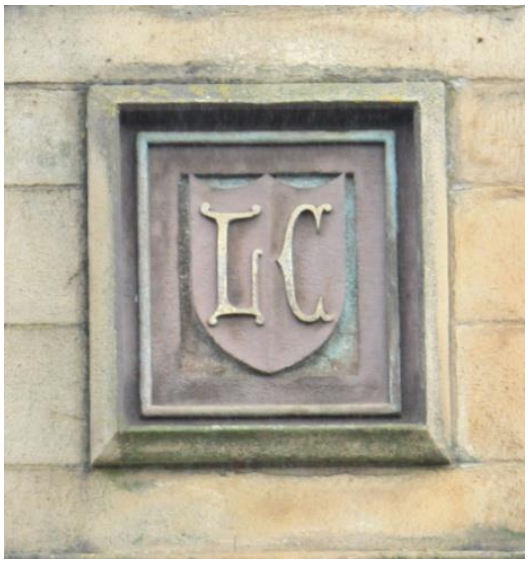
Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

RAILWAYS AROUND LANCASTER AND CARNFORTH

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 20





The Lancaster and Carlisle railway

Lancaster and Morecambe

The first railway reached Lancaster in 1840 – the Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway. Its terminus is now part of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary in whose car parks platform masonry can still be seen.

Edmund Sharpe, the noted Lancaster architect, designed the masonry work south of Lancaster including the long skew bridge over the A6 at Galgate (see Guide 32). The Lancaster and Carlisle Railway then went westwards in 1846 to the current station and crossed high over the River Lune on Carlisle Bridge.

By 1846 what is now called the West Coast Main Line was open between London and Carlisle and by 1848 to Glasgow. The Lancaster and Carlisle took over the Lancaster and Preston Junction in 1849 and was in turn leased to the London and North Western Railway in 1859. This then became part of the London Midland & Scottish railway in 1923 until railway nationalisation in 1948. There were local stations at Galgate (1840–1939) and Hest Bank (1946–1969).

The current station building by Platform 3 – called Lancaster Castle Station till 1969 – dates from 1846 with extensions in the 1850s. It was designed by William Tite as was Carnforth station. There are turrets, chimneys, mullioned windows and battlements in a mix of Elizabethan and castellated styles.

The building by Platforms 4 and 5 dates from 1898–1902 and blends in well though it is less elaborate. The LNWR's County Hotel opened opposite Platform 3 in 1869 and in 1995 the site became flats. The stone piers of Carlisle Bridge over the River Lune are original but the deck structure was rebuilt in 1866 and again 1963 and the line was electrified in 1974. More details can be found in Guide 69 on *Lancaster Railway Station*.

The east-west link at Lancaster came when the North Western Railway opened its lines from Lancaster to Morecambe (1848) and from Lancaster to Yorkshire (1849–50). Sharpe and Paley designed Green Ayre station (by Parliament Street in Lancaster) and the North Western Railway's seafront hotel in Morecambe (1847). The latter was replaced by the current Midland Hotel in 1933.

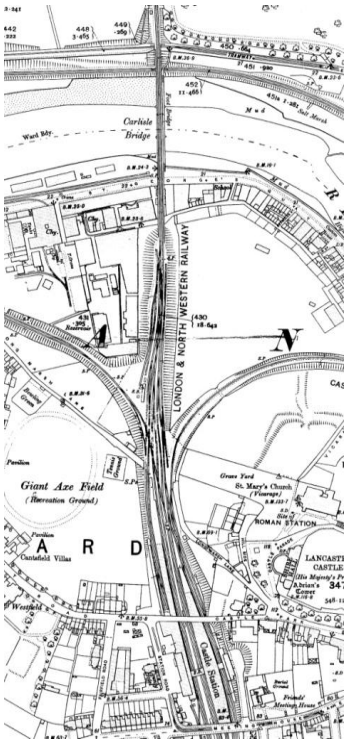
The line from Green Ayre to Morecambe and Heysham was electrified as early as 1908 and closed in 1966. Scale Hall station was short-lived (1957–66). The curved railway bridge from Green Ayre to Morecambe (Greyhound Bridge) became a road bridge in 1972.

The Green Ayre site is now a park, with an old crane relocated from Hornby Station up the Lune valley. More detail on railways to and in Morecambe can be found in the leaflet *Morecambe: the Station to the Sea*, No. 13 in this series.

The line west from Castle Station went past Williamson's linoleum works and on to Glasson: it operated between 1883 and 1964, the Luneside section closing in 1969. There is a leaflet on *Glasson*, No. 8 in this series. The owners of *Ashton Hall* (see Guide 94) had a private platform and the right to stop the trains. Part of this is now an attractive footpath and cvcleway. The *Heysham Harbour* line opened in 1904 (see Guide 92).

Gillow (later Waring and Gillow), the famous Lancaster furniture makers, fitted out dining cars and special saloon cars for many railway companies. There is a leaflet on *Gillow of Lancaster* (No. 5 in the series).

The *Lancaster Wagon Works* on Caton Road started making rolling stock for British and foreign railway companies in 1865, employing up to 1,800 people. The building, designed by E.G. Paley of Lancaster, survives. The firm was taken over and work transferred to other sites, this factory closing in 1908. More details on this site can be found in Guide 30. There were London and North Western Railway workshops on Lune Road in Lancaster for the District Engineer, the site now being housing. There is still a Railway Sports and Social Club on Morecambe Road.



In 1913, North of Lancaster Castle Station, the Glasson line curves off to the west and that of Green Ayre Station off to the east. After Carlisle Bridge, the mainline crosses the line to Morecambe from Green Ayre and then the Lancaster tramway





The Carnforth coal hoppers and station sign

Thomas Edmondson (1792–1851), born in Lancaster, invented the numbered ticket system (to prevent fraud and theft) and set up a firm to make the tickets and the numbering machines. One can be seen in Lancaster City Museum. A plaque at Stonewell in Lancaster commemorates his once widely used system.

Carnforth

Today the next station northwards is Carnforth with its complex railway history. Initially it was just a stop on the line north, opened in 1846 with extensions to the station buildings

in 1879–83 by Paley and Austin. In 1857 a link was opened westwards to Ulverston and then Barrow-in-Furness that became the Furness Railway after 1862. Then a link eastwards went to Skipton and Leeds/Bradford. Local passenger traffic, postal traffic and freight to and from Barrow and western Cumberland for the local iron and steel works (1866–1929) made Carnforth a very busy junction by day and night.

The huge station clock (by Joyce of Whitchurch) is unmissable. It featured in David Lean's 1945 film *Brief Encounter* for which the external station shots were filmed here. This film is the theme for the 'Refreshment Room' and Heritage Centre off today's Platform 1. Platform 2 (1938) is in a simple Art Deco style with a very long, cantilevered roof. Mainline trains no longer stop at Carnforth, only those to and from Barrow, Skipton/Leeds and Lancaster.

The area west of Carnforth Station has long been devoted to railway activities. Carnforth Motive Power Depot was operational between 1944 and 1968; 300 people lost their jobs when it closed. Steamtown attracted many visitors between 1969 and 1997. Orient Express carriages were restored here. West Coast Railways now use the site intensively. The tall, concrete coal-hoppers are a notable feature and steam trains still run from their base here, especially in summer.



The clock, Carnforth Station

Reading

K. Nuttall and T Rawlings 1980 *Railways around Lancaster.* Clapham, N. Yorks: Dalesman

D Richardson 2022 *Lancaster's Line to the Sea: A History of the Glasson Branch of the LNWR*. Pinner: Cumbrian Railways Association

Text and photographs – Gordon Clark.

Published by Lancaster Civic Vision (©2022).

Lancaster Civic Vision is the trading name of Lancaster Civic Society, registered charity no. 258434