

December 2019 Calder Valley timetable:

HADRAG comments, based on provisional information online

(source: Real Time Trains, late August 2019)

Notes: (A) Links will update if the timetable as shown online is changed or improved!

(B) This is not a comprehensive analysis but gives examples of some main issues which need to be addressed; other issues will undoubtedly be found.

1 Main clockface patterns

1.1 Leeds departures towards Halifax/Hebden Bridge (the good news)

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/LDS/to/HFX/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wtt>

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/LDS/to/HBD/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wtt>

Even 15 min interval LDS-HFX – **big improvement:**

Minutes past hour from Leeds	Minutes past hour at HFX	Minutes past hour at HBD	Origin-destination	
12	44	54	Leeds-Halifax-Manchester Vic	
	50		Bradford-Hud shuttle	
17	<i>via BGH</i>	15	Leeds-Brighouse-MCV-Wigan	Calls SOW, MYT
27	03		Hull-Halifax	
42	17	32	Leeds-Halifax-MCV-Chester	Calls LMR, SOW, MYT
57	27-29	38-40	York-Halifax-Blackpool	

Reasonable spacing LDS-Hebden Bridge (12, 17, 42, 57) – looks better than present pattern (18, 20, 38, 51)

1.2 Hebden Bridge/Halifax towards Leeds departures

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/HFX/to/BDI/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wtt>

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/HBD/to/LDS/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wtt>

Minutes past hour from HBD	Minutes past hour from HFX	Origin-destination	
50	05-06	Chester-Leeds	Calls MYT, SOW, LMR
	17	Halifax-Hull	
14	<i>via BGH</i>	Wigan-MCV-Brighouse-Leeds	Calls MYT, SOW
27-32	37-42	MCV-Leeds	
42	53	Blackpool-York	
	57	Huddersfield-Bradford shuttle	

Still some intervals exceeding 20min (up to 25 min) but much better than May 2019 timetable.

In some hours, some trains (actually the “fasts” xx55 dep MCV, HFX xx37-42) from Manchester appear to have padding in timetable Todmorden-Sowerby Bridge, defeating the object of omitting stops: could this be to allow for freight paths? Not really satisfactory. Part of problem is timing of stoppers MCV-Rochdale coming from other NW destinations. **Points to consider:**

- Timing of MCV-Rochdale stoppers which constrain through service timetable to Todmorden and beyond. (see also next paragraph).
- Is it reasonable that fast MCV-CV-Leeds service has to be slowed because of freight train in front? Could not freights run at night?
- Need for additional hourly service (as promised by franchise TSR3) Manchester-Bradford(-Leeds) to improve pattern for Halifax and intermediate CV stations.

1.3 Calder Valley-Rochdale-Manchester timing issues

(a) Leeds-Manchester/Chester services in the present timetable are often delayed when they catch up with only slightly late-running locals from Rochdale usually between Castleton and Mills Hill. This does not appear to be improved in the December 2019 timetable.

- Would it be better if the Rochdale-Manchester locals, instead of running through to other NW destinations operated as a “shuttle” using the bay platforms at Manchester? Could this make it easier to time them so that don’t interfere with the CV services?
- Can more effort be made to ensure trains starting in the bay platform (P4) at Rochdale leave promptly? (Is there a problem with people arriving late for trains from this relatively remote platform causing delays to departure?)

(b) Some of the “fast” Leeds-CV-Manchester trains appear to have a large amount of slack in the timetable from December 2019. Again this defeats the object of omitting stops at places like Sowerby Bridge. Examples:

- 1J07 0812 Lds-McV (<https://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/train/Y57404/2019/12/17/advanced>) which has 12½min pathing allowance between Hebden Bridge and Man Vic, giving journey of almost 1 hour Halifax-Manchester (should be about 40 minutes) and
- 1J13 1112 Lds-McV (<https://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/train/Y57407/2019/12/17/advanced>) – 10 min pathing allowance similar to above.
- 1J05 0712 Lds-McV (<https://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/train/Y57403/2019/12/17/advanced>) – 11 minutes dwell time in Bradford station. *Possibly other similar examples.*

2 Sowerby Bridge (SOW) and Mytholmroyd (MYT) issues

Sowerby Bridge station serves a potential catchment population equal to that served by Todmorden and Hebden Bridge combined but has a significantly poorer service, which appears to be significantly worsened in Dec’19. ***On this basis we believe all services that stop at TOD and HBD should also stop at SOW.*** Sadly, the trend appears to be in the opposite direction.

Mytholmroyd serves a significant village and surrounding area, and is soon to get a large new station car park. It has potential to relieve pressure on Hebden Bridge. In general MYT is served by the same trains that stop at SOW, so that comments below on the Dec’19 timetable apply to both stations.

Dec’19 departure board, SOW:

Weekdays: <http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/SOW/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>
 Sundays: <http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/SOW/2019/12/22/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>

2.1 SOW and MYT service reductions 33% to 50%

(a) Loss of York-Preston-Blackpool service weekdays.

Dec 2019 TT shows ALL weekday York ↔ Blackpools non-stop Halifax-Hebden Bridge. This is a withdrawal of a benefit given last year and is a massive disappointment, representing a 33% reduction in trains calling at SOW and MYT in the standard hourly pattern.

Destinations of trains from Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd	Trains per hour from SOW & MYT. May’18-Dec’19	Trains per hour from SOW & MYT. from Dec’19
Leeds	3	2
Bradford/Halifax	2	1
York and Blackpool	1	0
Manchester	2	2

Passengers will be inconvenienced by this, including East Lancs-Sowerby Bridge commuters as well as people from SOW and MYT travelling to York, East Lancs, Preston and Blackpool. Connections at Hebden Bridge are not an adequate substitute.

We have been told quite recently that the stops at SOW and MYT were only introduced to provide additional train services during road blockages associated with flood prevention work. If this was the case it was certainly not made clear when the stops were introduced.

We ask:

- ***That the stops at MYT and SOW by Blackpool-York services be reinserted in the December timetable.***
- We believe this could be done by taking up slack in the timetable as well as utilising the improved performance of the new rolling stock. It is noted, for example, that in the westbound direction these trains in the Dec'19 timetable typically have about 4-5 minutes of "padding" in schedules between Hebden Bridge and Burnley (pathing allowance + dwell time in Burnley Manchester Road station). See also Appendix for what we hope may be possible schedules in both directions with the stops restored.

(b) Loss of Manchester service Sundays – Dec'2019 TT on Sundays shows all Blackpool trains calling at SOW and MYT, but all Manchester trains running non-stop HFX-Hebden Bg.

- This means there will be no service SOW/MYT-Manchester on Sundays...
- ...and a 50% cut in standard hour frequency.
- Connections appear to involve a lengthy waiting time at Hebden Bridge, sometimes nearly half-an-hour westbound.
- First trains from Sowerby Bridge on Sundays are the 0951 to York and the 1033 to Blackpool; earlier trains run through non-stop.

Effectively rail travel from SOW and MYT to Manchester will be deterred on Sundays.

- ***We cannot believe that this is the intention...***
- ***and we ask that on Sundays all trains call at SOW and MYT.***

2.2 Morning peak cuts and gaps

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/SOW/to/LDS/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>

Times of trains from Sowerby Bridge arriving Leeds before 0900, Mondays-Fridays	May 2019 timetable: 8 trains	December 2019 timetable 5 trains
	0553	0551
	0638	
	0652	
	0700	0712
	0717	0719
	0724 (via Dew)	0724 (via Dew)
	0753	
	0758	0758

Note in proposed timetable gap of 81 minutes, then 3 trains in 12 minutes, then 34-minute gap. Again:

- ***We cannot believe that this is the intention...***
- ***and we ask that the missing stops in the Dec'2019 timetable at SOW and MYT be reinstated.***

2.3 Late evening gap of more than 2 hours (2157-0004) in service from Manchester back to MYT and SOW

This first became an issue in May 2018. HADRAG asked about it before that timetable change and was given hope that it might be changed. But this has not been done and the gap remains in the Dec'2019 plan.

<http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/SOW/from/MCV/to/LDS/2019/12/16/2100-0100?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>

On the face of it this should be easily solved since during the 2-hour gap, 2 other trains run non-stop Hebden Bridge to Halifax. It is very difficult for the ordinary passenger to understand why these two trains can not stop, and a time of night when it is surely more important to provide a service to get people home than to meet journey time targets.

3 Reconfigured services Halifax-Hull and Brighouse Line + Low Moor

- (a) Positive development **Halifax-Hull hourly service** (weekdays) restores cross-Leeds connectivity (hourly).
- (b) Hud-Brighouse-Halifax-Bradford-Leeds hourly replaced by **Huddersfield-Bradford shuttle**. We can see advantages to this. (But see also issues below).

Above changes increase Halifax-Bradford to 5 trains/hr whilst maintaining Halifax-Leeds 4/hr. Sunday service similar to present pattern.

Dec'19 departure boards, BGH:

Weekdays <http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/BGH/2019/12/16/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>

Sundays <http://www.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/advanced/BGH/2019/12/22/0200-0159?stp=WVS&show=all&order=wt>

3.1 Brighouse-Leeds. Hud-Brighs-Halifax-Bradford-Lds service replaced by Huddersfield-Bradford shuttle so Brighouse-Leeds becomes hourly instead of 2/hr (non-compliant with original Train Service Requirement). However, previous service was in effect only hourly because direct train via Dewsbury overtook or caught up with the one via Bradford. Connections are available at Halifax/Bradford though not really providing a useful additional Brighouse-Leeds service.

3.2 Bradford/Hfx/Bgh-Hud.

The shuttle restores a reasonable journey time on the Bradford-Huddersfield route.

3.3 Brighouse issues – early morning and late night

First trains from Brighouse, weekdays:

- 0632 to Leeds (via Dew) similar to present.
- 0645 to Bradford better than May 2019 (0704), but still half-hour later than May 2018.
 - *Could the 0617 from Halifax to Hull (first train) start back from Brighouse at about 0606 (or Huddersfield 0556).*
- 0555 to Manchester similar to present
- 0550 to Huddersfield slightly earlier than present, with possibility of connection for Manchester.

Last train arrivals at Brighouse:

- 2255 from Leeds (via Dew). Serious worsening of service; present last arrival from Leeds is 2357 via Bradford.
- 0003 from Bradford – but has poor connection off train from Leeds
 - *Could the last Hull-Halifax train (HFX 0005) be extended to Brighouse?*
- 2132 from Manchester similar to present

3.4 UCV-Hud connectivity issues

- (a) **Upper Calder Valley to Huddersfield:** The “fast” from Manchester had a connection at Halifax for the train from Bradford to Huddersfield with a waiting of around 10 minutes in Halifax. However this is useless for Mytholmroyd/Sowerby Bridge to Huddersfield. Connection at Brighouse in this direction would be a half-hour wait. Travel by rail from these to stations to Huddersfield is effectively deterred.
- (b) **Huddersfield to UCV.** Much better, with 12min connection at Brighouse off train from Huddersfield onto train from Leeds to upper Calderdale and beyond.

Could the above issues be helped by

- reconsidering timing of Bradford-Hud shuttle?
- reconsidering stopping pattern of Manchester-CV-Leeds trains?

Could there be aspirations to

- run Bradford-Hud shuttle half hourly?

- run half-hourly upper Calderdale-Brighouse-Leeds?
- run Calderdale-Brighouse-Leeds at least hourly on Sundays?

3.5 Low Moor (LMR) – Chester trains to call giving LMR-Manchester service – welcome. This does not mean additional service to Leeds because Brighouse train replaced by Bradford-Hud shuttle, though there is a useful connection from Leeds with the shuttle serving Low Moor.

3.6 HADRAG suggestions for Brighouse line development

A better service is required in preparation for Elland station opening. Brighouse serves a population equal to that of Todmorden and Hebden Bridge combined (the same will be true of Elland). The aim should be:

- 2 trains/hour Bradford-Huddersfield
- 2 trains/hour Calderdale-Brighouse-Dewsbury-Leeds (1/hr fast; 1/hr stopper)
 - Target journey time 20 minutes Brighouse-Leeds fast via Dewsbury
 - This service also needs to run on Sundays
- Good connections upper Calderdale-Huddersfield at Brighouse for work, educational, social etc needs. (Aspiration for through cross-Pennine-Calderdale-Brighouse-Huddersfield service).

4 Concluding comments/summary – what needs to be done?

4.1 Short term (Dec'2019-May2020)

URGENT ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN to improve the proposed timetable in December 2019, to include:

- (a) Restoration of SOW and MYT stops in YRK-BPN services, mainly by using slack in present schedule (supported in due course by superior performance of new rolling stock); see Appendix;
- (b) Restoration of peak hour gaps at SOW/MYT;
- (c) Restoration of Sunday service SOW/MYT-Manchester, with earlier start to service;
- (d) Restoration of 2-hour late-evening gap in Man Vic-SOW/MYT service (first identified in May 2018);
- (e) Removal of timing anomalies in services that lead to extended journey times by supposedly fast trains (see section 1.3);
- (f) Addressing first/last train issues at Brighouse (see suggestions in 3.3)

To the above we would add:

- (g) that we expect the franchise promise to be delivered to operate all cross-Pennine CV line services via Bradford using **the new rolling stock (Class 195)**. (Commitment to withdraw “pacers” by Spring 2020 is noted and understood. However the continued operation of equally old, and old-fashioned Class 150 trains should not be seen as acceptable. All trains on main CV services should be able to achieve the new line speeds meaning minimum standard should be Class 158 or Class 170.)

4.2 Medium term (May 2020 to May 2022):

- (a) All trains serving HBD/TOD should also call at Sowerby Bridge, based on population/potential market served. Sowerby Bridge is on the list of designated “Northern Connect” stations.
- (b) Franchise promises must be delivered:
 - Calder Valley service to Manchester Airport, serving stations on south side of Manchester city for employment, education, leisure and longer distance connections. It is emphasised that the main aim is Calder Valley cross-Manchester connectivity (not just the airport).
 - Third Calder Valley service to Manchester every hour, not to provide increased frequency for the sake of it, but to enable existing gaps to be addressed e.g. need for more stop at intermediate stations, need for daytime Littleborough-Bradford service, need for better Brighouse Line service.
- (c) Better Brighouse Line service in time for Elland station opening to include as in 3.6 above:
 - 2 trains/hr upper Calderdale-Sowerby Bridge-Elland-Brighouse-Leeds (fast + stopper).

- If possible higher frequency Bradford-Huddersfield
- Useful, regular, upper Calderdale-Huddersfield connectivity.

4.3 Ideas to consider – these are simply suggested possibilities, linked to a varying extent and in no particular order, that may perhaps be already under consideration:

- Linkage of TPE Man Picc-Huddersfield stopper with Huddersfield-Bradford Northern service (existing or additional) to provide Bradford-Man Picc-... service.
- Rerouting of 1/hr TPE service per hour via Calder Valley which would:
 - Provide improved service for Brighouse/Elland/Sowerby Bridge
 - Release operating constraints of Huddersfield Line
- Rerouting of 1/hr TPE service Man Airport service via Guide Bridge, releasing a path via Ordsall Chord for a Calder Valley service.
- Increased frequency on Blackpool-Burnley-Calderdale-Leeds/York service, with second service each hour operating via Sowerby Bridge-Elland-Brighouse line.
- Aspirational new service: Bradford/Calderdale/Huddersfield to York via Wakefield and Castleford.
- Diversion via a different route, or operation at night, of existing freight services via the CV line to avoid damaging the timetable of passenger services.

4.4 Final thoughts

We know that many timetable problems across the North are due to capacity issues in Manchester including the new Ordsall Chord route and the Castlefield Corridor through Deansgate to Piccadilly. We hear that plans for additional through platforms at Piccadilly and enhancements at Oxford Road that were ready to go ahead during CP5 (2014-19) are now effectively “back to the drawing board”, suggesting that capacity improvements here are still some years away.

In the meantime TransPennine Express has been allowed to go ahead with two trains per hour from NE England to Manchester Airport via Ordsall and Castlefield. But Northern’s franchise commitment for a Bradford-Calderdale-Manchester Airport service is on hold, as is the aspiration to operate the east Lancs “Tod Curve service” via Ordsall to the Airport.

We repeat our view that this is simply not fair on Northern’s passengers (actual or would-be).

We note – and welcome – recent Government support for “Northern Powerhouse Rail”. The proposed high-speed line is many years away and if/when it is built will bypass most medium-size and some larger towns. ***Passengers – actual and would-be – in those towns and smaller communities need a better service now.***

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 The Halifax & District Rail Action Group
 30 August 2019
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Appendix on next two pages:

Appendix:
York-Leeds-Preston-Blackpool timings, typical hour

Westbound:

		December 2019 plan (as online 29/08/19):	Would this be possible?	Notes
		1B21	1B21	
York (YRK)	d	09:23	09:23	Unchanged calling Church Fenton, Leeds, New Pudsey, Bradford I, Halifax
Leeds (LDS)	a	09:50	09:50	
	d	09:57	09:57	
Bradford Inter (BDI)	a	10:14	10:14	
	d	10:17	10:17	
Halifax (HFX)	a	10:27	10:27	
	d	10:28	10:28	
Milner Royd Junction	pass	10:32	10:32	1 min stops at SOW and MYT. Timing HFX-HBD based on Leeds-Chester train with same timing load as YRK-BPN in Dec 2019.
Sowerby Bridge (SOW)	d	(pass)	10:34	
Mytholmroyd (MYT)	d	(pass)	10:39	
Hebden Bridge (HBD)	a	10:38	10:42	
	d	10:39	10:43	
		(2) <1>	<1>	(2) pathing allowance allows for conflict with eastbound CTR-LDS at Hall Royd. Not needed if YRK-BPN calls SOW and MYT?
Hall Royd Junction	pass	10:47	10:49	
Burnley Manch'r Rd (BYM)	a	11:00	11:02	1 min stop instead of 3 min.
	d	11:03	11:03	BYM-BPN schedule and stops unchanged.
...				
Preston (PRE)	a	11:38	11:38	
Blackpool N (BPN)	d	12:02	12:02	

Note (for this and next page) numbers in [], () or <> brackets:

[x] = "engineering allowance" x minutes

(y) = "pathing allowance" y minutes (usually to avoid junction conflicts or where fast train catches up with a "stopper")

<z> = "performance allowance" z minutes

Eastbound:

		December 2019 plan (as online 29/08/19):	Would this be possible?	Notes
		1B22	1B22	
Blackpool N (BPN)	d	09:20	09:19	
Poulton-le-Fylde (PFY)	d	09:26	09:25	1 min stop at PFY
		[1]	[1]	Recent journeys suggest BPN-PRE running time < 21 min (Class 158) so should be OK with CI 195?
Preston (PRE)	a	09:43	09:41	
	d	09:46	09:44	
Blackburn (BBN)	a	10:02	10:00	
	d	10:03	10:01	
Accrington (ACR)	d	10:11	10:09	1 min stop at ACR
Burnley Manch'r Rd (BYM)	a	10:19	10:17	
	d	10:20	10:18	
		[2]	[2]	
Hall Royd Junction	pass	10:37	10:35	
Hebden Bridge (HBD)	a	10:41	10:39	
	d	10:42	10:40	
Mytholmroyd (MYT)	d	(pass)	10:53	1 min stop at MYT
Sowerby Bridge (SOW)	d	(pass)	10:58	1 min stop at SOW
	pass	10:47	10:59	
Halifax (HFX)	a	10:52	10:54	
	d	10:53	10:55	
		[1]	[1]	
Bradford Int (BDI)	a	11:04	11:06	
	d	11:07	11:09	
New Pudsey (NPD)	d	11:15	11:17	
		11:16	11:18	
		[1]	[1]	
		(1)		
Whitehall Junction (line C)	pass	11:24	11:25	
Leeds (LDS)	a	11:26	11:27	
	d	11:30	11:32	Suggested extra minute dwell in Leeds
(Pathing allowances after Cross Gates and after Micklefield)		(3) (2)	(1) (2)	Follows LIV-SCA calling Garforth which follows LDS-YRK stopper so some slack to take up?
Church Fenton (CHF)	d	11:49	11:49	1 min stop at CHF
		(1)	(1)	Unchanged!
York (YRK)	a	12:00	12:00	