

Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Line



**What we contribute to the Line,
the Train Operating Company
and the local economy**

An entirely voluntary organisation with 3,300 members, we are the UK's largest rail user group. Thanks to the generosity of our members we have significant funds to invest in the Line.

Our railway line is unique: it is a key part of the national rail network, yet it incorporates a wealth of Victorian railway engineering heritage and runs through a remarkable, varied and wonderfully scenic landscape. Its entire 72-mile length between Carlisle and Settle Junction is a conservation area.



Our main aims are:

- to encourage, support and promote the use and development of the line
- to support the preservation and restoration of the structures and buildings along the line
- to provide new facilities or to improve existing facilities for users
- to promote knowledge and appreciation of the line

In support of these aims our 150 active volunteers contribute over 40,000 hours per year to the wellbeing of the Settle-Carlisle Line. Multiplied by the national average wage of £13.60 per hour, this equates to an annual financial value of around £544,000. In addition, over the past few years we have put in over £300,000 of our own funds into preservation and maintenance work, directly benefitting the local economy.

Our Voluntary activities

Headcounts and Passenger surveys Over a three-year period Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line (FoSCL) volunteers have carried out a wide range of on train headcounts and passenger surveys, culminating in a massive exercise in August and October 2014 when numbers boarding and leaving trains at every station between Leeds and Carlisle were recorded on every train in both directions for one week. The resulting data has meant that we have an unrivalled understanding of current travel patterns – origins, destinations and purpose of journey – on the Settle-Carlisle Line. This forms the basis for our case for new and improved train services.

Liaison with TOC, NWR, government, YDNP, voluntary organisations We represent passengers when dealing with the Train Operating Company and Network Rail. Customer concerns are discussed at length and a satisfactory resolution is usually achieved. In recent years we have lobbied government at all levels from the Secretary of State downwards for better trains and an improved service. In the run up to the next Northern franchise we put our case to all bidders for both the Northern and TPE franchises. We have also achieved excellent coverage for the Settle-Carlisle Line in railway magazines and local media.



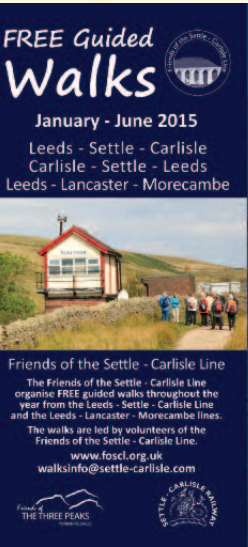
On Train Guides These volunteers travel with pre booked groups travelling on the line. As the train travels over the line, the guide will describe the passing scenery and talk about the railway. They also travel on other trains and talk to any passengers that want information, plus selling books of interest about the Settle-Carlisle Line.

FoSCL has also created an MP3 audio guide to the Line which can be downloaded to mobile phones and other devices, and listened to as the journey proceeds.



Guided Walks Walkers have always been keen supporters of the line and the FoSCL programme of free guided walks from trains continues this tradition. The walks are to encourage people to use the train instead of their cars. This brings a double benefit, firstly for the train operator and secondly for the environment. Guided walks are offered throughout the year every Saturday, and many Sundays and Wednesdays. There are around 25 experienced leaders.

The walks vary in nature from easy to strenuous and cover a wide area, including the western Yorkshire Dales, Eden Valley, North Pennines, Lake District and Lancashire. Some walks make use of local rural bus services to connect with the trains but all walks start and end at one of the stations on the S&C or Lancaster/Morecambe lines.



Ribbleshead Heritage Tours The Ribbleshead Viaduct is the highlight of the route with its magnificent 24 arches spanning Batty Moss over 100 feet below. The Ribbleshead Tours look at the archaeological sites and the history of the Viaduct. They explain how the navvies lived and built this tremendous structure with assistance from steam cranes and muscle power. Places of interest that are visited are the site of the Batty Green Shanty Town including the site of the hospital, the narrow-gauge tramway, the maintenance shed for the steam locomotives, the brickworks, lime kilns, the stone sorting area and the Viaduct itself.

Ribbleshead Visitor Centre The centre illustrates for visitors the history of the site from its beginning to the present day - and includes fascinating insights into the construction and repair of the line, its viaducts and tunnels. The Centre and its small shop is open 7 days a week for much of the year and is staffed mainly by FoSCL volunteers.



Shops and Trading FoSCL have two shops, one at Settle station and the other at Appleby station. There is a large pool of volunteers selling Settle-Carlisle memorabilia and a range of local produce. Settle Station shop is usually open 7 days a week.



Signal boxes Settle Station Signal Box was opened in 1891 and closed for operational purposes in 1984. It lay derelict for more than a decade. It was given to the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line "on long-term loan" in 1997, with the proviso that the structure be re-sited and restored. It is now run as a small working museum dedicated to mechanical-era railway signalling on the Settle-Carlisle Railway. It is staffed and maintained by a small group of dedicated FoSCL volunteers and is open to the public on a regular basis.

The current Armathwaite Station Signal Box was built in 1899 to replace an earlier signal box which was destroyed by fire, and closed in 1983. It was leased to the Friends in 1992 and it has since been fully restored to its Midland Railway appearance. It is now maintained by a group of enthusiastic FoSCL volunteers. The original lever-frame is still in position and the signal box has been furnished with a number of interesting exhibits.

Station gardens The ten station gardens between Armathwaite and Settle are largely cared for by our dedicated volunteers. Significant sums of money are also spent by FoSCL on stocking the gardens and support for the gardeners. The results are plain for all to see and favourable comments are often made by the travelling public.

Painting & decorating From time to time there is need for small repairs to be done on the stations. As the Settle-Carlisle Line is on the National Network FoSCL are limited as to what we can do. Painting is something that is often undertaken. This is carried out by a few of the volunteers.

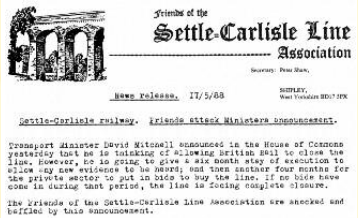


Station furniture FoSCL has provided and owns most of the heritage style benches on every station between Settle and Armathwaite. Volunteers regularly monitor the state of the benches and repair and repaint them when necessary. FoSCL also has a long term lease on the wooden waiting shelter on the up platform at Langwathby and is responsible for keeping it in good decorative order.



Archives FoSCL's Historian has done a great deal of work on recording and cataloguing the resources available to students of the Settle-Carlisle line.

In addition comprehensive documentary archives on the history of the line and the campaign against closure in the 1980s are housed in the station building at Horton-in-Ribblesdale. These are only partially catalogued and it is envisaged that the work will be undertaken by volunteers when the archives are moved to Settle in the near future.



Events As part of the 25th anniversary celebrations, FoSCL took part in various events up and down the line in 2014.

This included support for the Ride2Stride walking festival and the Dentdale Music and Beer Festival.

A specially brewed beer and souvenir beer glass were commissioned for the latter. Regular events such as Settle Station Open Day are held every year.



SCRCA (The Settle-Carlisle Railway Conservation Area project) A small team of Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line volunteers is currently working in partnership with Network Rail, Northern Rail, local Conservation Officers and other organisations and individuals to:

- Identify, record and assess the current condition of all the standing and demolished railway-related historic structures within the Settle-Carlisle Railway Conservation Area; then to
- develop and agree a set of questions / assessment criteria (aligned with English Heritage guidelines) against which the relative importance of the standing structures can be assessed; then to
- assess the relative importance of each standing structure using the agreed criteria; and then to
- monitor the condition of the 'important' structures on an ongoing basis.

Education FoSCL has a history of cooperation with a number of primary schools in the Settle area. This has included trips on the train to Ribbleshead with teachers and pupils where they learnt about the history of the Line and its construction. This was rewarded with a magnificent concert and historical presentation at Giggleswick School in April 2014 as part of the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the saving of the Line from closure.

Regular visits are made to primary schools in the northern half of the line by FoSCL volunteers in period costume. Pupils are introduced to the history and operation of the train service in Victorian times. They are encouraged to travel on the line and railway safety is covered in some detail.



Other areas that include valuable volunteer support are:

Publications Including guided walks leaflets and quarterly magazine production and distribution

Publicity Support for the line guide, distribution of leaflets and social media

Website

Committee members

Health & Safety

Our Financial Support

Integrated transport The withdrawal of subsidies for bus services connecting with trains on the Settle-Carlisle Line would have led to a drastic reduction in services linked to FoSCL's guided walks programme. FoSCL regularly provides financial support for the Saturday community bus service in Dentdale and for the Sunday service between Ribbleshead and Swaledale.



Heritage Maintaining Victorian buildings in a conservation area is expensive, especially given the climate in the more elevated sections of the Settle-Carlisle Line.

It is vital that they are kept in good decorative order to maintain the attractive and homogeneous appearance of the built environment along the line.

Over the past seven years alone, FoSCL has put over £300,000 of its own funds into a variety of projects:

- repairs to and repainting of Kirkby Stephen, Ribbleshead and Horton stations
- restoration of Ribbleshead Stationmaster's House
- refurbishment of Settle, Garsdale and Appleby stations
- provision and restoration of station furniture

Local economy Kirkby Stephen station building and Ribbleshead Stationmaster's House are operated as self-catering holiday lets by the Settle & Carlisle Railway Trust. Much of FoSCL's expenditure in recent years has gone into these buildings. They now earn in excess of £50,000 per year in self-catering income.

Visitors staying at these stations also spend significant sums of money in local restaurants, pubs, shops and visitor attractions. It is likely that FoSCL's investment in these buildings is bringing in a substantial six-figure sum each year to businesses in the Yorkshire Dales and Eden Valley.

We sponsor the Ride2Stride walking festival in early May each year. This brings in hundreds of extra rail passengers who stay in the area and visit restaurants, pubs etc.



www.foscl.org.uk