

Cumbrian Railways Association

Style guide for contributors [Issue of 2026]

1. INTRODUCTION

For consistency, appearance and readability of the CRA's journal, books and other publications, a standardisation of style is needed. This aims not to affect the writing style of the contributor — although the Editor retains the right to edit and amend where appropriate — but helps give a consistent rendition of frequently used textual features, such as forenames, dates, times, numbers, abbreviations, etc.

This document gives a brief overview of each of the main features, followed by a section giving some advice on punctuation and some grammatical matters, and an Appendix listing the most-used abbreviations — general and railway related terms.

2. NAMES

Names should be expressed without stops after title initials or qualifications. For example:

Mr AG Smith BA	James Brunlees MICE	Rev Michael Cooper DL
Dr Thomas F Little	TM Richardson Jnr	Mr Frederick J Ramsden

3. DATES

In text, use the notation:

eg 23rd September 1908 Thursday, 5th August 1923

(note that the accepted abbreviations for ordinals, nd, rd, th, are full size.) [not in superscript]

Where space is at a premium, such as in lists or tables, this can be shortened depending on the space available, but err to the full expression wherever possible:

eg 23 September 1908 23 Sept 1908 23.9.1908 23.9.08

4. FIGURES AND NUMERALS

In general, figures up to and including the value of twelve are to be written in full but, thereafter, in numerals only, as in:

One, two, three . . . twelve, then 13, 14 . . . 125 . . . 3,523, etc. However, in a range, write '5 to 20', not 'five to 20'.

(Note that, with large numbers of four digits or more, a comma is inserted to signify 'thousands').

If a numeral starts a sentence, it should be written in full, but, with large numbers, the sentence may be rewritten to avoid a cumbersome start, as in:

‘Fifteen wagons . . .’, but instead of: ‘Three thousand, four hundred and five wagons were built in the years between the wars’, revise to read: ‘Between the wars, 3,405 wagons were built’.

When decimals are involved, the full point is used for the decimal and, where the number is less than one, a ‘0’ should always appear ahead of the decimal, thus:

19.71 102.08 0.76 (not .76) 1.375 3.14159

Locomotive and rolling stock numbers should always be stated without commas or breaks. For example:

46238, 66201, M79602

Where stock numbers are to be used frequently, the use of the abbreviation ‘No’ can be curtailed, such as:

For its visit to the United States in 1939, Princess Coronation Class No 46229 *Duchess of Hamilton* was renumbered and renamed 46220 *Coronation*. On return to the UK in 1946, its original name and number were restored. In 1937, the ‘real’ 46220 achieved a speed of 114 mph.

Units of measurement

Generally, numerals are used, as in:

The four-compartment carriage had a wheelbase of 14 feet.
The 10-ton wagon had a tare weight of 6 tons 5 cwt 2 qtr.
The distant signal was sited 2 miles 1,050 yards from the signal box.

Where many instances of linear measure are used, the usual abbreviations for feet (ft) and inches (in) may be used (but ‘yards’ always in full), in the style of:

. . . 28ft 6in long, 8ft 5in wide and 6ft 10in high . . .
The fence was 5ft 3in high and stretched for 16 yards.

Fractions

The default fractions in most word processing packages should be used and are in the form:

4ft 8½in gauge 12ft ¾in 7¼ miles

Where non-standard fractions are needed, it’s best to use the notation: numerator solidus denominator, thus:

1/16in 6ft 6 3/8in 1 7/8in

Note that there is a space between a unit and the fraction.

There are ways of making these non-standard fractions appear as the default forms (the preferred style) but that is outside the scope of this document.

5. Money

Where pre-decimal currency is mentioned, it should be followed by a conversion to the current decimal equivalent.

The two systems should be expressed as:

Pre-decimal:	£21 4s 1d (£21.20)	2s 10d (14p)	10d (4p)	£1 3s 2½d (£1.16)
Decimal:	£25.94	27p	£1,308.39	£106 07

[Note: in decimal work, the suffix p is not used in entries with pounds and there must always be two figures after the decimal point.]

When displaying in tables with columns headed '£' 's' 'd' or '£' 'p', the descriptors and intermediate stop can be dispensed with, but, with decimal system, there should always be two figures in the 'p' column, eg 29 68, 106 00, 57 09, etc.

6. Times

Generally, the 12-hour clock should be quoted for all periods up until the adoption of the 24-hour clock by British Rail in the 1960s. However, on occasions it might be necessary to convert one system to the other to help with comparisons — such conversions should be made clear:

Text — 12-hour clock

8-05 am 11-23 am 8-48 pm 12.15 am (ie 15 minutes past midnight — not 0.15 am)

Text — 24-hour clock

08-05 11-23 20-48 00-15

Timetables

Quotations from timetables in timetable format should be expressed with a space between hours and minutes. With the 12-hour clock, it should be clear whether the hour quoted is am or pm — this can be as shown here or by column head:

12-hour clock	8 05 am	11 23 am	8 48 pm	12 15 am
24-hour clock	08 05	11 23	20 48	00 15

Periods of time

For preference, periods of time should be quoted in full but there may be circumstances where an abbreviated form would be acceptable for ease of reading or use in tabular form:

In full:	3 hours 43 minutes	5 minutes 38 seconds
Abbreviated:	3h 43m	5m 38s

7 ABBREVIATIONS

Company names

The first reference in any one article should normally give the name in full followed by its abbreviation in brackets. Thereafter the abbreviated form may be given. Note that, in the abbreviation, full stops are not used between successive initial letters. For example:

Railway Clearing House (RCH) United Steel Companies (USC)

In railway company names, the same principle applies but, for abbreviations, ampersands are not used and a standard style is used, thus:

CWJR, FR, LMS, LNER, LNWR, MCR, etc.

Other cases

In general text, standard abbreviations may be used as listed in most well-known dictionaries (eg Chambers, Oxford English, etc). It should be noted that stops are rarely used in these abbreviations, eg:

cu ft	cubic feet
lbs/sq in	pounds per square inch, can also be abbreviated to: psi
mph	miles per hour
km/h	kilometres per hour
rpm	revolutions per minute

Some of the more frequently used and railway-related cases are listed in Appendix 2.

8 CAPITAL LETTERS

The use of capital letters should be limited to initial letters of the first word in a sentence and proper nouns.

Some railway-related terms are considered as proper nouns or names, for example, features on a railway with geographical identity, such as:

Kent Viaduct Dalton Tunnel Bog Junction

The word 'station' is not a proper name and its initial letter remains in lower case, unless it is part of the established name, eg: Carlisle Citadel Station Committee (CSCC). Names of houses, including public houses, are considered as proper names and should have capital initial letters, as in:

Instead of meeting at the usual venue of Newtown Scout Hut, the club met in the Red Lion.

9 LOCOMOTIVE CLASSES AND TRAIN NAMES

Locomotive names are always put in italics. Official Class and train names are proper names and should have capital initial letters. Both the name of a locomotive Class and the name of a train are to be given single quotation marks. Any Class of locomotive that acquires an unofficial name, single quotation marks should be also used. For example:

LNER 'A3' Class No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* headed the 'Flying Scotsman' service to Edinburgh.

'Princess Coronation' Class No. 46238 *City of Carlisle* was on 'The Lakes Express'.

The train engine was an LNWR 'Precedent' Class 2-4-0 No. 860 *Merrie Carlisle*. The 'Precedent' Class gained the peculiar colloquial name 'Jumbos'. Of the 'Jumbos', No. 2186 was named *Lowther* and 2187 *Penrith Beacon*.

Note that the comma used in numbers with four or more digits is not used here.

10 WORDS USED IN A RAILWAY CONTEXT

Some railway-related words or terms need special treatment. For example:

The signal was pulled 'off' to allow the train to proceed.

The Down train was diverted onto the Up line.

The main line, but for signalling, the Up Main.

See Appendix 1 for more such cases.

11 REFERENCES

Titles of books and journals should be quoted in italics; the titles of articles should be put within single quotation marks, as in:

Rail Centres: Carlisle by Peter W Robinson, Ian Allan, 1986.

'Lowca's First Locomotive' by Russell Wear, *Cumbrian Railways* Vol 7, No2, pp28–29, May 2001.

References will be scheduled at the end of the article.

If numerical references to the entry are included within the text, in the form of [Ref 1], [Ref 2], etc, they should be inserted at full size after the appropriate text. References in superscript should be avoided as they tend to be difficult to see. The reference list at the end of the article should be numbered (in the same style), eg:

1 *Rail Centres: Carlisle* by Peter W Robinson, Ian Allan, 1986.

2 'Lowca's First Locomotive' by Russell Wear, *Cumbrian Railways* Vol 7, No2, pp28–29, May 2001.

12 QUOTATIONS

In general, a quotation should be quoted in its original form and be bound by single quotation marks. If more than one paragraph is involved, the opening quotation mark appears at the start of each paragraph, but the closing mark only appears after the final paragraph (but see below). A quotation within the quotation is identified by double quotation marks. For example:

He said, 'Why does he use the word "poison"?''

In a quotation, comments by the author (or Editor), should be within square brackets, eg:

He said, 'Why does he [Mr Bloggs] use the word "poison"?''

Where the extent of quote is more than five lines, the quoted text can be set alone either in a smaller fount or in italics. In these cases, the beginning and ending quotation marks are not used, and where there is a quote within this text, single quotation marks are used. In italic text, where italics would be used in normal text, it reverts to normal text. For example:

Normal text: Nock wrote: ' . . .on the trial run with *Ralph Brocklebank* in 1913 . . . '

Italic text: *Nock wrote: ' . . .on the trial run with Ralph Brocklebank in 1913 . . . '*

Where an article is a reproduction of an article published elsewhere, opening and closing quotation marks are not required, and it should be quoted verbatim. Comments by the author should be contained within square brackets. The author should give an introductory

explanation of the source of the original article. If there is doubt about the copyright, the author should consult the Editor.

13 CREDITS

Photographs, drawings and maps need to have the source acknowledged. In CRA-produced matter, the methods used are:

Journal and CRA books

Photo: F Bloggs, courtesy J Smith

Photo: J Smith Collection

Photo: CRA Bloggins Collection Ref XYZ0000

Note that, if the last type of credit is to accompany a photograph destined to appear in a non-CRA publication, the full name of the Association should be given, ie:

Photo: Cumbrian Railway Association Bloggins Collection Ref XYZ0000

OS maps

Map, Edition, Scale, Date, Crown Copyright Reserved

14 SUNDRY ITEMS

Stock diagram numbers should be quoted as they appear on those diagrams (assuming consistency thereon), For example: Wagon/carriage diagram numbers Dxxx

The two world wars should be referred to as: The Great War and the Second World War.

Words ending '...ise' or '...ize' — the preference is to use the '...ise' spelling.

Be cautious in the use of carriage codes, e.g., BSOT, as many are quite obscure, and they varied between companies. On first use in an article it is advisable to give the name of the carriage type in full followed by the code in brackets. The code can be used on its own thereafter.

15 GUIDANCE ON PUNCTUATION

Modern practice is to use less punctuation, but there are limits! Avoid long sentences. Do not link sentences together with commas and no conjunction. Where the sense is closely related you can insert a semi-colon or a dash, but they are disruptive and it will usually be better to put in a full stop and start a new sentence. It is general practice to comma off non-defining relative clauses, but the commas can be omitted where there is no risk of confusion or awkwardness. Be sparing in the use of capitals and inverted commas.

APPENDIX 1 PREFERRED FORM FOR RAILWAY-RELATED TERMS

Common railway-related terms are listed below in the form that we prefer. It is assumed that readers will have some knowledge of railway terms. Note that the use of hyphens can vary with form of the sentence e.g., 'The engine ran tender first' but 'it was a tender-first working'.

3-cylindere

23-lever tumbler frame

5MT

12A

1960s meaning 1960-1969, but 'the 1960's style'

'A' road, but A66

air-braked

axlebox

Atlantic

'B' road, but B5299

block post

BR-funded service

brake van

buffer beam

chaldron wagon, or waggon [chaldron and waggon usually refer to early types of vehicles]

chimney first

Class 40s as in 'six Class 40s'

colour-light signal

'consist'

distant, as in 'a distant signal', but the 'Southwaite Outer Distant'

double-headed

Down as in 'the Down line'

driving wheel

ex-LMS

firebox

fitted

goods depot

goods line

head shunt

home, as in 'a home signal'

intermediate block post

Lake Side, not 'Lakeside' when referring to the original railway but use Lakeside when referring to the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway (after preservation.)

Lavatory Composite

LMS-built

main line but 'mainline duties' and 'mainline-liveried Class 37s'

Metrovick

Mogul

Pacific

platform but 'Platform 2'

pick-up goods
 pull-down blinds
 roller-bearings
 run-round loop
 saddle tank
 side tanks
 signal box
 smokebox
 Sundays Only
 station
 stationmaster but 'Stationmaster Joe Bloggs'
 switched out
 tender first but 'it was a tender-first working'
 train shed
 trip working
 trip as in 'to trip them to London Road'
 unfitted
 Up as in 'the Up line'
 valve-gear
 wrong line

APPENDIX 2 PREFERRED ABBREVIATIONS

BoT	Board of Trade (in full on first appearance in an article)
c&w	carriage and wagon
CCTV	closed circuit television
CRA	Cumbrian Railways Association
CWR	continuous welded rail (in full on first appearance in an article)
Dia	diameter
DfT	Department for Transport (in full on first appearance in an article)
DMU	diesel multiple unit
ECML	East Coast main line
ECS	empty coaching stock
EMU	electric multiple unit
FPL	facing point lock (in full on first appearance in an article)
GF	ground frame
HST	high-speed train
IB	intermediate block (in full on first appearance in an article)
IBS	intermediate block signals (in full on first appearance in an article)
Jcn	junction, as in 'Stainton Junction' [always in full]
kv	kilovolt
L/C	level crossing
MO	Mondays Only, also: SO, MWFO etc.
MPD	motive power depot
NCB	National Coal Board
No.	number, as in 'Carlisle No. 3' and No. 46432

Nos.	numbers, as in Nos. 46233 and 46238
OLE	overhead line equipment
OS	Ordnance Survey
PO	private owner, as in 'private owner wagons'
PTE	Public Transport Executives (in full on first appearance in an article)
pw	permanent way
Ref	Reference, as in '[Ref 17]'
ref.	as in 'CRA Miscellaneous Collection ref. M00027'
PSB	power signal box
SB	signal box [not signalbox]
ST	suffix meaning 'saddle tank'
T&T	top and tailed
TMD	traction maintenance depot
TOC	train operating company (in full on first appearance in an article)
TPO	travelling post office
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America, as in 'US-built'
USA	United States of America
WCML	West Coast main line
WiFi	wireless internet access
WT	suffix meaning 'well tank'
WTT	working timetable