

# Network Rail volunteers go back in time to maintain heritage railway

June 29, 2023



Volunteers from Network Rail have helped carry out essential track maintenance on the East Lancashire Railway.

Earlier this month (Wednesday 7 June) a team of eight staff switched from Network Rail's Square One office in Manchester to help make repairs at the heritage railway in Bury.

The team spent a day replacing wooden sleepers and carrying out other track work near to the line's Bolton Street railway station.

Usually, the team concentrate on maintaining or replacing bridges other modern railway structures, not historic tracks.

They found in some cases the use of tools over 100 years old were needed so the heritage railway's historic infrastructure could be maintained in keeping with traditional methods.

Simon Bishop, Network Rail senior structures engineer, said: “It was great to get out of the office for a day and get stuck into some hard but enjoyable work helping maintain a heritage railway.

“While the trains still run on rails, the modern railway is very different to how things used to be. It’s been really valuable to spend time with colleagues and the team at the East Lancashire Railway learning new skills and helping maintain its infrastructure so it can carry its passengers safely and reliably in future.”

Jeff Armstrong, East Lancashire Railway head of operations, said: “It was a pleasure to see how enthusiastically the Network Rail team took to the heavy manual maintenance methods. They were a pleasure to work with. We all work to 21st century safety standards, so we can always learn from each other.”

[It follows Network Rail and the East Lancashire Railway working in partnership last autumn to trial pioneering technology to treat ‘leaves on the line’.](#)

[Click here for more on how Network Rail works to protect the main line railway’s heritage and the conservation work it carries out.](#)

*Photo credit: Network Rail*