Lancaster Civic Vision

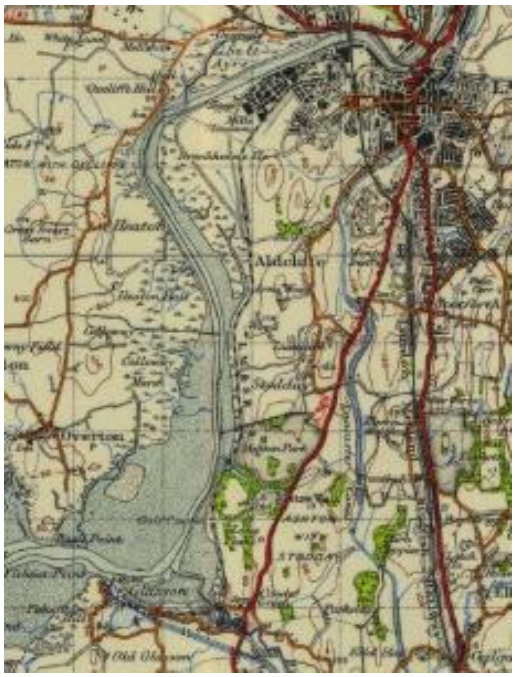
Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

THE TRAIN TO GLASSON

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 108

In Guide 8 in this series we traced the growth of Glasson. The quay on the river opened in 1781/2, the dock in 1787 and the link to the Lancaster Canal in 1826. Despite the railway reaching Lancaster from Preston in 1840 it took till 1883 to open the branch to Glasson.

The line left Lancaster (Castle) Station just north of the platforms and, turning west, went down a 1 in 50 gradient. It passed St George's Works, the town's gas works and Williamson's Lune Mills before turning south. It then followed the River Lune till, turning west again at Conder Green it ran into Glasson station. The tracks continued beyond the station to serve the dock.



The route along the Lune as shown on the OS one-inch map of 1947



The route leaves Lancaster (Castle) Station (bottom right) and travels north-west then south-west. Note the industrial sites and the District Engineer's yard and workshops off the Glasson branch (OS six-inch map of 1938).



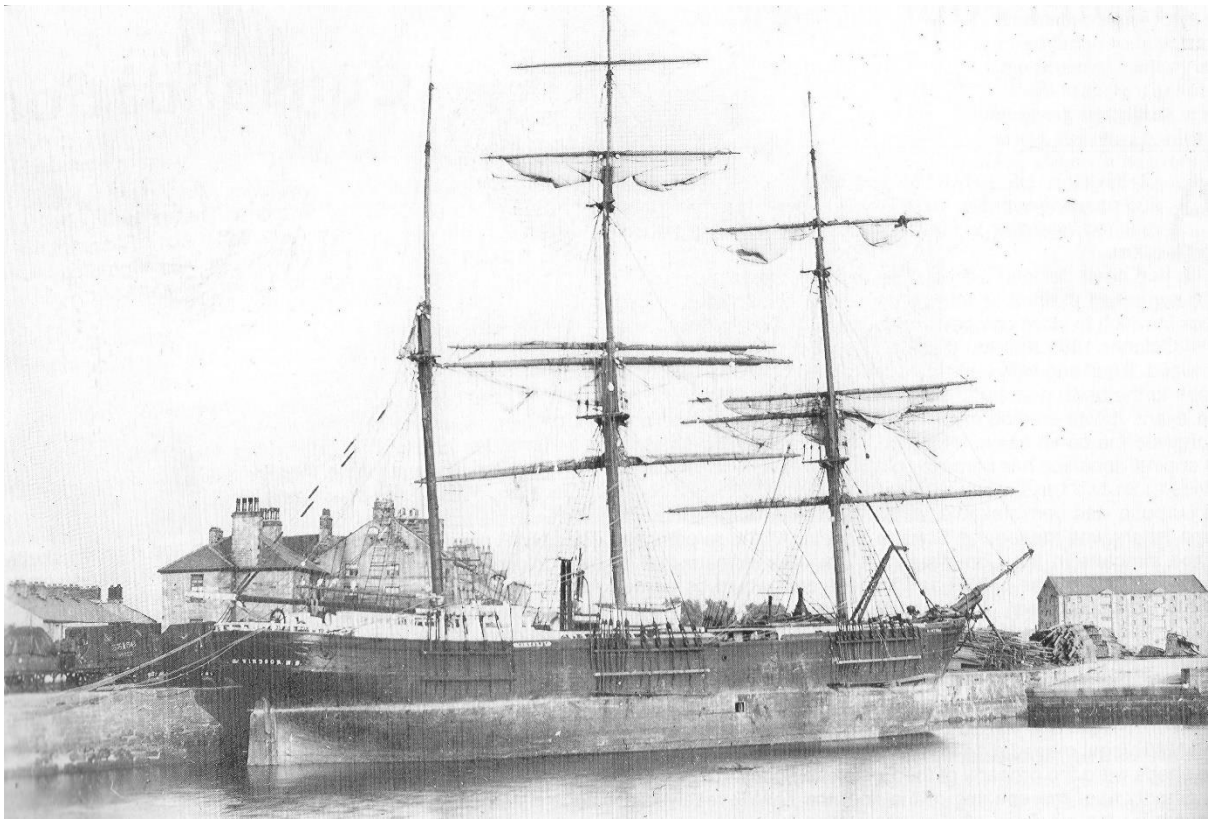
The tracks at Glasson in 1910 (OS six-inch map). The tracks split west of the station to serve the dock and riverside quay.

It was a single-track line with level crossings at Aldcliffe and Stodday, a request Halt for Ashton Hall and a request Station at Conder Green. The Lancaster to Glasson journey – nearly five miles – took 16 minutes without a stop at Conder Green, 19 with one. In the 1920s there were four trains in each direction for passengers on weekdays.

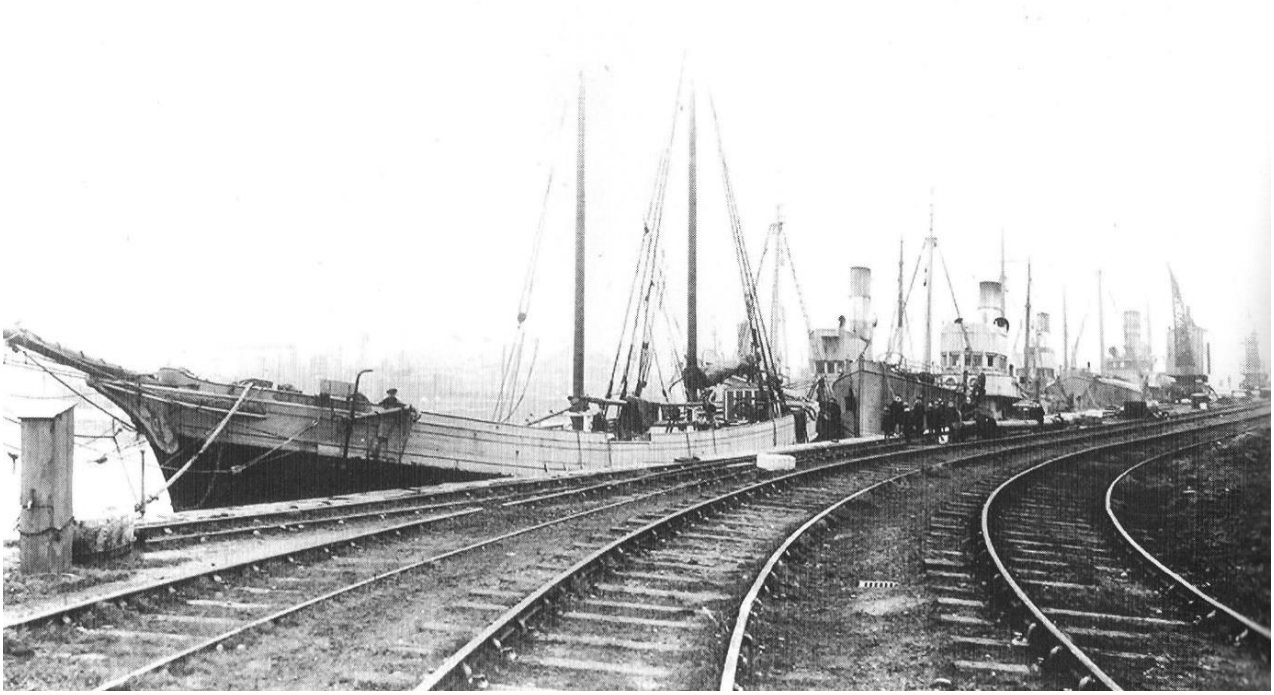
Competition from buses and cars led to the closure of the passenger service in 1930. The line remained open for goods traffic which was always important in this line's finances.



Glasson Station (Source: commercial postcard and Richardson 2022)



Unloading cargo on to railway wagons around 1900.



The cargo tracks dock-side at Glasson after 1903.

After the passenger service closed it was the freight traffic that kept the line open. From the docks at various times came iron ore, coal, timber, linseed oil and nitrochalk. At the Lancaster end of the line there were considerable goods flows inward and outward for St George's Works, Lune Mills and the town's gas works. This included coal, coke, materials for making linoleum and Williamson's finished products. There were sidings off the Glasson line into the gas works, quayside and Lune Mills connecting with the latter's extensive internal system.

By the 1960s freight traffic was also declining and the Glasson branch was closed and lifted from Glasson to Freeman's Wood in 1964 and fully closed in 1971. Today the route is a footpath.

The author has relied on David Richardson's book *Lancaster's Line to the Sea: a History of the Glasson Branch of the LNWR.* (Cumbrian Railways Association, 2022) in the preparation of this guide. This book provides an extensive, well-researched and well-illustrated account of the line.

Text – Gordon Clark.
Published by Lancaster Civic Vision (©2022).
Lancaster Civic Vision is the trading name of Lancaster Civic Society, registered charity no. 258434