



Our Electronic Newsletter, keeping you informed of CRA activities and other aspects of Cumbrian Railways

ELX 32 - Spring 2026

The County's Railway History Group



Photograph © Alan Johnstone

Chairman's Musings

This year marks a key milestone for the CRA. Our Spring Conference, at Burneside on 21st March, will mark 50 years since the Association was founded at a meeting in the same month in 1976. Those early days with a small number of supporters has now risen to over 500. For me, it only seems yesterday since we were celebrating the 40th anniversary and it will be an honour to be at the head of this thriving organisation as we go into this momentous year! A celebratory logo has been developed to mark the occasion and you can see it on the front of this newsletter. However, the CRA and its progress over the years is more substantial than just a motif. I like to think that over the years we have become a well known (and I believe respected) member of the railway history community providing a current and historic view on the railways and communities that make up what is "Cumbria", making people aware that there is more to the region than just the West Coast Main Line - important though it is. We work closely with a number of like-minded organisations and have published twenty eight books and other publications. The new website and forthcoming books referred to in this newsletter are a testament to the underlying energy and commitment that continually drives our Association forward. We look at the Cumbrian railways today and tomorrow as well as yesterday and our photographic and document archives provide a valuable source for historians, researchers, modellers, and others - now and into the future. We currently have over 60,000 photographs and are digitising our paper archives, to protect them and improve their accessibility! As we look to celebrate our Anniversary at the forthcoming March conference, we will raise a glass of a specially brewed beer to celebrate the CRA journey so far and to the next fifty years.



Cheers!
Philip Tuer

Capture this QR code on your smart phone, and it will take you to our web site.



<https://www.facebook.com/cumbrianrailways>

Contact us :

For further information, go to our website at <https://cumbrianrailways.org.uk> or contact Don by email on publicity@cumbrianrailways.org.uk

CRA's new website launched

A significant development for the CRA took place on the 6th November last year when our new website was launched a great precursor to our 50th Anniversary year. Our previous site had been in use for a number of years, evolving to embrace new aspects and facilities. However, it was decided that the time had come to bring it up to date and make it more accessible and relevant. A simple cosmetic refresh would not suffice.

Consequently, during 2025 a small team from within the CRA did an amazing amount of work to specify; develop; and launch this new website in a matter of months. We hope that both members and non-members will appreciate the improvements. Our website address remains the same (cumbrianrailways.org.uk) and most of the content of the old site has been brought across, but hopefully users will find the new website easier to navigate and a bit more visual. Most pages can be accessed either by clicking on the illustrated tiles, or by using the drop down menus at the top of the screen. Getting back to the "Home" or "Front" page is simply done by clicking on the Cumbrian Railways Association logo to the left of the menu bar. The new website also works much better on mobile devices than its predecessor.

Two aspects that were not included in the transition are the photo search and the real time train information. We have an exciting new photo search exclusively for members, but non-members can access the photos that were previously available through the website photo search at the Association's Zenfolio site: (cumbrianrailways.zenfolio.com). We also decided that it was not worth recreating our own version of real time train information when there are several sources of this information on-line that can provide far more functionality than we ever could. Why not go on-line, take a look at the new site and browse!



<https://cumbrianrailways.org.uk/>

New Locomotive shed at Upperby



Cumberland Council has granted permission for a 140-metre-long steel-framed canopy at the former Carlisle Upperby Diesel Depot, off St Nicholas Bridges, to provide covered storage for historic steam locomotives and heritage rolling stock.

The application, from Locomotive Storage Limited, relates to the former 12B carriage shed site at Upperby, once a key part of Carlisle's railway infrastructure.

The depot, originally built by the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway and later rebuilt by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway in 1948, operated as a major maintenance, storage and servicing hub for steam and later diesel locomotives.

The new structure will be located within the existing confines of Carlisle Diesel Depot on the site of a former railway storage building.

Locomotive maintenance at Upperby ended in 1968 with work transferred to Kingmoor, carriage work continued into the early 1990s, and the remaining sheds were demolished in 2016, 'marking the end of an era for this historic facility'.

The development will provide 'a secure and weather-protected environment for historic steam locomotives, contributing to the preservation of the nation's railway heritage, and the facility has the potential to 'attract visitors, support tourism, and provide educational opportunities related to railway history'.



Cumbria Local History Federation meetings

The Cumbria Local History Federation (CLHF) has a full program of meetings around the County, covering all aspects of our history. For their program, visit their website : <https://www.clhf.org.uk/events-diary/>.

Return to Burneside

I was running the West Cumberland Railway Museum stall at Solrail (as excellent as ever), and one of my items for sale was a station sign off Burneside station. Notwithstanding its quite a long station name, the sign was over 7ft long and made of a box section of aluminium, in good condition. I'd owned it for quite a while and, not really being in my core territory, I thought I'd try to move it on. On the Saturday it didn't get a sniff of interest, so as I was driving to Energus on Sunday I was thinking, "If I only sell one thing today may it be the Burneside sign, as that will allow me to only need one trip home for everything else."

Within 10 minutes, a guy comes up to the stall and asks how much I was asking for the Burneside sign. I told him what the ticket said but then asked if he lived there. He replied he was only dropping his Dad off to help run a layout but thought he'd have a quick look round before going back home, and that was when he clapped eyes on the sign. As luck would have it, his wife is the Secretary of Burneside football club and they needed a new sign to go on the outside of their clubhouse, which is situated by the side of the railway, not 400m from the station. "Wow" I thought, serendipity or what! Of course, I let him have it at a reduced price as it was going to such a good home and was being repurposed so close to its place of origin! A real win – win situation.

Peter Rooke, West Cumberland Railway Museum



Image AR0098 from the CRA's Archive Collection, showing the sign in original situ.

RCTS Furness, Lakes & Lune Branch Programme 2026

Wednesday 4th March 2026 : **Railways around London & the South East** by James Sutcliffe

Wednesday 1st April 2026 : **Steam & Diesels in the Northern Fells** by Ian Pilkington

Wednesday 6th May 2026 : **On the Right Track – A Life in Track Renewals** by Sean Devaney

All meetings take place at the Royal Station Hotel, Carnforth at 7.30 pm.

For further information: Telephone 01524 34840, e-mail alan.sattenstall@tiscali.co.uk or Website: www.rcts.org.uk

Steamale meetings

Transport related slide show and talk. Third Tuesday in the month, September to May. Ex Services Men's Club, Victoria Place, Carlisle, 19.30 - 22.00. Cost £5.00 (to include sandwiches). 01228-522118 for info if you would like to attend.

New speakers are always welcomed. Would you like to come and talk to us? If so, please contact Philip on the above number.

Spring Meeting & AGM 2026

We are delighted to announce that the Spring Meeting & AGM of the Association will be held on Saturday 21st March 2026, at the Carus Green Golf Club, Burneside Road, Kendal, LA9 6EB.

As is the customary practice at these events there will three speaker sessions:

- Chris Jackson- Managing Director, TPE “TPE- preparing for the future”
- Philip Tuer – “The ‘CRA: half a century up and still getting stronger”
- Tim Saunders- “1976 to 2026: 50 years of change on the Cumbrian Railways scene”

We are delighted to be able to welcome Chris Jackson to our 50th Anniversary event. The 50th anniversary celebratory theme coming with the presentations by our Chairman Philip and our Image Database Manager, Tim Saunders

As always the meeting is open to non members, so if you would like to book a place or get further details, please contact:

Dave Stubbins, “Brome”, Green Lane, Flookburgh, Cumbria LA11 7JT Phone 07807 836591, email meetings@cumbrianrailwaysassociation.org.uk .

The day starts at 10.30 and goes through to 17.00. Coffee/ Tea and Lunch can also be booked through Dave Stubbins.

New Books

As you will see alongside, new CRA books are in the offing but last year there were several published by other people that are worthwhile considering and obtaining a copy.

West Side Story was published to coincide with the Stockton & Darlington 200th anniversary celebrations at Kirkby Stephen East. Priced at £13.95. This is a very nice photo album of what was produced for the travelling exhibition, by that name, with which the CRA was heavily involved. Two of the names on the front cover are our members who did a lot of work selecting photographs, helping mount them and also putting up and taking down the display boards at various venues. As a bonus, some of the photographs in the book are ones that did not make the display. The quality of print is very good. This publication has sold well and there may be some copies still available direct from <https://mainlineandmaritime.co.uk/>

Railway Women Across the Northern Pennines published by Upper Eden History Society and Ravenstonedale Parish History Group. Only £10. Starting with the Stockton & Darlington Railway it moves on to the Darlington, Stainmore Line, Kirkby Stephen East, Tebay Junction and the Eden Valley line and finishes with some ‘Railway Women today’. There are some very interesting photographs to look at and anecdotes that will surprise you. It is available from local shops in Kirkby Stephen, or the online shop of KSE station <https://stainmore-railway-company-shop.co.uk/>.

The Longbridge Branch Self-published by CRA member Mike Norris. A very limited run, in hardback for £30. The book covers the surprising number of private sidings and associated businesses along the branch as well as describing the lines numerous signalling installations. Obtainable direct from Mike at: mike_t_norris@hotmail.com.

CRA Sales Stand Outings

Preston – 7 & 8 March – Preston College, Fulwood
Kirkby Stephen East – Sunday 21 June – Father’s Day, KSE Station

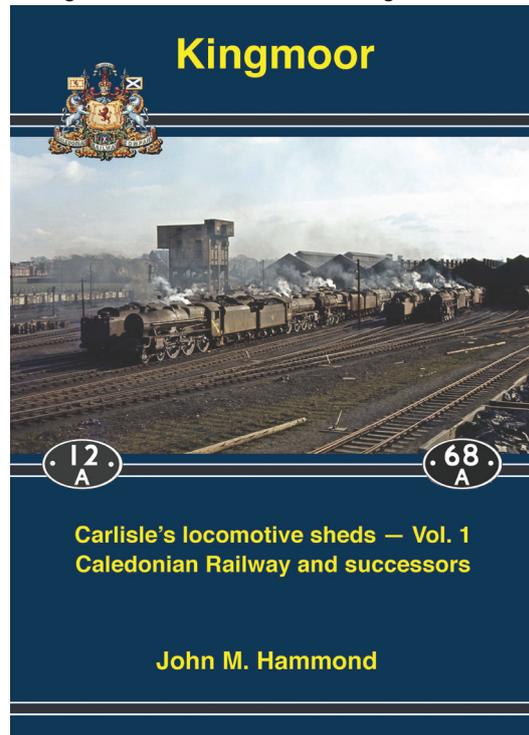
Come and visit the CRA stand, if you can. It’s good to talk.

© Cumbrian Railways Association, February 2026
The Cumbrian Railways Association is Registered Charity
Number 1025436.

Forthcoming New CRA books

After a pause in production 2026 looks set to see two new CRA publications coming out.

“Kingmoor”, by John Hammond, is a thorough history of Kingmoor steam shed from its origins at Carlisle’s West Walls,

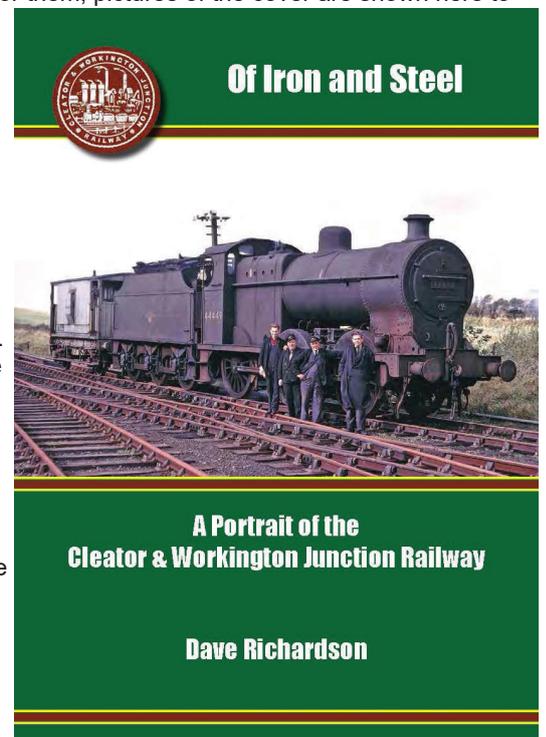


through the move to Etterby and the renaming during the first World War to Kingmoor. “Of Iron and Steel”, by Dave Richardson, modestly describes itself as a portrait of the Cleator & Workington Junction Railway. However, it is a thorough, authoritative and well illustrated history of this

pivotal West Cumberland railway.

Watch out for them, pictures of the cover are shown here to help you spot them.

Full details and publication dates will be included in this publication and on our fantastic new CRA Website. Why not have a look at the site but don’t forget to go to the Shop and the Books page within it where you’ll find all our currently available books!



Cumbria Industrial History Society Programme 2026

The Cumbria Industrial History Society (CIHS) has a full program of meetings around the County. For further information about any meeting please contact cihs@cumbria-industries.org.uk. For their program, visit their website : <https://www.cumbria-industries.org.uk/cumbria-industrial-history-society/programme/>