



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

ELX 35 - Winter 2026



CRA Autumn Meeting 2026

We are pleased to confirm that the CRA Autumn Meeting will be held on Saturday 14th November 2026. The venue is the Station Hotel, Carlisle, CA1 1QY, located conveniently next to Carlisle railway station entrance

As can be seen below, there is a full and interesting programme. As ever, non-members are most welcome to join us. The cost for the whole day is £30.00, including tea/coffee on arrival, lunch and mid-afternoon. For those not wishing to take lunch, the cost is £11.00.

Meeting Programme

- 10:00 Assemble – Tea & Coffee available.
- 10:30 Philip Tuer, Chairman CRA, Welcome & Introduction
- 10:40 Jim Summers: Glasgow Central – “dark doings at low level”
- 12:00 End of morning session
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:00 “An Afternoon of Derek Cross Photos” by his son David
- 15:00 Tea & Coffee.
- 15:15 Ian Watson: “Opening of the Newcastle – Carlisle Line 1836-37”
- 16:15 Meeting Close

To book your place, please contact Ian on 07967 908201 or email him at: meetings@cumbrianrailways.org.uk



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



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 50th Anniversary Field Trip to Threlkeld Quarry

As part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations, a field trip was organised on Saturday 26th September. The venue was the Threlkeld Quarry and Mining Museum near Keswick where quarrying first started in the 1870's, finally finishing in 1982.

Despite a rather damp start to the morning, the visit got underway with our party of fifteen taking a half mile ride behind Bagnall 0-4-0 steam locomotive, “Sir Tom”, hauling a rake of coaches up to the Threlkeld Quarry face.

“Sir Tom” was originally built in 1926 and came to Threlkeld in 2001, after lying idle for 30 years, and has been completely restored. The group were then given a talk on the history of the quarry and the types of granite and their uses, before making the return journey behind “Sir Tom”. Tours of the works and engine shed were followed by an opportunity to visit the fascinating museum and look at the large number of Vintage Excavator Trust vehicles and excavators (around 84!) that are displayed on the site – most of which are in operational condition! Following a picnic lunch, we were taken on a three-hour walk to the other adjacent quarries in the area - following the route of the old tramways that served them and moved the granite down to the main line railway at Threlkeld on the Cockermouth - Keswick - Penrith Line.

All in all a successful and enjoyable day was had by all in what turned out to be sunny weather with fine views of Blencathra and Skiddaw! Our sincere thanks to Dickon, Ian and their team for hosting us and guiding our visit

The photograph of the group at the quarry with Sir Tom and alongside examining the rails (highlighted) of the old tramway still in situ by Graham Worsnop.



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

New location sign at Quintinshill



Network Rail has erected a new lineside sign (above) to denote the location of Quintinshill, site of Britain's worst railway accident on 22nd May 1915 when over 200 people died.

Before (below) and after images by Network Rail.



Steamale

New speakers are required. Would you like to come and talk to us? Please contact Philip on 01228-522118 if you would like to talk or just attend or just for information.

Transport related slide show and talk.

Third Tuesday in the month, September to May.

New venue : Spencer Street Social Club. CA1 1BA, Carlisle, 19.30 - 22.00.

Cost £5.00 (to include sandwiches).

Model Railway Exhibitions

Workshopwise – Saturday 24 October – Stannington, Morpeth NE61 6EL

Workington MRE – Saturday 21st November – The Railway Club, 5 Falcon Street CA14 2XD (adjacent to the Railway Station). One day only, this year.

Come and see us on the CRA stand. It's good to talk!

Carlisle Citadel new train wash facility



Late on the 11th July, a new train wash facility came into use at Citadel Station, together with an on-platform personnel shower as a torrential rain shower hit the station and centre of Carlisle.. The platforms were described as 'wet' on the station information systems!.

Photographs by Les Gilpin.



Final Mail 'Click' Information board unveiled at Penrith

To commemorate the last operational mail click in the country, on the main line, Penrith Town Council arranged a new plaque as near as possible to where the Click was sited - fixed to the fence on a footpath leading from Scotland Rd, going under the West Coast Main Line, to Thacka nature reserve.

The "Click" was a piece of lineside equipment where mail bags were collected and deposited automatically, without the postal train having to stop. The Mayor of Penrith along with two long retired postmen, both of whom attended the click until the last 'pick up' on Friday 1st October 1971, performed the unveiling on the 12th August. The last 'drop off' of a bag at the Click was in the early hours Monday 4th Oct. 1971.

The information and photos on the plaque were provided by the CRA and Penrith Post Office Museum.

Photograph by Network Rail



Borders Railway Feasibility Study.

Scottish Borders Council have announced the selection of the engineering and transport planning consultancy WSP to undertake two major packages of work as part of this overall feasibility study. The larger of the two is the Strategic Outline Business Case, (SOBC). This gathers a large amount of

factual evidence which is then analysed in order to answer the following questions in a logical and sequential manner:-

- What social, economic and environmental problems exist in the study area, (ie the central Scottish Borders to Carlisle)?
- Which of these problems are due to poor transport connectivity?
- How might these problems be overcome?
- Of the many possible solutions, which would be the most practical, effective and would offer the best value for money?

The second package of work is to develop an economic development strategy for the study area, which will provide a context against which the potential transport solutions can be judged.

SBC estimate that this phase of the study will take up to 18 months to complete.

It is important to note that the study is a multi-modal transport appraisal, which will consider road as well as rail transport issues. The study must comply with official guidance from the Scottish and UK Governments on how transport appraisal work should be conducted and UK Treasury guidance on the development of proposals for major public investment.

21st and 100th Birthday Celebrations at Ravenglass



To mark the 21st Anniversary of the diesel hydraulic locomotive 'Douglas Ferreira' and the 100th Anniversary of the Muir-Hill Petrol/TVO mechanical locomotive 'Quarryman' entering service at Ravenglass, speeches were made, toasts offered and birthday cake were enjoyed on the 18th July 2026.

Flask Wagons incoming

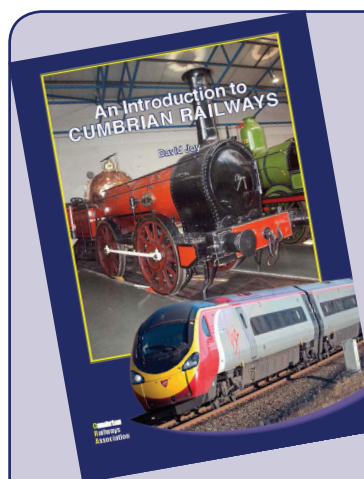
The **BR 'Flatrol MJ'/XKB atomic flask wagons in OO gauge**, produced by Revolution Trains for Model Rail, are very nearly here. They are expected to be available to pre-order shortly from <https://www.modelrailoffers.co.uk/>



Book Focus

An Introduction to Cumbrian Railways

by David Joy



Authored by David Joy, the well-known railway historian and writer, the book is aimed at those who want to learn more about the railways in the county. With its comprehensive coverage of the history

of Cumbrian railways, it will also be of interest to the more knowledgeable student of our local railways.

Each line is covered, from the main trunk lines running through the County to the smaller railways that went to make up the network of lines serving local communities and businesses. The Industrial lines that served the County receive comprehensive coverage.

Basic information on the building of the railways and their subsequent development is included and each section is profusely illustrated by photographs and detailed maps.

The book is topped off with a detailed bibliography for those that want to learn more.

This book is priced at £9.95, £4.00 postage per order.

Details of other books published by the Association can be found on our website:
<https://www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk>

Book Production News

It's good to see the excellent reception we've had for our latest books – *Kingmoor* and *Of Iron and Steel* – plus the reprint of *Kendal Tommy*. If you haven't got a copy yet you can get them from the CRA website or from the CRA stand at the various exhibitions mentioned elsewhere in this electronic Lakes Express. Don't forget to recommend these or any other CRA titles to your friends. Although a few months away, Christmas will be upon us before you know it and they'd make ideal presents!

We are not resting on our laurels and work is continuing on a number of future titles. The next Carlisle 'shed' book will be Canal. Although not the biggest of Carlisle's sheds by any means, it was certainly a place that attracted enthusiasts in the know for its ex-LNER locos, some of which spent most if not their entire lives there. No date yet for publication as we aim for our usual high quality. Other titles in progress are our history of the cross-border railways from Cumbria and a history of Keswick and its Railways. Both will be a little further away but when the Canal book is ready for the presses, these others can be finalised. The other Carlisle 'shed' books, on Upperby and on those sheds of the other railways into Carlisle are not forgotten and will be advanced as other titles hit the shelves.

Traffic and Challenges of preservation at Alston



The image above shows Battery Electric Locomotive "Newcastle" in use on the South Tynedale Railway – very ecological, but also a great way of minimising fire risk in the recent heat waves.

It is not often appreciated, that one challenge facing preserved railways, and possibly one of the most costly, is that of maintaining the infrastructure formation. Not just the trackbed, but also the associated structures such as bridges and viaducts. The Thornhope Burn viaduct between Slaggyford and Alston (see image below) is a multi-arch viaduct of significant height, and maintenance would need either major scaffolding or specialist rope workers, neither of which would be cheap!



RCTS Furness, Lakes & Lune Branch Programme 2026-27

Wednesday 4th November 2026: **Overhead Line History, Construction & Design** by Paul Batty

Wednesday 2nd December 2026: **AGM & Bolton Shed – Railway Life in a Lancashire Mill Town** by Prof. Paul Salvesson

Wednesday 6th January 2027: **Road to the Isles – The Story of the West Highland Railway** by David Bousfield

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

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Railways: 200 Years that Transformed Britain

The Regional Heritage Centre at Lancaster University and the Midland Railway Society Present

RAILWAYS

200 Years that Transformed Britain



Discover how the railway transformed population, society, literature, law and everyday life in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain.

21 November 2026

09.00-17.00

Lancaster University Management School
Lecture Theatre 1 and Online



Book now: scan the QR code or visit lancaster.ac.uk/regional-heritage-centre/events/



To mark the bicentenary of the birth of the railway in 1825, and the 150th anniversary of the Midland Railway's new main line from London to Scotland via the Settle and Carlisle, the Regional Heritage Centre at Lancaster University and the Midland Railway Society are co-hosting a public conference on **Saturday, 21 November 2026 at Lancaster University, 9:00 -17.00.**

Bringing together leading historians, scholars and researchers, the conference will explore the transformative impact of the railway on 19th and 20th century Britain. Moving beyond industrial and transport history, the programme will examine how the railway reshaped population, society, culture, law and everyday experience. In addition to four key speakers, the conference will showcase innovative new research by Lancaster postgraduates in a poster session, and a follow-up programme of talks on the history of the Midland Railway is in preparation.

Tickets for in person and online attendance will be available via a link from the Lancaster Regional Heritage Centre and Midland Railway Society websites. <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/regional-heritage-centre/> and <https://midlandrailwaysociety.org.uk/> Online attendance will be at a reduced rate.

The main speakers and topics are:

Prof Ian Gregory: 'Railways and Population Change in England & Wales, 1851-1911: A Digital Analysis'

Prof Michael Greaney: 'Nobody's Fault': Railway Accidents in Victorian Fiction

Prof James Taylor: 'The Railway King on Trial: George Hudson and the Limits of Criminal Law in Victorian Britain'

Dr Michael Brown & Prof Joanne Begiato: Railway hands: moving through modernity in Britain 1850-1960'