys the trains can whizz along at up to 100kph. The dedicated tourist trains on the Bernina line make a planned stop at Alp Grüm for travellers to alight and admire the scenery. Why couldn't we do the same at Dent? Meanwhile the regular services for local travellers run to a steady pattern, usually hourly. There are reliefs run at busy times for winter sports enthusiasts and, on the Albula line, a shuttle that takes thrill-seekers and their hired toboggans up one stop from Bergün so they can slide down the specially maintained piste back to their starting point – and then go round again.

### Passenger rolling stock

The locomotives, and the Stadler passenger carrying motor units that pull unpowered vehicles along behind, are relatively modern, certainly newer than our 158s, but the other coaches are older though still comfortable. The prestige trains have modern loco-hauled vehicles with glass panels where the bodyside meets roof, for maximising views of the mountains.

### Luxury trains

On the Glacier and Bernina Expresses one can reserve places in some top-end luxury cars with gourmet catering, at prices which even by Swiss standards are eye-watering! The S&C has visits from



the Blue HST and other Pullman grade stock, but the difference on RB is that the elite services run daily, are staffed by the general operator and are promoted world-wide.

### Merchandising and marketing

The ‘merch’ as our American cousins call it, is not much more exciting than our own – baseball caps, fridge magnets and tee shirts etc. but the marketing, informational and souvenir literature is excellent and multi-lingual. It clearly aims to reach beyond the borders of Canton Graubünden. The RB has the advantage that the Albula and Bernina lines have UNESCO World Heritage status, but that shouldn't stop us blowing the S&C trumpet just as widely and loudly.

### Language

The RB reaches over the border into Italy and passes areas where the Romansch language is still used, so automated on-train announcements are often quadri-

lingual with English as the default for all foreign visitors. The on-train German messages are generally in clear standard German rather than the musical, but to outsiders unintelligible, Swiss dialects. But it might be fun if we were able on the S&C to give information in broad Yorkshire, or even ‘braid Scots’ as we too almost reach foreign lands at Carlisle. On the ‘Express’ trains commentary is given in multiple languages (including Japanese) by means of airline style plug-in earphones.

### Destinations

The RB admittedly has the edge in glamour here, particularly at St. Moritz and Davos. We are still waiting for Giorgio Armani to open a branch in Settle and the World Economic Forum has never been held in Appleby. But from Leeds right through to Lancaster and Carlisle we have some great and interesting towns, all with stations located close to the centres so we could make a more integrated approach to highlighting our ports of call.



A retired crocodile

So realistically what ideas and wish-lists can we bring back from a trip to Switzerland, or from other networks that try to cater especially for tourist traffic.

My list would include:

- Comfortable seats with clear views through clean windows
- Regular interval service patterns
- Marketing of the whole system and the towns and areas served as a package, right from Leeds through to Carlisle and including the Bentham 'branch', with supporting literature and brochures for visitors
- Publicising our lines and services on a much wider basis than just our own area

- Creation of a proper S&C Visitor Centre and museum as a destination in its own right
- Running of a regular (albeit perhaps seasonal) 'Limestone Express', possibly just from Skipton to Appleby, catering for those coming mainly for the ride and mitigating the risk of overcrowding on our other services. This could be an 'open access' opportunity
- Further promoting the usefulness of the line to fell-walkers in the way that the RB trains cater for wintersports fans.

Then we'd certainly have a reet gradely railway!

FRIENDS OF THE  
• FOOTSTEPS IN TIME •  
SETTLE-CARLISLE LINE

Free walks, trails, talks, exhibitions and theatre  
from 23rd April – 10th September 2025.

With a huge variety of events covering rocks and rails, quarry botany, viaduct builders, shanty sites, a lost village of thorns, a fossil hunt, and an introductory talk before each event – join the Friends for fun and adventures. Group bookings are welcome.

23rd April	Lost Village of Thorns
7th May	Rocks, Rails & Viaduct Fossil Hunt
21st May	Shanty Life Theatre & Railway Builds
4th June	Limestone Botany
18th June	Navy Walk & Graveyard Theatre
2nd July	Lost Village of Thorns
16th July	Rocks, Rails & Viaduct Fossil Hunt
30th July	Limestone Botany
13th August	Navy Walk & Graveyard Theatre
27th August	Shanty Life Theatre & Railway Builds
10th September	Lost Village of Thorns

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Arten Gill viaduct, photo courtesy of John Bentley.

