

Reinstating a trans-Pennine route

At a Glance

2014

The campaign to reopen the Skipton-Colne railway line: Update



The Reshaping of a British Railway:
New report says benefits of Skipton to Colne line could be up to 6.5 times greater than costs

Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership
CONNECTING CITIES AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NORTH



www.selrap.org.uk

Patrons: George Adam, Richard Bannister, Gordon Prentice, Lord Richard Faulkner, Lord Tony Greaves, Rt Rev Nicholas Reade. MPs Gordon Birtwistle, Nigel Evans, Anne McIntosh, Andrew Stephenson, Julian Smith. MEPs Chris Davies, Jacqueline Foster, Timothy Kirkhope, Brian Simpson, Rebecca Taylor

At a Glance 2014: Update

..... an outline of the rationale behind the campaign for the reopening of the former rail line linking Skipton, North Yorkshire, with Colne, Lancashire and progress towards that aim.



FRONT COVER

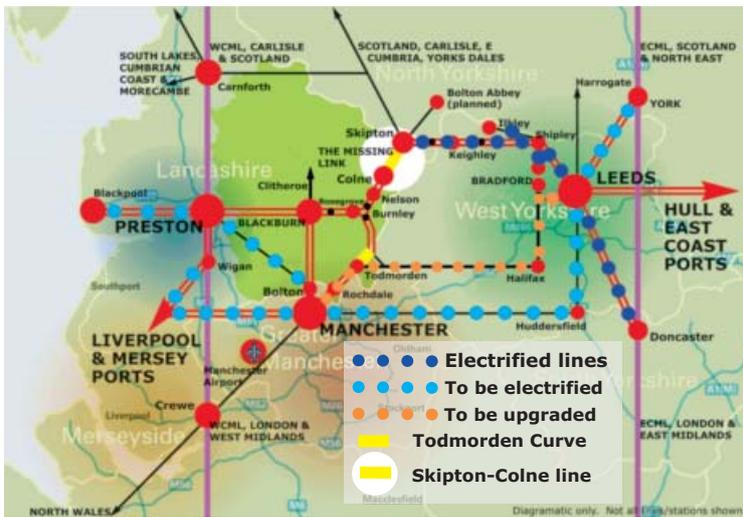
An open and shut case*

SELRAP's Chairman Derek Jennings holds the latest report by [consultants] ARUP. The one that states that the benefits of reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line could be up to 6.5 times the costs of doing so. And that long distance, inter-regional services & freight could increase that figure still further.

Meanwhile, clearly displaying Skipton as its destination, a train is pictured [courtesy of a driver with an eye on the future] at Colne station.

*Defined as: **Immediately obvious upon consideration; easily decided**

Reinstatement of the Skipton to Colne rail line will complete a new trans-Pennine route for passenger and freight services linking Hull and Leeds with Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. It will further foster economic ties between the communities of Yorkshire & Humber, Leeds, Bradford, the Aire Valley and those of East Lancashire, Manchester, Preston, Liverpool and the Mersey ports.



Upgrades and electrification all around. Yet, until the link to the [already-electrified] Airedale line via Skipton and Colne is reopened, Pennine Lancashire's rail links to the economic drivers of North & West Yorkshire, Leeds and beyond will remain stuck in the slow lane.

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Did you see:
SELRAP featured on national BBC Breakfast programme; Monday 31st March re Network Rail's Control Period 5 [2014-9] funding announcement.

If there are issues you wish to raise, or draw to the attention of the Executive Committee, please make use of the contact details above.

The line between Skipton and Colne was opened by the Leeds and Bradford Extension Railway on the 2nd October 1848. In February 1849 it made an end-on junction with the East Lancashire Railway in Colne, thus completing a route linking Liverpool, Manchester and Preston with Leeds, Bradford and Hull.



The Reshaping of British Railways [Beeching] Report of 1963 reveals that, at the time, the line between Burnley and Earby [via Colne] carried between 5 & 10,000 passengers per week. And that between Earby and Skipton it carried between 10 & 50,000 passengers per week. None of the double track route was listed for closure in the Beeching report.

A report published by the Ministry of Transport British Railways Board in 1967 cited the Burnley to Colne & Skipton [and Leeds] route as part of the network selected for further development. Notwithstanding, the eleven and a half mile section between Skipton and Colne failed to gain subsidy under the Transport Act of 1968, and was closed in 1970.



Reduced to single track and increasingly run down for years, under the protective umbrella of the East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, the profile of the remaining 7 mile Colne branch has recently been raised and its infrastructure upgraded. Pictured left, Nelson's £5



million Bus/Rail Transport Interchange is the jewel in the crown. But the trains that serve this remarkable facility remain seriously basic, are slow, infrequent, unreliable and often cancelled at short notice. And the line terminates at the buffers just 2 miles away in [left] Colne.



Thanks to the monumental efforts of Burnley Borough and Lancashire County Councils the Todmorden Curve (see map) is to reopen in 2014 facilitating a 45 minute service from Burnley to Manchester. And, via interchange facilities at Rose Grove station, the potential for complementing services on the Colne branch.

But the 35 mile journey from Colne to Leeds will remain at 2 hrs 50 minutes. Until the line to Skipton is reopened when it will drop to less than an hour. And Skipton to Manchester in under an hour and a half.

Less than a dozen miles away from the dysfunctional Colne branch is the Airedale line. Once part of the same through route, in transport terms they are currently light years apart. With just 425,000 passengers choosing to use the former whilst over 7 million opt for the latter.



Regarded by many as a rough barometer of economic activity, the imbalance in connectivity is reflected within the disparity in property prices: the average for Skipton being £210,000 and that for Colne: £110,000.

SELRAP campaigns for reinstatement of the Skipton-Colne line as part of a new through route, and ensuring that all parts of it are fit for the purpose of doing what it says on the box:

Supporting, stimulating & sustaining business & economic growth and regeneration, thus creating new jobs whilst improving connectivity & social mobility and encouraging non-car tourism.



Skipton & Airedale: fast, frequent, comfortable and reliable electric train services from [left*] Skipton to Leeds and Bradford. 75% of commuter traffic in Airedale travels by train. The Airedale line is the most heavily used commuter route outside the South East of England.



There are also services & connections to the East Coast Main Line for London, Edinburgh and intermediate stations. And to Lancaster, the Yorkshire Dales, Cumbria, Carlisle, Glasgow & Western Scotland. The result is a rail line used not only by commuters, but shoppers, students, tourists, cinema and theatre goers et al. Then there's the bit about [below] regular heavy freight



In short a railway that is part of the nuts and bolts of society. Yet less than a dozen miles away, and serving a similar [180,000] population to Airedale, the Colne branch line is the transport of choice for just 1% of commuters. Until it is reconnected as part of a joined up railway

*To the right of this shot is the SELRAP sponsored special train of April 1st 2007 just arrived from Colne via a 50 mile route taking 2 1/2 hours.

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT

..... the gulf between rail services that are quite simply not fit for purpose whilst less than a dozen miles away are those that do exactly what it says on the box outlined on the previous page.

BACK IN 1848

..... profit was all that promoters and investors had in mind for the Skipton-Colne rail line. And a joined up route linking major manufacturing towns, cities [and ports] on either side of the Pennines would make profit as factory owners and others scrambled to take advantage of the new facility.

Business, industry and transport infrastructure has undergone a spot of realignment since those days of certainty as planners and politicians alike talk not of profit per se but of environmental awareness, economic growth, job creation, social mobility and the like. In Planner-speak: business case.

Then there's the bit about history that has a habit of rearing up in our faces. As the roads that were to fulfill all of the nation's transport needs fall victim to their own success and traffic congestion has to be factored into delivery and commuting time alike.

Which might explain the growth in rail passenger and freight figures year on year. An all time high 1.6 billion rail journeys were made last year. And Network Rail forecasts that total freight demand will grow by up to 140% by 2030. Adding up to increasing demands for capacity on a network half the size it was at its zenith.

Indeed, at a recent meeting, Northern Rail [TOC] described proposals to reopen the Skipton-Colne line as "intuitive" Yet, despite all the superlatives ("**no brainer**" **et al** **Ed.**) outlining the rationale behind SELRAP's campaign, there is evidence of an

OPEN AND SHUT CASE

..... of bias against rail projects. The cumulative cost of road congestion and traffic accidents racks up to an eye watering loss to the economy of £50 billion per year. That's before our "free" roads are cleaned, gritted, cleared of snow, repaired and upgraded. But no matter 'cos with no requirement for business cases to be developed, all of this expenditure is written off as infrastructure investment.

Meanwhile, the £4 billion spend on rail continues to be described as subsidy. Indeed, the rule book says that before investing in a rail project there has to be proof that it will make a *profit. OK, it's dressed up in new clothes and packaged as a business case. But we are where we are. And for business case read

STUDIES:

Carried out in 2003, 2007, 2010 and 2011, [respectively] by consultants Steer Davies Gleave, JMP, JRC [and SELRAP], in-depth studies combined to establish that:

- The Skipton-Colne line could serve both local and longer distance movements within the wider corridor of the route
- Reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line is technically feasible
- There is a strong business case [with a **BCR of up to 2.43] for reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line
- **The way forward is via a Project Development Group as outlined within the JRC report made up of national organisations, railway infrastructure owners & operators, crucial regional stakeholders, local and regional government bodies and SELRAP**
- There are a number of potential funding options [inc. private] for reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line

*Question: Can you bring to mind the last time you heard of a new road proposal that had been knocked back on the grounds that it wouldn't make a profit?

A GRIPPING TALE

With an early-stage case for and the feasibility of reopening the Skipton-Colne clearly established, there was common agreement that the next step simply had to be a more detailed study leading to **GRIP 3 level that will firm up the needs assessment, business case, engineering options and accurate costings for rebuilding the route without which nothing further can happen.

ACCORDINGLY

Armed with a phased remit for the GRIP 3 study prepared in partnership with Network Rail, in 2012 SELRAP sought to set up the Project Development Group as outlined in the JRC report of 2010.

ON OUR OWN

Lancashire and North Yorkshire Councils, in concert with the DfT, confirmed their corporate support, in principle, for reopening the Skipton-Colne line. But a meeting [with L & NYCCs and DfT] aimed at progressing GRIP 3 is best summed up by the [then] Rail Minister, Simon Burns. Who, famously said: "*I wish you well, but you are on your own*".

ARUP

Mindful of the Minister's challenge and cutting a long story [& massive fundraising exercise] short early in 2013 SELRAP commissioned ARUP a global firm of consulting engineers, designers, planners and project managers to carry out stages 1 and 2 of the 3 part study. Positive outcomes from both of those early stages mean that SELRAP now has its sights on that make or break full GRIP 3 .



Published in April 2013, the key messages of Stage1 are:

- Base costs estimated down: Single track rebuild £38 million. Double track rebuild: £72 million.
- A large number of changes have taken place since the previous business cases were developed, and these could have a significant impact on the current business case.

Published in February 2014, Stage 2 of the study considers how the re-opening of the Skipton-Colne line will provide local connections to nearby economic centres, and the strategic significance of the route for passenger services and freight. It also analyses the social need for the link, potential service patterns & engineering options. And includes a current economic appraisal of the scheme.

The key messages of Stage 2 are:

- There are key towns at each end of the route and smaller towns/villages along the route that could benefit from the increased connectivity [inc. with Leeds & Manchester] that the proposed scheme offers.
- 414,000 new passenger journeys (rising to 620,000 within 10 years of opening) would be made as a result of the reopening of the Skipton-Colne rail line with stations at Earby and West Craven Parkway [for Barnoldswick].
- Reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line would facilitate additional strategic journey opportunities.
- Reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line would offer new opportunities for freight movement.
- A single track scheme with a half hourly service between Leeds and Rose Grove [with interchange for Manchester] offers the most economically viable case.
- The **BCR for a single track scheme with median passenger demand is 1.52, and reaches 6.56 if demand for travel is 30% greater than that anticipated.
- Additional use of the line beyond local journeys, including long distance and inter-regional services could increase the BCR further. The use of the line for freight may be an additional benefit. There are also wider economic and social arguments for the new service.
- BCR calculations are based on passenger figures, some of which could prove to be conservative. They also take into account an optimism bias loading of 50%.

****See jargon buster overleaf**

WHAT DO THEY ALL MEAN

GRIP divides a project into eight distinct stages:

1. Output definition ✓ done
2. Feasibility ✓ done
3. Option selection Next step!
4. Single option development
5. Detailed design
6. Construction test and commission
7. Scheme hand back
8. Project close out

Network Rail has to ensure that all schemes are compatible and integrated with existing railway operations. And, Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) describes how Network Rail manages and controls projects that impact on the national rail network.

BCR:

Benefit Cost Ratio is calculated by dividing the quantifiable benefits [eg. traffic de-congestion & journey time savings] of the reopened Skipton-Colne line by the aggregate [less revenue] of the capital & ongoing costs of providing services on the new route. As a general rule, the higher the BCR, the more seriously a project will be taken by those who matter most.

OPTIMISM BIAS:

Is the percentage of loading that is applied to the estimated costs of new project proposals. GRIP 3 is the point where engineering options for reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line will be developed and accurately costed. The 50% loading built in to ARUP's calculations drop to 40% at GRIP 3. This drops still further as a single option and detailed designs emerge. As a consequence BCR is likely to *rise as projects develop.

- 198 MPs that's almost one third of the nation's [646] MPs have written to SELRAP to tell us that they want the the Skipton-Colne rail line reopened.
- 49 MEPs that's more than two thirds of the nation's MEPs want the Skipton-Colne line reopened
- More than 500 Councils within the wider corridor of the Skipton-Colne rail line have written to SELRAP to offer their support for reopening the route.
- More than 150 businesses and trade organisations nationwide have written to SELRAP to offer their support for reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line.

WISHLIST

Remember the excitement? Christmas morning and your first trainset. A basic oval, two carriages and a small locomotive. And if you promise to eat all your cabbage without complaining, and clean your own shoes then for your birthday you might get a set of points, a siding, and even a station building. Then you could save up for freight trucks and maybe after next Christmas, have enough track for a double oval and trains to run on each circuit.

THE REALITY

is not so far removed. For basic oval and two carriages, read the ARUP report. Which provides a sound basis for the future direction of SELRAP's campaign if we press all the right buttons.

For, whilst the BCR for a double track scenario drops through the floor at 0.41 that for a single track scheme with median passenger demand is a modest 1.52. But if demand for travel is 30% greater than that anticipated, it reaches 6.56. In other words, the quantifiable benefits of reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line could be up to 6.5 times all incurred costs.

Then factor in the following:

- Passenger footfall figures for recently reopened lines in Scotland & Wales exceed highest consultants' estimates by more than 50%
- Current analysis is a conservative estimate of commuter yield.
- Costs currently loaded with a 50% optimism bias.
- BCR could rise still further if Skipton-Colne route was used for long distance, inter-regional and freight services.

*Although there is also an outside chance that it could fall!

SELRAP would like to thank the following organisations and individuals whose generous financial support has made the ARUP studies possible:

- Lush Cosmetics
- Alliance Rail
- Reedley Hallows Parish Council
- Friends of Nelson & Brierfield Stations
- Trinity Baptist Church, Colne
- Support the East Lancashire Line Association
- Unite the Union
- SELRAP Membership fees
- Donations from individual members of SELRAP

AND, TO FOLLOW:

Indicating, as it does, that the quantifiable benefits resulting from the reopening of the Skipton-Colne line could exceed overall costs by a substantial margin, the latest report makes a tantalising starter.

As for the main course: in anyone's language, a return of up to £6.56 for every £1 spent has to be a good investment.

But only in the event of a positive outcome from that crucial GRIP 3 study will potential investors be it via public funding stream or private put their heads above the parapet, so to speak.

Plainly, GRIP 3 will come with no guarantee that the Skipton-Colne route will reopen. We can, however, guarantee that without it the line will remain closed.

SO WHAT NEXT?

In three words: Getting a GRIP! That said, with the best will in the world, securing, funding and managing a GRIP 3 study will need the coordinated input of professional individuals, bodies and organisations.

"If you only do what you've always done

You'll only get what you've always had"

Makes you think: It should!

Accordingly, Lancashire County Council has begun the process of contacting appropriate partners to begin to establish the formation of a Project Development Group to oversee the Skipton-Colne project. And, following broad-based discussion, the County is to formally invite SELRAP to act in a consultative and advisory capacity to the group that, when finally formatted, will work to reopen the Skipton-Colne line, as recommended by the JRC report in 2010.*

GRIP 3 studies are seriously costly, and SELRAP is advised of an alternative incremental approach. Consequently, a decision on which route to follow re achieving a full GRIP 3 study will feature high on the fledgling project development group's to do list.

To go for a full GRIP 3 study from the outset or via the [GRIP compliant] incremental route. That is an early decision the Project Development Group will have to make. Either option will cost. Heaps! Lancashire County and Pendle Borough Councils have jointly committed a minimum of £15,000 towards this crucial next stage study. SELRAP seeks to match fund that figure to enable us to play a full part in negotiations as they take place.

Peter Nowland has reminded the writer that members of SELRAP and others responded so well to last year enabling Stages 1 & 2 of the study to be commissioned.

Accordingly, if you, or an organisation you are associated with, is in a position to make a contribution, please send to:

Peter Nowland, Treasurer, SELRAP, 3 Ivegat, Colne, BB8 9BN.
e mail: peterandedwina@googlemail.com Tel: 01282 871659
(cheques made payable to SELRAP).

Breathless? We are. The more so when we reflect on where we've come from. Who we've liaised with and met on the way. And where SELRAP is headed: studies et al.

And finally re progressing to that game changing GRIP 3: watch this space or help us fill it!

OPEN MEMBERS' MEETINGS:

- Mon. 12th May 2014 @ 7.00pm: New Road Community Centre, Earby.
- Mon 14th July 2014 @ 7.00pm: Herriots Hotel, Broughton Road, Skipton
- Mon. 8th September 2014 @ 7.00pm: St. Bartholomew's Church, Albert Road, Colne
- Mon. 10th November 2014 @ 7.00pm: New Road Community Centre, Earby.

*See page 3 for outline of Project Development Group as per JRC. To see full JRC report, use this link:
<http://www.selrap.org.uk/documents/JRCfinalreport.pdf>

AHEAD OF US

A peek at the future: This is what reopening a railway looks like.



Newtongrange, Borders Region, Scotland. 35 miles of the former Waverley route linking Edinburgh with Carlise is being rebuilt to promote economic growth. Starting in 2015 a half hourly service will link Edinburgh with Tweedbank, near Galashiels. Controversially closed in 1969 just a year before the Skipton-Colne line was culled, coincidentally, both lines were opened as through routes in 1849.

Photo: Peter Delaney.

Care to help to make sure the Skipton-Colne line reopens too

Then, join SELRAP by filling in the membership form overleaf and come along to the open meetings advertised in this publication.

If you are already a SERAP member and/or reader of *At a Glance*, maybe you'd care to take advantage of the heavily discounted rate on offer below.

Railfuture



- ■ Special offer to SELRAP members and readers of *At a Glance* 2014: As you are already a supporter of the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership, Railfuture would like to welcome you as a Railfuture Supporter, at a bargain rate of £9 a year.
- ■ Railfuture Members and Supporters receive the magazine *Railwatch* free four times a year and the chance to join local branches and take part in local and national events. You can choose to be a Member or a Supporter, but only Members can vote in Railfuture elections.
- ■ We all need a good, modern rail network cheap enough for everyone to use. Railfuture has a proud history of fighting for new and reopened lines and stations, high speed rail and electrification, and has campaigned against high fares and overcrowding.
- ■ Railfuture is not affiliated to any political party but lobbies to ensure rail is promoted and receives its fair share of investment.

Yes I want to join railfuture

- Railfuture Membership: £18 (special discount)
- Family Membership £18 (+£2 per extra person)
- Unwaged Membership: £14
- Railfuture Supporter (AaG 2014): £9

Join online at www.railfuture.org.uk/join Or send a cheque payable to Railfuture to Railfuture, 6 Carral Close, Brant Road, Lincoln LN5 9BD

NOTICE FOR MEMBERS

Following notification of our recent Annual General Meeting, a number of members with an e mail address asked to be kept informed by post.

Recently announced increases in postal charges mean that, regrettably, SELRAP will have no option but to make greater use of e mail for communicating with members.

Accordingly, in future all members with an e mail address will receive most [but not necessarily all] publications and notices electronically. Those NOT on e mail will continue to get information by post.

We thank you for your understanding, and trust that this decision will not inconvenience members, and ask that you ensure that SELRAP always has your current e mail address.

HELP REQUIRED

You can help progress this far reaching scheme still further by lobbying your Councillor[s] and MP and/or rail industry policy & decision makers. But don't stop there. Spread the message still further. If you represent the media, then ask what [more] your publication can do to move minds towards a rail reopening that has been eloquently described as a no brainer.

You might also care to join SELRAP by filling in the form below:



S E L R A P

MEMBERSHIP FORM Ref: AaG 2014

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Tel:.....

Mobile:.....

e mail:.....

I wish to become a member of SELRAP and enclose my Annual Membership Fee of £8.00 [Concessions: £5], Groups £15, Life £60 and/or make a donation by **Cheque** payable to **SELRAP**; or by filling out the **Standing Order** below:

To: Bank/Building Society,

Sort Code:

Full Address:

.....

.....

Account Name:

.....

Account No:

Pay To: Yorkshire Bank plc,
Market Street, Colne BB8 0HT
Sort Code: 05 - 03 - 83
SELRAP Account No: 34689554

The Sum of:

On the same date each year, dated:

.....

Signature:

.....

Please return to SELRAP Membership Secretary:

Derek Jennings, 3 Hamilton Rd, Carr Hall, Barrowford, Lancs BB9 6DE

e mail: derek.jennings01@gmail.com

Tel: 01282 690411

SELRAP's only source of regular income is via membership fees of just £8.00 per year. Supporters will appreciate that full colour printing and distribution costs for *At a Glance* are not inconsiderable. You could help further by adding a donation to your membership fee!