



## The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Community Rail Partnership

### PRESS RELEASE

August 2017

#### Haltwhistle opens historic station for Heritage Open Days

For the first time ever, the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership will be participating in Heritage Open Days, over two days Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

This will be at Haltwhistle station on the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line, Britain's first cross country railway, which runs parallel to Hadrian's Wall. Not only is this a first for us, but we shall be opening the 1901 Haltwhistle Grade II listed signal box. This is one of the BBC's top ten <sup>1</sup> signal boxes. Access is being granted courtesy of Network Rail and Northern.

The Partnership has worked throughout the length of the line for over 15 years. In 2016, the Partnership took the lease of the 1855 Haltwhistle Station Booking Hall, and refurbished the building as our education base room. This building will be open for these two days. A key feature is its booking office wooden wall with all the furnishings for Edmondson ticket issue. These were the classic railway tickets which were invented on this line in the 1830's. The original booking office clock was restored in 2017 by Diana Bell of Mr George's Time Museum in Haltwhistle.<sup>2</sup>

Haltwhistle station opened in 1838 and became a four way country junction. The line south to Alston penetrated the Pennines and, in part, has become the South Tynedale Railway. As a country junction, Haltwhistle has a remarkable set of railway structures. This has been recognised in the listing process and with the involvement of the Railway Heritage Trust, who have contributed to the restoration of first the Signal Box and now the Booking Hall. Other significant structures include the water tower and crane, station master's house, waiting rooms and the magnificent Alston Arches viaduct across the Tyne.

Visitors over the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September will be able to gain access inside the historic Signal box. Guided walks to the viaduct will start in the Booking Hall where there will also be displays, a craft fair and light refreshments. Reproduction Edmondson tickets will also be available for a small donation. Partners in the railway industry are assisting, and Virgin Trains East Coast will bring their 'Azuma' roadshow vehicle. Our partners Haltwhistle Community Partnership, who own the water tower, also hope to be able to welcome visitors to that structure too.

Trains run hourly along this section of line [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk). The station is one of the terminals for the AD122 bus [www.gonortheast.co.uk/ad122/](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk/ad122/) to Hadrian's Wall and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19464080>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hexham-courant.co.uk/news/haltwhistle/New-lease-of-life-for-station-clock-29b9a21d-7f95-41dd-9591-57ca650ed406-ds>

this will take you to The Sill, Northumberland National Park's new National Landscape Discovery Centre [www.thesill.org.uk/](http://www.thesill.org.uk/) .

The town centre is a short walk from the station. Haltwhistle boasts the greatest number of medieval bastles on the English border, a 13th century church with Roman stonework, and to cool off, the visitor could take a plunge in Haltwhistle's open air swimming pool.

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#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership is a not for profit limited company and part of The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP).

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership was designated by The Department of Transport as a Community Rail line in 2014.

Relevant urls are:

TVCRP [www.tvcrp.org.uk](http://www.tvcrp.org.uk)

Fiona Forsythe [fiona@tvcrp.org.uk](mailto:fiona@tvcrp.org.uk) or 07810 885 223

Urls for places mentioned in text:

Heritage Open Days <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>

Mr George's Time Museum <http://timeforgeorge.co.uk/>

13<sup>th</sup> Century Church, Holy Cross, Haltwhistle <http://www.holycrosschurchhaltwhistle.co.uk/>

Outdoor pool <http://www.haltwhistleleisure.co.uk/Swimming.html>

Bastles <http://www.visithaltwhistle.com/turbulent-past.html>

Walks around Haltwhistle <http://haltwhistle.org/index.php/miscellaneous-pages/28-walks>