



SAMPLE PAGES

The 48-page, A4 handbook for Waterways & Railways across the Northern Pennines, with text, photographs, maps, a chronology and a reading list, is available for purchase, price £15.00 including postage and packing.

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Waterways & Railways across the Northern Pennines

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Above: Rochdale Canal: Sowerby Bridge wharf (1979)



Above: trans-Pennine waterways and their connections

Two preserved railway lines are relevant to the geography of railways across the North Pennines. The **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway**, formerly a branch of the Midland, represents all that was built of a possible link between the Midland Railway at Keighley and the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway at Hebden Bridge. The **Wensleydale Railway** forms part of – and ultimately is planned to reinstate – the jointly-owned link between North Eastern Railway at Northallerton on the East Coast main line and the Midland Railway at Garsdale on the Settle & Carlisle line.



Above: Rochdale Canal: Ducie Street warehouse, Manchester (1998)

Faced with an alternative scheme, involving a 4¼-mile tunnel, to link the Rochdale Canal with the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal and the Mersey & Irwell Navigation, the Duke of Bridgewater reversed his opposition and supported a second Bill, which however failed by one vote, in 1793. With the Duke's continued co-operation, a third Bill was promoted and received the royal assent as the Rochdale Canal Act on April 4th 1794, the same day that the Huddersfield Narrow Canal was authorised.

The line ran from the Calder & Hebble Navigation at Sowerby Bridge, up the Calder Valley through Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, to join the Roch Valley as far as Castleton, on the outskirts of Rochdale, and then south through Littleborough and Failsworth to Manchester. On the final approach into Manchester, a junction with the Ashton Canal (already authorised in 1792) ultimately provided links with the Huddersfield Narrow and the Peak Forest canals (both authorised 1794), leading all three waterways to the Bridgewater Canal at Castlefield by way of a flight of locks known as the "Rochdale Nine".

Rennie's original intention was to build a 1½-mile tunnel between Walsden and Sladen, to provide a lower summit level and save water. William Jessop (1745-1814) was consulted immediately after the Act was passed, and suggested abandoning the tunnel in favour of a 600-foot summit level, which added fourteen locks but saved construction costs of £20,000, though it increased the need for reservoirs to supply a total of 92 locks.

The section from Sowerby Bridge to Rochdale was completed in 1798, but in the face of continuing financial difficulties two further Acts were needed, in 1800 and 1804, to complete the line into Manchester.

Building broad 14 ft 2in locks on either side of a high summit pound meant that the Rochdale Canal could take wide boats from the broad navigations at each end of its line, but customarily struggled for water to cope with heavy traffic. Its original reservoirs were at **Hollingworth** (130 acres), **Blackstone Edge** (50 acres) and **Chelburn** (16 acres). Ultimately there were five more – **Easterly Gaddings Dam**, **Light Hazzles**, **Whiteholme**, **Warland** and a second reservoir at **Chelburn**.



Above: Midland Railway, Settle & Carlisle Extension: Smardale Viaduct

Scottish railway companies, the North British Railway and the Glasgow & South Western Railway, this proposal gained the Royal Assent on July 16th 1866.

However, it received Parliamentary approval at the worst possible moment, when an economic downturn in 1866-7 put the railway industry as a whole in difficulty: the London Chatham & Dover Railway, the Great Eastern Railway, the financier Overend Gurney & Company and the contractor Sir Samuel Morton Peto all went bankrupt in rapid succession, and other major railway companies such as the Great Western and the North British were financially embarrassed. The Midland was in any case fully stretched by the costs of completing its St Pancras and New Mills extensions, neither of which was fully operational or capable of generating significant revenue.

Nevertheless, the L&NWR were sufficiently perturbed by the prospect of a rival route to Scotland, running alongside its own trains into Carlisle rather than connecting into the East Coast services, that they proposed a formal joint arrangement to work the West Coast Main Line between Lancaster and Carlisle – in effect, buying off the Midland by offering to share their existing capacity. The Midland Railway board were satisfied by this, and sufficiently anxious to reduce their capital commitments to present an abandonment bill to Parliament in 1869, but though the Midland was willing to collaborate with the L&NWR, their Scottish partners were not, and along with the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, the NBR and the G&SWR raised strong enough objections to have the abandonment bill rejected.

The Midland was therefore obliged to begin constructing its railway. James Allport was appalled:

I shall never forget, as long as I live, the difficulties surrounding the undertaking... We walked over the greater part of the line from Settle to Carlisle, and we found it comparatively easy sailing till we got to that terrible place, Blea Moor.

Wensleydale Railway



Above: Wensleydale Railway: Leeming Bar Station (2009)

The Midland Railway constructed a branch from Garsdale to Hawes, where it made an end-on junction with the North Eastern Railway from Northallerton. A through service, operated throughout by North Eastern locomotives and rolling stock, began in 1878.

The Wensleydale railway brought new life to the local economy. Though lead-mining had largely died out by the 1870s, limestone, livestock and milk production were encouraged by the easier, faster transport facility. After the closure of passenger services in 1964, the track between Garsdale, Hawes and Redmire was lifted, leaving the eastern end of the line in place to carry quarry stone to British Steel at Redcar.

Freight traffic east of Redmire ceased on December 18th 1992, by which time the 1989 reprieve of the Settle & Carlisle had prompted the foundation of the Wensleydale Railway Association, dedicated ultimately to the re-opening of the entire line between Garsdale and Northallerton. Their company, Wensleydale Railway PLC, leased the remaining 22 miles of track in 2003, and quickly inaugurated diesel-railcar services over twelve miles between Leeming Bar and Leyburn; a further five miles, covering the stations at Bedale, Finghall and Redmire, opened the following year. A further eighteen miles remains out of use. Details of the railway and its current services can be found at www.wensleydalerailway.com.

The most recent publications about the line are Christine Hallas, *The Wensleydale Railway* (Great Northern 2002) and Stanley C Jenkins, *The Wensleydale Branch: a new history* (Oakwood Press Library of Railway History No 86, 2nd edn, 2002).

There is still track – and a train – however at **Hawes station**, which is the Dales Countryside Museum, interpreting the history and ecology of the Yorkshire Dales, and administered by the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Railways across the Northern Pennines

Geoffrey O Holt, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Vol 10, The North West* (David & Charles, 2nd edn, revised by Gordon Biddle, 1986)

David Joy, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Vol 8, South and West Yorkshire* (David & Charles 2nd edn, 1984)

Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway

Martin Bairstow, *The Manchester & Leeds Railway: the Calder valley line* (Martin Bairstow 1987)

A Holt, *A Pennine pioneer – the history of the Summit tunnel* (George Kelsall 1999)

J Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway* (Vol 1, 1969; Vol 2, 1970; Vol 3, 1972)

O S Nock, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: a concise history* (Ian Allan 1969)

London & North Western Railway in Lancashire and Yorkshire

Martin Bairstow, *The Leeds, Huddersfield & Manchester Railway: the Standedge line* (Martin Bairstow 1990)

M C Reed, *The London & North Western Railway* (Atlantic 1996)

Midland Railway (Settle & Carlisle Extension)

V R Anderson & G K Fox, *Stations and Structures of the Settle & Carlisle Railway* (Oxford Publishing Company 1986)

E G Barnes, *The Rise of the Midland Railway* (George Allen & Unwin 1966)

E G Barnes, *The Midland Main Line 1875-1922* (George Allen & Unwin 1969)

P E Baughan, *The Midland Railway north of Leeds* (2nd edn, David & Charles 1987)

Terry Coleman, *The Railway Navvies* (Penguin 1968)

D Jenkinson, *Rails in the Fells* (Peco 1980)

W R Mitchell, *The Lost Shanties of Ribbleshead* (Castleberg 1996)

W R Mitchell, *The Men who Made the Settle-Carlisle* (Castleberg 1993)

W R Mitchell & David Joy, *Settle to Carlisle: a railway over the Pennines* (Dalesman 1989)

James Towler, *The Battle for the Settle and Carlisle* (Platform Five 1990)

F S Williams, *The Midland Railway: its rise and progress* (1876; reprinted, with a new introduction by C R Clinker, David & Charles 1968)