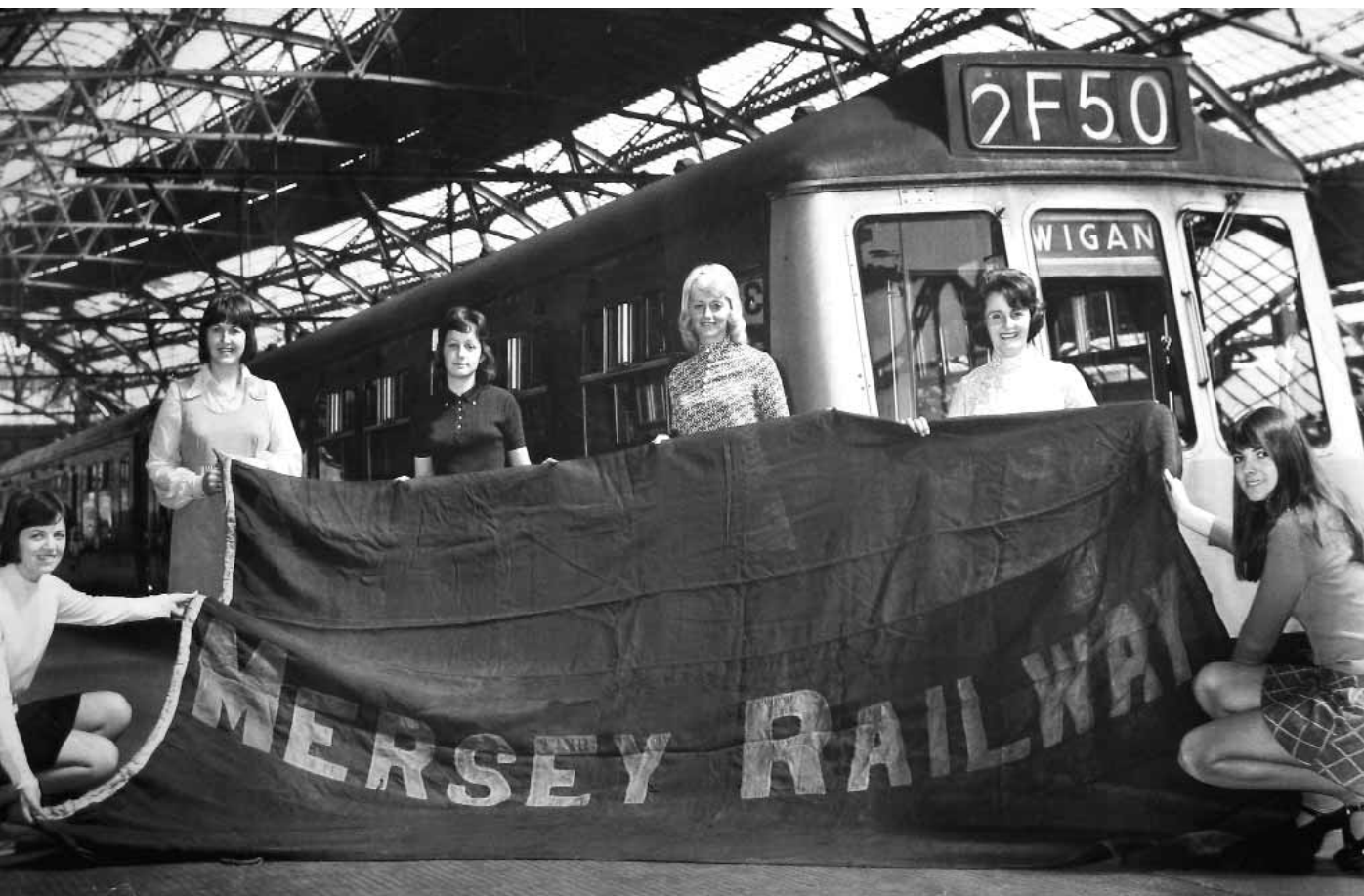


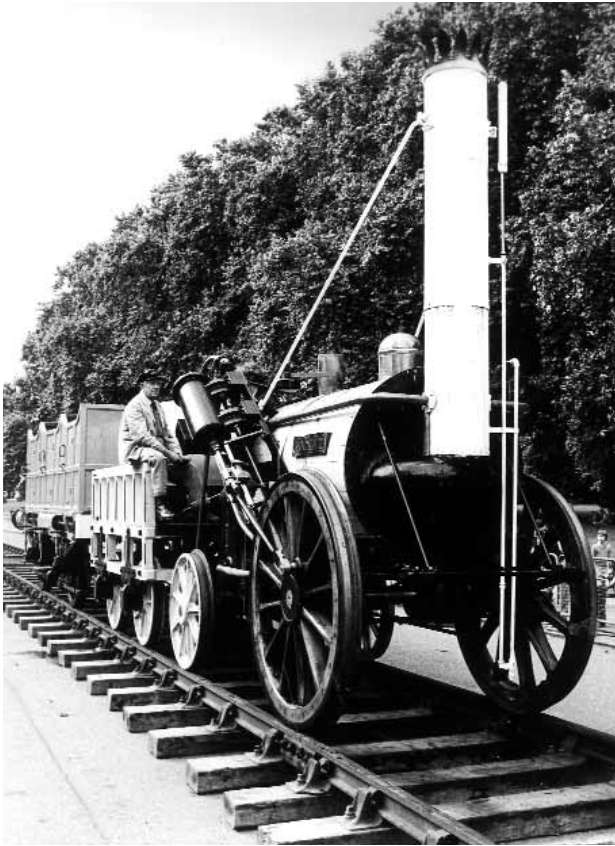
Northern Heritage



A look at where we've come from







Replica of Stephenson's Rocket - at Hyde Park. (Paul Salveson)

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Front cover: Women engine cleaners show off their handiwork at Low Moor depot, Bradford, 1916. The locomotive is an Aspinall 'Highflyer'

Inside cover: The swinging 60s: British Rail staff at a promotional event at Liverpool.

Rear cover: London & North Western Railway train crew posed on the Precursor class 4-4-0 locomotive number 1104 "Cedric", about 1905.

The text has been written by Paul Salveson, Head of Government and Community Strategies at Northern.

We will donate £1 from every sale of this booklet to The Railway Children Charity.

We are particularly grateful to the National Railway Museum for their assistance. All photos courtesy of NRM Archive unless otherwise shown.

Design: DC Graphics.

Preface

Dear reader,

I hope you enjoy this introduction to 'where we've come from'. The booklet traces the development of railways and their impact on the North of England since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

We're very proud of the fact that our trains still run over the tracks of the original Stockton and Darlington Railway and the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.

Northern is very much a part of the living heritage of the North of England. We are part of the fine tradition which included the great companies which formed the London Midland and Scottish and London and North Eastern Railways and went on to become British Railways.

We operate in a very different world today, but railways have never been more important to the North of England. The remarkable economic growth of our great cities can only be sustained by good quality commuter rail services. Our stunning natural landscape must not be ruined by car traffic – our rural lines are vital for sustainable tourism.

The challenges facing our world through climate change will not be met by one single solution. But transport accounts for a large proportion of greenhouse gases, and most of that is coming from road transport and aviation.

Rail can offer a modern, high quality alternative which helps reduce carbon emissions. We can be at the forefront of a transport revolution every bit as radical as that which swept Britain in the railway boom of the nineteenth century.

We are determined to work with our partners in Government – local and national – as well as the wider community to achieve our vision of an environment-friendly and high quality railway for the North which would have delighted the Stephensons and the many other railway pioneers who were born and raised in the North.

Enjoy reading about our great heritage – and take the chance to enjoy the many visible signs of it around our rail network today.

Yours faithfully,



Heidi Mottram
Managing Director



Heidi Mottram, Managing Director. (Northern)

The beginning of railways in the North

The first railways in the North of England were colliery tramways, using horses to convey coal from the pit head to navigable rivers and later canals. The young George Stephenson grew up in this environment, at Wylam, where Northern trains still call, along the historic Tyne Valley Line. Though he didn't have much in the way of education he was an engineering genius, pottering around with some of the first colliery steam locomotives. The house where he was born is a pleasant walk from Wylam station and a small museum in the village celebrates his achievements.

Stockton and Darlington – the world's first steam-operated public railway

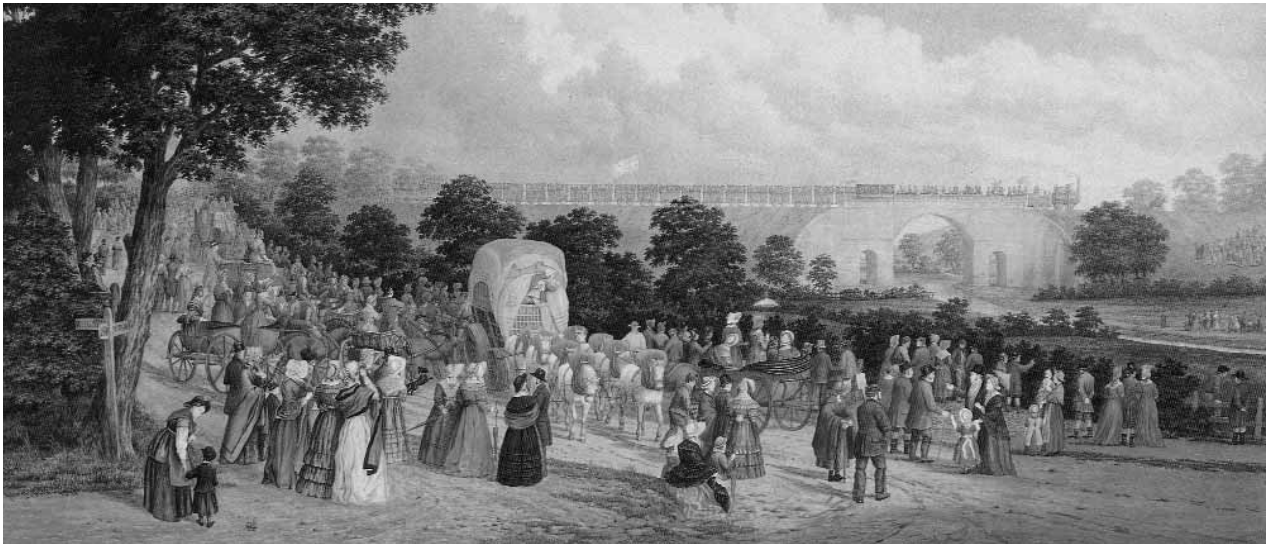
Stephenson quickly made a name for himself as a locomotive engineer, developing the work of other engineers in the North East such as Timothy Hackworth and Matthew Hedley. He combined a grasp of both mechanical and civil engineering principles, and his first major project was the Stockton and Darlington Railway – the world's first railway empowered by Parliament to convey goods and passengers.

The Stockton and Darlington was above all, a coal railway, linking the pits west of Shildon around Witton Park, with the ports developing around Stockton, on the Tees. The railway was promoted by several local entrepreneurs, including the Darlington Quaker, Edward Pease. He is commemorated with a statue in the centre of Darlington.

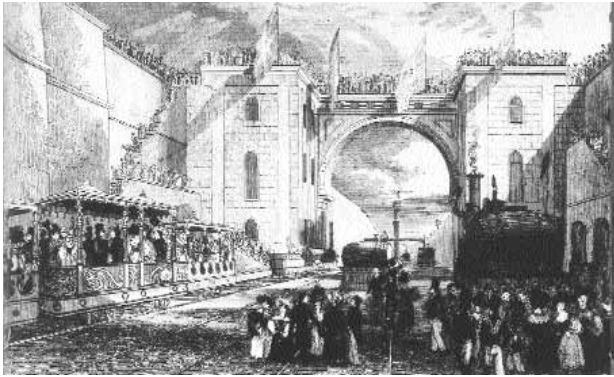
When the line opened, on September 27th 1825, thousands turned out to celebrate this strange but exciting new form of transport. The Railway Age had arrived. The first steam locomotive to operate on the line, Locomotion No. 1, was placed on the tracks at Heighington. The locomotive is preserved at Darlington's Railway Museum at North Road Station. Much of the S&D can be travelled on today, using Northern's Saltburn to Bishop Auckland service – branded 'The Heritage Line'.

Liverpool and Manchester – the first "Inter City" railway

It was a few years later before 'the railway' as we know it today really came into being, and the Liverpool and Manchester must take the credit for that. It linked two of Britain's great cities – Manchester, the centre of manufacturing and the great port of Liverpool. And once again it was Stephenson who created it, with the financial backing of Manchester manufacturers and Liverpool financiers.



The opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, September 27th 1825. (Photo courtesy of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum)



The opening-day of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, 15th September 1830. The triumphal arch at Liverpool Crown Street.

This was much more than a freight line – it was an express passenger railway, built along pretty much a straight line between the two cities, across some fearsome geological challenges – above all, Chat Moss. Many engineers said it was impossible to put a railway over the moss – it would sink. Stephenson replied by packing the formation with tons of brushwood, providing a secure base over which to built the railway. Some of his engineering feats were little short of astounding – the great sandstone cutting at Olive Mount (Liverpool), and the Sankey Viaduct. Both of these features can still be seen from Northern trains today.

The first station in Liverpool, Crown Street, is no longer in existence but Edge Hill still sees frequent use by Northern trains. At the Manchester end, Liverpool Road station, the original terminus and the first passenger station in the world, is part of the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. Many of the bridges on the line are the original Liverpool and Manchester structures, still performing a useful function.

As well as the great civil engineering feats, the Stephensons also gave the world the first modern steam locomotive. 'The Rocket', winner of the 1829 Rainhill Trials on the Liverpool and Manchester, incorporated most of the features which 20th century steam locomotives were to have, particularly the multi-tubular boiler design. There is some historical interpretation at Rainhill station about the Trials.

George Stephenson and his son Robert went on to build many more railways, but there can be no doubt that the Stockton and Darlington in the North East, and the Liverpool and Manchester across in the North West, were the two most historically

significant railways in the world. And you can still ride over much of them today in our trains!

Impact on society

The first railways ushered in huge changes in how people lived and worked. They changed our concept of time and space – before the railways different parts of the country had different time zones! Railways were the first big employers of civilian labour, and the new railway managers – many from military backgrounds - imposed an iron discipline on the staff. Strikes were not tolerated and the leaders of one dispute on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, ended up on the treadmill at Salford Prison. At a time of major civil unrest in the 1840s, the first railways were used to move troops into cities like Manchester to quell any potential disturbances.

Britain now had the infrastructure to make the industrial revolution take off – coal, iron and steel could be brought into the great manufacturing centres, finished goods could be exported to the world. And the North was the epi-centre of the revolution. You can explore the contribution the North made at many excellent museums including The Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, The National Railway Museum at York and at Shildon and the superb open-air museum at Beamish.

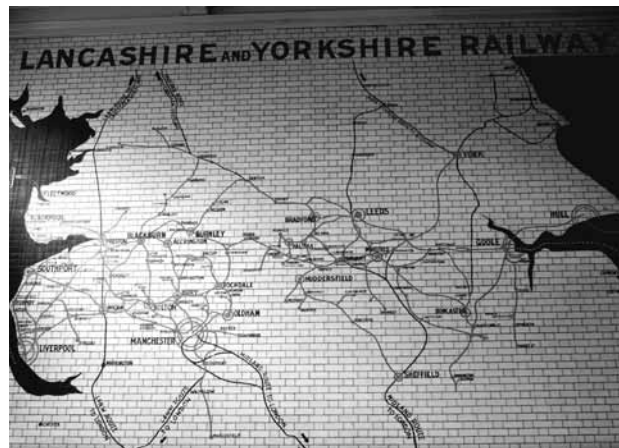


The Puffing Billy locomotive, 1860. This pioneering locomotive was built by William Hedley in 1813 for use on the Wylam Colliery line. The line went from Wylam, Northumberland, to Lemington on the River Tyne. The line had opened in the 1750s, with the wagons being pulled by horses, but Puffing Billy was able to haul much larger loads. The locomotive was used at the colliery until 1860.

Creation of a network

The Railway Age ushered in 'The Railway Mania' with hundreds of schemes to build new railways. Many failed, but others survived and helped to shape the modern railway network. Most of the first small companies amalgamated and created bigger and bigger companies. The Great London and North Western Railway, the largest joint stock company in the world by the end of the nineteenth century, grew out of the Liverpool and Manchester, Grand Junction and London and Birmingham Railways.

The Stockton and Darlington expanded beyond its original route and took in much of Durham before being taken over by the North Eastern Railway in 1868. By the turn of the century the North Eastern had a virtual monopoly in the North East. Its sumptuous station at Newcastle Central, designed by Dobson, retains many of its original features. In the North West and Yorkshire the picture was more complex. The Manchester and Leeds Railway, another Stephenson line, opened in 1841, connecting the great industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Today, marketed as the Calderdale Line, it's a busy inter-regional route operated by Northern. Some of the early structures, such as Gauxholme Viaduct near Todmorden, are still in use. Summit Tunnel, when built the longest in the world, still sees trains passing through between Leeds and Manchester.



The Northern Network: The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway tiled map - still on display at Manchester Victoria.

Other early railways were the Leeds and Selby (1834) and Whitby and Pickering (1836). Northern operates trains over both of these railways. In the case of the Whitby line, we operate to Grosmont from where the North Yorkshire Moors Railway runs steam services to Pickering.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway emerged by the third quarter of the nineteenth century as a major player on both sides of the Pennines, with a flourishing business in both freight – above all, coal – and passenger traffic. It absorbed lines like the Manchester and Leeds and East Lancashire Railway and built its headquarters at Hunts Bank, Manchester, facing Victoria station. A superb piece of history adorns a large wall inside the concourse of Victoria station – the Lancashire and Yorkshire's route map, as at the turn of the twentieth century. Outside the station, you can see glazed ironwork showing the destinations once served by the L&Y.

The Newcastle and Carlisle Railway was one of the North's earliest lines and the first railway to connect the east and west coasts of England. It was absorbed by the North Eastern. Today it's a delightful ride with an energetic community rail partnership promoting the route.

Along the Cumbrian Coast several smaller railways like the Maryport and Carlisle jostled with the LNWR. The Furness Railway enjoyed a near monopoly in South Lakeland and Barrow,

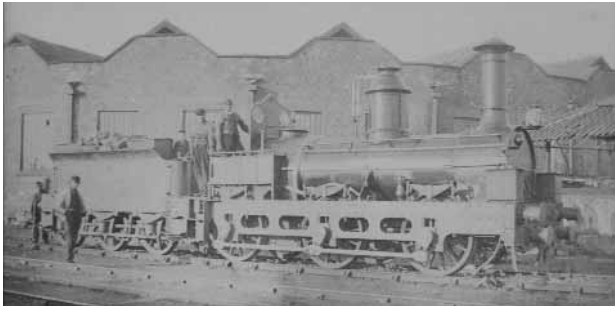
**TO HULL AND BACK THE SAME DAY.
GOOD FRIDAY,
BY RAILWAY AND STEAM PACKET.**

THE PUBLIC are informed that Arrangements have been made for carrying Passengers to HULL and BACK, on Friday, the Thirteenth Instant, also to Booth Ferry, Howden Dike, or any other Intermediate Places. The Train will leave the Depot, Marsh Lane, at SEVEN in the MORNING, and Parties will arrive in Hull by Packet about One o'Clock. The Packet will leave Hull again about Five and arrive in Leeds by Railway at Ten. Fares to Hull and back,—

First Class and Best Cabin	5s.
Second Ditto and Common Ditto	6s.

WILLIAM SIMPSON, Superintendent.
Railway Office, April 6th, 1838.

one of the first railway excursions on record.



North Eastern Railway 0-6-0 locomotive number 82 with its driver, J Roxby, and fireman, at Shildon Works roundhouse, 1868.

with its charming vernacular styles in architecture and branch lines to popular Lakeland resorts such as Coniston and Lakeside. Though the Coniston branch is long gone, the Lakeside branch is now a steam-operated heritage line, the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway. The Cumbrian Coast Line is a joy to use at any time of year, with spectacular sea views to the west and the towering Cumbrian Mountains to the east. The delightful miniature Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway links with our trains at Ravenglass.

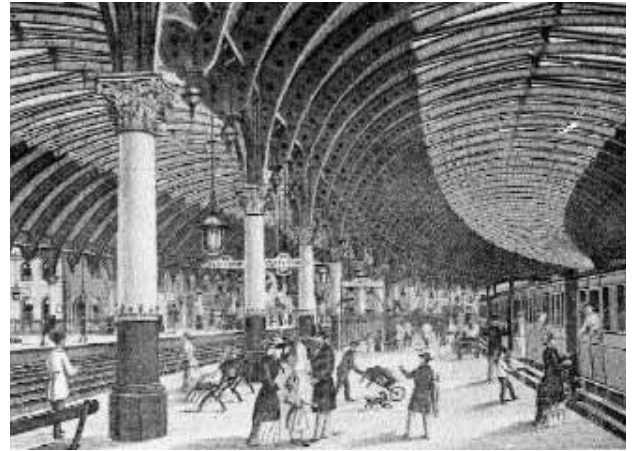
The Midland and the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (later to become the Great Central) had a major presence in Manchester, with competing train services to London. The North Western had the lion's share using the route via Stoke, but the Midland competed with trains via Matlock and Derby, the MS&L via Woodhead and Sheffield to Kings Cross and later Marylebone. Both the Woodhead and Matlock routes are now closed.

The North's great stations

By the second half of the nineteenth century the North had some stunning examples of railway architecture. The great cathedrals of Manchester's railways were the Lancashire and Yorkshire's Victoria and the LNWR's London Road (now Piccadilly) which it grudgingly shared with the Great Central, the latter using what are now platforms 1-3. Last but by no means least was the Central station with its splendid arched roof, opened in 1880; it is now the G-Mex Centre. The Midland shared accommodation with the Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) and Great Northern. The CLC itself was a joint committee of the Midland, Great Northern and Great Central, operating express services to Liverpool (Central), Southport (Lord Street) and Chester (Northgate). Liverpool's Lime

Street became the LNWR's main terminus on Merseyside whilst the L&Y ran into Exchange. The Cheshire Lines terminated at Central. Manchester Piccadilly has recently had a stunning re-vamp making it one of Britain's finest main line stations.

In Yorkshire, Leeds, York and Sheffield were the principal railway centres. York developed under the wing of the railway entrepreneur George Hudson who vowed to make every train go through York. But if York became the administrative railway capital which it remains, Leeds' economic growth made it the bigger traffic centre, with the Midland, North Eastern, Great Northern and London and North Western each having a major presence in the city. The Midland had what is now platforms 0-4 of the recently modernised Leeds station whilst the LNWR and North Eastern shared the main through platforms (now numbered 5-12).



York Station about 1877.

The Great Northern had its own station at Leeds Central, close to the existing station. It was from Central that the GN – and subsequently LNER – expresses to Kings Cross departed.

The Midland Railway dominated Sheffield and most of South Yorkshire. Midland Station is still a busy hub for the region. Sheffield Victoria was the Great Central's, about half a mile from Midland. Trains ran to Manchester via Woodhead, the East Coast and Marylebone. Little now remains, other than the former station hotel.

The Midland Railway completed its new main line to Carlisle via Settle in 1876.



The coming of the railway opened up access to the countryside including the Lake District. A 1930s scene at Windermere.

The rural railway

In more rural areas the railway helped communities to prosper, even if the railways themselves never did. They allowed farmers to get their produce and livestock to markets and small communities grew up around the stations. Some of these rural stations have survived and are today busy commuter facilities, taking workers into Leeds, York, Manchester and Sheffield. Others, like the Easingwold Railway, survived nationalisation but closed shortly after. Some classic rural lines survive on Northern, like the Esk Valley Line from Middlesbrough to Whitby, and the Cumbrian Coast Line from Barrow to Carlisle.



"The Port Carlisle Dandy" This Cumbrian route was horse drawn until 1914! From the collection of Simon Clarke.



The railway was often the main employer in rural areas and even small stations had large numbers of railway staff. This group is pictured at Stamford Bridge.

An important feature of Northern's heritage is the large number of fine smaller stations we operate. Some of these are quintessentially rural, like Green Road on the Cumbrian Coast Line, lovingly tended by our station adopters. Others serve bustling market towns, such as Hexham, Knaresborough and Todmorden.



Bus-Rail integration is nothing new! Many of the railway companies operated their own bus services connecting more rural areas with the rail network.

The North at Work and Play

The railways revolutionised the way people lived and worked. They were great employers of labour, and they enabled people to go beyond the very enclosed world which was the norm at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As Northern industry took off, with an insatiable demand for labour, the railways brought thousands of 'economic migrants' to the teeming cities and towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire and the North East. For the better off, they enabled businesspeople to get to London and back in a day, an unimaginable exploit not many years before.

An essential part of industrial development

The railways were crucial to the industrial development of the North. Much of the network depended on freight for its business survival and some of the North's railways – such as the Hull and Barnsley – were almost entirely freight railways. The railways of the North moved millions of tons of coal, iron and other raw materials from pithead and forge to factory and port. The North Eastern Railway had a huge network of ports along the east coast and the Lancashire and Yorkshire built its own facilities at Goole and Fleetwood. The Midland had its own docks at Heysham, the LNWR at Liverpool and the Great Central constructed one of the biggest port facilities at Immingham. Hull had a huge network of docks shared out between the Great Central, Hull and Barnsley and North Eastern. The Furness Railway created Barrow as a modern industrial town.



Railway workers painting an A2 class locomotive at Doncaster Works, 28 November 1947.



The iron foundry at Horwich Loco Works, c1900.

Growth of the first city regions

The big cities developed busy suburban rail networks which flourished before trams and then buses forced them to retrench. Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds had sprawling suburban networks which brought workers into the expanding business centres. Luxury 'club trains' brought the textile magnates into



Interior of a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Club Car, 1905. Club cars were provided for the exclusive use of regular business travellers on certain routes, mainly Blackpool.

their offices in Manchester, Leeds and Bradford from Blackpool, Southport and Morecambe – at a far more civilised time than their employees had to clock on. After the decline of the 1960s things changed and today the cities have rediscovered the importance of good quality commuter rail links.

Engineering giants

The railways created major engineering industries. Each railway company had its own workshops, which often acted as a catalyst for urban development. Places like Crewe and Horwich hardly existed before the railways built their great workshops. Darlington and Doncaster expanded into major industrial centres directly because of the railway presence. Many independent engineering companies specialised in railway engineering. Leeds and Manchester became major centres for railway manufacturing, building locomotives for both British companies and abroad. Leeds had no less than seven railway engineering companies at the turn of the nineteenth century. They built over 10,000 locomotives. Hardly any railway engineering remains in the North, apart from slimmed-down facilities at Crewe and Doncaster.

A trip to the seaside

One major benefit of the railways were the opportunities they opened up for mass leisure. Before the railway, Blackpool was a tiny hamlet consisting of a few fishermen's houses. By 1860 it was taking off as one of the country's biggest holiday resorts, bringing

in thousands of visitors each week. By the end of the nineteenth century the railways were handling millions of visitors each summer, from the mills and mines of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Southport, Scarborough, Bridlington, Morecambe, Whitley Bay and Redcar experienced similar, though less spectacular, growth thanks to the railway. The day of 'the cheap day trip' had arrived.



Camping coaches were popular throughout the last century: a scene on the Yorkshire coast in 1936.

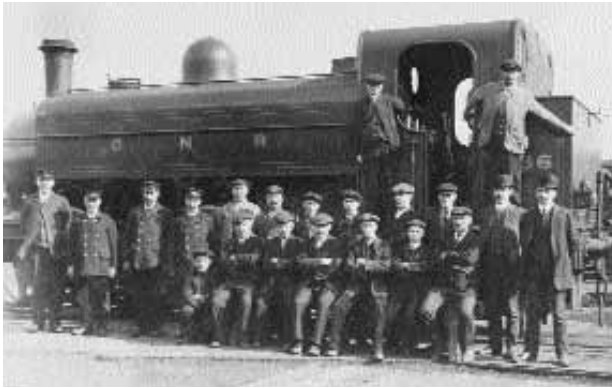
As more leisure time became available, walkers took trains from Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle and other centres to access the moors and dales. Railway companies responded by producing walkers and cyclists' guides to their services. Northern has re-invented this tradition and sponsors a number of walking guides across its network. Thousands of walkers have re-discovered the delights of leaving the car at home and taking the train for a day out in the Dales, Lakes or the Peak District.

Safety slowly improves

The early railways had very basic signalling and accidents were frequent. The Government's Board of Trade gradually exerted control, using inspecting officers usually drawn from the military. They were kept busy, though fortunately the railways of the North had few accidents in which large numbers of passengers were killed. The Settle-Carlisle Line has had an unfortunate history of accidents, including the Hawes Junction (Garsdale) crash of 1910 and the Ais Gill collision and fire of 1913. These accidents led to tighter regulations on signalling and train working. Many years later, in 1995, the line featured once again in tragedy when a



Poster advertising cheap railway tickets on London, Midland & Scottish Railway routes at Manchester Victoria station, 1925.



Railway workers at Ardsley depot, Leeds, around 1900.

Northern Spirit train derailed at a landslide and an oncoming train collided with it. The guard of the train, Stuart Wilson, died in the accident.

Life for many railway workers was perilous, particularly construction staff. Around 100 died during the building of the Woodhead Line between Manchester and Sheffield, and a similar number perished, thirty years later, when the Settle-Carlisle Line was built. Chapels at Woodhead and at Chapel-le-dale commemorate those who died building those lines. Shunters and track workers were particularly vulnerable and staff safety became a major issue of public concern in the 1880s, with questions raised in the House of Commons.



Newcastle driver Billy Hardy (left) with mates and on shunting loco with guard. Photos courtesy of Driver Dave Hardy, Northern Rail, Newcastle.



Pride in the job: Station staff at Farnworth and Bold (near Widnes) in 1939.

Rise of railway labour

Life on the railways in the nineteenth century was not easy. Hours were long, pay was low and, as we've seen above, many railway jobs were highly dangerous. Alongside that, there was a tradition of paternalism in many of the companies which fostered an ethos of 'looking after the troops'. Some of the housing provided by the companies is still in use today and 'railway cottages' have often become desirable homes or holiday cottages.

Railway management in the nineteenth century was not sympathetic towards trades unions. Strikes were tantamount to mutiny and union membership was seen as disloyal. That attitude began to change towards the end of the nineteenth century. Trades unions for 'wages grade' staff – the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, were formed in the last quarter of the century. Manchester was an early stronghold of the ASRS (today's RMT) and Leeds has always been a major ASLEF centre. The forerunner of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) was the Railway Clerks Association, formed in 1897. The North Eastern Railway was the first major company to recognise the unions. By 1907 the companies and representatives of the unions sat down and hammered out the first national agreement on wages and conditions.



Horwich Loco Works' brass band, 1921.

War, Depression - and War

A golden age for railways

The years immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 were, on the surface, a golden age for railways. They had little competition from roads and were able to offer train services which were amongst the best in the world – though America and Germany were catching up. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was running its expresses from Liverpool to Manchester in 40 minutes flat. The company was also experimenting with electrification schemes on its busiest commuter routes, between Liverpool and Southport (today's Merseyrail) and Manchester to Bury (now operated by Metrolink trams). The Midland was also implementing electrification schemes in the Lancaster – Morecambe – Heysham triangle. The North Eastern had the most imaginative plans, to electrify its main line from Newcastle to York. The London and North Western stuck with steam, getting every inch of power out of its express locomotives on the Liverpool and Manchester to London flyers.

The First World War

It all seemed too good to last – and it didn't. Major industrial strife hit the railways in 1911. Then the outbreak of war brought an end of the Edwardian golden age, with Britain plunged into a nightmare of total war. Tens of thousands of railwaymen



An ambulance train at Huddersfield station, 1916. Ambulance trains were used during the First World War in France and Belgium to transport wounded or sick soldiers to hospital.



Manchester Victoria was the principal station on the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway system. This animated scene shows Saturday crowds boarding a train for Blackpool on 27 August 1927.

volunteered to fight and the war memorials you can see at many of our stations give an idea of the numbers who died. For the first time, women joined the railways in significant numbers. Before the war their work was confined to the office and catering. Now they were called on to clean engines and carriages, check tickets and do other traditionally male jobs. Most left railway employment after the war.

The war took a massive toll on the railways themselves so that by 1918 major action had to be taken to shore up their position. Nationalisation was seriously debated but Lloyd George, prime minister at the time, opted for less radical measures. The 1921 Railways Act led to amalgamation of the various railway companies in 1923 – though the L&Y and the LNWR merged the previous year.

Creation of 'The Big Four'

Two companies dominated the North from 1923 to nationalisation in 1948. On the west side of the Pennines – but stretching across to Leeds and Bradford – was the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, based at Euston but with its main works at Crewe, Derby and also Horwich. To the east, the London and North Eastern Railway held sway, with its tentacles stretching into Manchester through its absorption of the Great Central. Whilst the LNER's engineering heart was split between Doncaster and to a lesser

extent Darlington and Gorton, its administrative centre was York – the 'Main Headquarters' which had been the base of the North Eastern Railway since the early 1900s. The other two constituents of 'The Big Four' were the Great Western Railway, which occasionally put in an appearance at Manchester's Exchange station, and The Southern, which never really came anywhere near the North.

The two companies, LMS and LNER, were never really rivals – they had their own geographical territory and only competed for London – Scotland business and perhaps to a small extent for Manchester to London traffic, with the LNER running to Marylebone via Woodhead.

The General Strike of 1926

The companies had massive resources to deploy but inherited a railway which was badly run down due to the war effort. This combined with the onset of economic depression and the General Strike of 1926. Despite a few well publicised stunts by volunteers, hardly any trains ran during the Strike, which lasted nine days. Thousands of railwaymen never got their jobs back at the end of the strike and others were demoted. It was not a happy time to be on the railways and things did not get much better in the next ten years. The economic slump worsened and the industries which supported the railways – mining, cotton and steel making above all – were particularly hard hit. The miners, millworkers and steel workers who once took the train to enjoy a holiday were out of work and the last thing they could afford was a seaside trip.

Renaissance in the 30s

The economy began to pick up in the mid-1930s and the new spirit of optimism was typified by the LMS 'Coronation Scot' and the LNER's 'Silver Jubilee' streamlined expresses. Crewe turned out Stanier's magnificent 'Coronation' Pacific and Gresley at Doncaster rolled out his sleek A4 Pacific. One of the class, 4498 'Mallard', was to achieve the fastest recorded speed of a steam locomotive – 126 mph – in 1938.

The day trip market to Blackpool, Scarborough and other Northern resorts revived. On one day in 1936 the signallers at Kirkham North Junction, through which all traffic to Blackpool was funnelled, recorded no less than 656 trains!

The LNER started a scheme to electrify the Manchester – Sheffield via Woodhead route, with the ultimate objective of wiring through to Marylebone.



Sir Nigel Gresley, designer of the London & North Eastern Railway A4 class 4-6-2 locomotive number, stands next to the engine which bears his name.

Rise of fascism – and war

Yet whilst the railways were starting to revive, a much uglier revival was taking place in Europe. Several British railwaymen had gone to fight for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, but backed up by Hitler's tanks and planes General Franco snuffed out the democratic government. Before long Europe would be plunged into the Second World War and the railways would be at the front line of the conflict, at home as well as in Europe.



Half a million school children were evacuated in four days in 1939, many from northern cities.

All the great plans, such as electrifying the Woodhead Route, were suddenly put on hold.

The age of total war

The railways of the North, and indeed all parts of the country, suffered far more than they had in the First World War. Modern aerial warfare meant that railways were a key target. Several major railway locations in the North were heavily bombed, notably York, Barrow, Middlesbrough, Hull, Liverpool and Manchester. The railways performed magnificently under increasingly difficult conditions – many railwaymen were called up and those who stayed behind to do essential jobs worked tirelessly to keep the trains moving. Women came back to the railways as cleaners,

guards, porters and signallers. This time, many stayed on the railways after the war ended.

Many of the major workshops transferred to war production, often using women workers for the first time. There was little time for maintenance and by the end of the war the railways were on their knees, with worn out infrastructure and rolling stock. But the contribution of Britain's railways, and its railway men and women, had been heroic. And they had every right to expect something better than their parents had got after the First World War.



Devastation at Sunderland station during the blitz. Photo courtesy of Backtrack Magazine.

Nationalisation

1948 - 1994

Labour swept to power in the 1945 election on a radical programme which included railway nationalisation. Many railway trade union activists in the North found themselves sitting in the House of Commons as Labour MPs. Few opposition politicians opposed nationalisation. The railways needed investment on a massive scale, which could only come from the state. So on January 1st 1948, British Railways was born. Mining, steel and road haulage were also brought under public ownership.

Public ownership – the tide recedes

British Railways came under the overall control of the British Transport Commission, which would, it was planned, take over all aspects of transport including road haulage, passenger road transport and aviation. Yet whilst British Rail stayed under state ownership, road haulage and the buses were de-nationalised by subsequent Conservative governments.

In the North of England, railways which had been part of the LMS simply became part of the London Midland Region. On the east side, former LNER territory was split into two - the Eastern Region



A Manchester passenger train hauled by an electric locomotive leaving the Woodhead tunnel in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 2 September 1954.



The old order changes.

was formed covering the southern half of the network and the North Eastern Region pretty much covered what was the former North Eastern railway pre 1923. The North Eastern was eventually merged into the Eastern Region.

The Modernisation Plan

British Rail inherited an ageing, run-down railway. Some pre-war schemes, such as Manchester – Sheffield electrification, were however completed. Other schemes, such as electrification of the East Coast Main Line, were quietly dropped, only to be revived a year later.



Bradford Exchange: The transition from steam to diesel in the 1960's.



Modern signal control room at York station, 1951.

But the Government was determined to invest in a modern railway system and the 1955 Modernisation Plan was the key to reviving the railways. Steam traction would be abandoned and a programme of electrification and dieselisation was to be ushered in. Stations would be rebuilt and the citizens of post-war Britain would have a transport system befitting a modern and progressive nation.

And a lot was done. The West Coast Main Line from Euston to Crewe, Manchester and Liverpool was electrified and stations like Stafford were rebuilt. But then it stopped. Instead of continuing north to Preston, Carlisle and Glasgow, less efficient diesel traction was used, until the job was finally completed in 1974. British Rail workshops were still turning out new steam locos as late as 1960 – many only surviving for five or six years.

The Beeching Axe

Railways in the North faced an increasingly bleak future during the 1950s as road competition began to really bite. A small number of branch lines closed in the 1950s but it was in the next decade that the cuts really hit. Richard (later Lord) Beeching was appointed chairman of the British Railways Board in 1960, by the Conservative Transport Minister Ernest Maples. He had a clear remit – to make the railways pay and get rid of anything that didn't. The 'Beeching Report' of 1963 – 'The Reshaping of British Railways' sounded the death knell for dozens of railways around the country.

The North had more than its fair share of closures. Some branch lines had clearly outlived their usefulness, but the loss of rail services to towns like Fleetwood, Ripon, Ashington, Blyth, Market Weighton, Leigh and elsewhere, seems to have been mistaken.



Period of decline: the last day of train services between Bury and Bacup on a wet January morning in 1967. A train bound for Bury pauses at Waterfoot. (Paul Salvesson)

Some of the routes which Beeching wanted to close survived, and are today prospering. The busy commuter lines to Ilkley and Skipton would have lost their local passenger services if the report had been implemented fully, and the Penistone Line from Sheffield to Huddersfield would not be the thriving 'community railway' it has become. It might have survived as a cycle track. Other routes which are now greatly missed include the electrified Woodhead Route between Manchester and Sheffield and the Beverley – York route in the East Riding.

Turn of the tide – Settle-Carlisle is saved

The last major closure attempt was the Settle-Carlisle Line in the late 1980s. The line had lost its through passenger traffic and most freight was diverted via Shap. British Rail announced its proposal to close the line in 1986. The news led to an avalanche of protest, culminating in 23,000 formal objections. The line was reprieved and the closure attempt proved particularly effective in raising the line's profile. Use during the closure campaign rocketed, and fortunately the growth has been sustained since.

The saving of the Settle-Carlisle Line was a turning point for railways. Closures were off the political agenda, consigned to the



Tyldesley station, between Leigh and Manchester, shortly after closure in 1969. (Paul Salvesson)

'too difficult' category. One of the very last closures was the Clayton West branch in West Yorkshire, which succumbed in 1983. There have been no significant closures since. But the investment which the North's railways needed was still not forthcoming.

The PTEs are born

One of the most important legislative changes in this period was the 1968 Transport Act, which established the passenger transport executives (PTEs). In the North, PTEs were formed for

Merseyside, Greater Manchester, South and West Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. They had the resources to invest in both the infrastructure and operation of their local rail network and the results were stunning. New trains, new stations and attractive fares led to a major increase in ridership across all of the PTEs.

Doing a lot with little

Despite the success of the PTEs, overall there was little money to invest. British Rail managers became expert at doing a lot with few resources. British Rail introduced new management structures in the late 1980s and early 1990s which put the organisation on a much stronger business footing. The creation of InterCity, Provincial, Network SouthEast and Freight provided an effective management focus and the neglected 'provincial' services began a steady revival – helped by increasingly pro-active passenger transport executives and local authorities.

Turn of the tide?

By the 1980s it was becoming clear that road motor transport was not the answer to all our transport problems. The cities were becoming congested and a growing environmental awareness gave an added attraction to rail investment. Increasingly, rail was seen as offering a viable alternative to the car and this was reflected in a growing number of schemes across the North. The PTEs and county councils were key allies without whom little would have been achieved.

New stations opened at Meadowhall, Metro Centre as well as at several smaller locations like Hag Fold, Flowery Field, Slaithwaite, and Lea Green, funded by the PTEs. One of the most notable line re-openings was the Ribble Valley Line from Blackburn to Clitheroe, a partnership between Lancashire County Council and British Rail. Ribble Valley Rail, the pressure group which campaigned for over 10 years to get the service back, is now actively involved with Northern in promoting what has become a flagship service with rising passenger numbers.

One of the most successful schemes was electrification of the Leeds – Ilkley/Skipton/Bradford suburban routes. Remember these services had been threatened with closure by Beeching.

Investment transformed them into some of the most successful commuter routes in the country, with spectacular growth which continues today.

Some major national schemes benefiting the North came to fruition: electrification of the East Coast Main Line being the most

notable. The first generation of diesel multiple units, built in the 1950s and early 1960s, were replaced by the 'Pacer' and 'Sprinter' fleets.

Light Rail and Metro

Several schemes in the 1970s and 1980s helped revolutionise rail travel in the North. The Tyne and Wear Metro was created out of several worn-out Tyneside commuter routes, with a new tunnel under the city. It opened in 1980 and became a stunning success. British Rail developed a similar, but heavier, scheme for Merseyside, linking up the Wirral, Kirkby, Southport, Ormskirk and Hough Green routes with an underground loop in the city. It opened in 1977. Today the network is operated by Merseyrail, a franchise run by the same joint venture which runs Northern – Serco and NedRailways.

Greater Manchester opted for light rail to replace the ageing electrified infrastructure on the Bury – Manchester - Altrincham routes. Metrolink opened in 1992 and has gone from strength to strength. It is now operated by one of Northern's parent companies, Serco. After some very determined lobbying by GMPTE and local authorities, the Government has approved extensions to Oldham, Rochdale and South Manchester.



The age of steam: Liverpool driver Eric James. (Paul Salvesson)



Transition to diesel: Driver Tom Kelly of Blackburn. (Paul Salvesson)

A modern work force

The 1970s and 1980s marked a sea change in social relations on the railway. More and more women were taking up jobs in traditionally male bastions. The first female train drivers took the controls in the mid 1970s. British Rail set out to recruit women for senior management positions, encouraging female graduates to apply for its Management Trainee scheme. Many of the recruits are now managing directors of train companies, including our own.

The 1960s and 1970s saw large scale immigration from the Asian sub-continent and Africa. Whilst many Asian workers took up jobs in the North's textile industries an increasing number took jobs on the railways, as guards, station staff and other grades. Today, Northern's Human Resources team encourages diversity and respect for people from all backgrounds and beliefs. We want to have a workforce which mirrors the communities we serve.

Privatisation

Railways remained a political football during the era of public ownership. Yet throughout the Thatcher years rail privatisation seemed not to be a priority. It was the John Major Government of 1992 that was determined to complete the programme of privatisation by selling off the railways. Various options were mooted but it was finally decided to go for the separation of track and operations, with an independent track authority and several franchised and open access operators.

The 1993 Railways Act heralded the end of British Rail and the creation of a system of franchised passenger operations. An infrastructure authority – Railtrack – was created which would, initially, be state owned. It was subsequently decided to sell Railtrack. The first franchised train operator was South West Trains, which started operations in 1994. Over the next three years all the other train operations were sold to various bidders.

The North of England Franchises

In the North of England, the former Regional Railways North West was sold to Great Western Holdings, which also had the Great Western Trains franchise. The company was branded North Western Trains and won much local support by operating innovative but short-lived services from Rochdale, Blackpool and Manchester Airport to London Euston. Regional Railways North East (RRNE) went to Liverpool-based bus operator MTL Holdings.

The tasks facing both franchises proved challenging. North Western Trains was bought by First Group in 1998 and RRNE, subsequently re-branded as 'Northern Spirit', was bought by Arriva in 2000.

The period between 1996 and the letting of the Northern franchise was an unsettling time for railway staff and their customers, with little new money available for investment.

Signs of revival

The new fragmented structure established by the Railways Act was unfamiliar to both railway managers and local authorities. Decision making was complex. Yet some progress started to be made. Both train companies built up strong relations with the passenger transport executives in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South and West Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. County councils such as Lancashire and Durham found ways to



Customer service has improved in recent years. (Northern Rail)

support rail schemes. Several new stations opened including Horwich Parkway, promoted by GMPTE; Merseytravel's Wavertree Technology Park; and Euxton Balshaw Lane, largely funded by Lancashire County Council. West Yorkshire PTE promoted the re-opening of the Halifax – Huddersfield route with a new station at Brighouse.

On the more rural parts of the network, community rail partnerships came into existence to harness community support for the local railway. In the North of England, the Penistone Line Partnership became the first community rail partnership, with an eclectic mix of music and real ale trains and guided walks to help breathe new life into that particular line. People started coming back to the railway.

A time of change

The historian of rail privatisation will be struck by how turbulent the period between 1994 and 2005 was. Several franchises changed hands, Railtrack was replaced and the Hatfield accident in 2000 had deep and wide-ranging effects on the whole railway. Network Rail was subsequently formed as a not-for-dividend company limited by guarantee, to manage the railway infrastructure. The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, set up at the time of privatisation to manage the franchising process, was abolished and a Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) was formed by the incoming Labour Government. The SRA itself was abolished as a result of the Railway Review of 2004 and most of its functions transferred to the Department for Transport.

Strategic Rail Authority ushers in changes

Whilst organisational change within the railway industry became a way of life, outside the industry more and more people were waking up to the fact that the road network could not cope with the demands being placed on it. Rail had the potential to provide a sustainable solution, but it needed stability, backed up by investment, to realise the potential.

The creation of a franchise covering the whole of the North of England began to take shape during the existence of the Strategic Rail Authority. The North Wales services run by North Western Trains, and subsequently First North Western, transferred to the new Wales and Borders franchise in 2003. It was decided to take the Trans-Pennine Express business out of Arriva Trains Northern and longer distance First North Western services and create a stand-alone franchise for what was more like an InterCity operation. The remaining local services operated by First North Western and Arriva Trains Northern would be merged into a

single franchise covering the whole of the North of England.

The TransPennine Express franchise was won in 2003 by First Group and it began operating in February 2004.

Northern Franchise begins

After a hard-fought competition the Northern franchise was awarded later in 2004 to a joint venture of Serco and Dutch Railways subsidiary, NedRailways.

Since the franchise started in December 2004 there have been some exciting developments. Passenger growth has been averaging 10% each year and reliability has dramatically improved. During 2007 Northern took delivery of additional rolling stock and is continuing to work with its partners in Government and the PTEs to make the case for further investment.

Northern is leading the way in its community development activities and is working on innovative environmental strategies.



(Northern Rail)

Conclusion

We're proud of where we've come from. There is much to celebrate in the tradition of dedication to public service, and doing a job essential to the North's industry and society.

We're running a modern railway which aims to meet needs which are very different from those of the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries. We long since lost a monopoly on longer distance transport and rail has been putting up an increasingly successful counter-attack against its competitors. More people are now travelling by train than at any time since 1947.

On Northern, the number of people using our services is growing by over 10% a year. One of our biggest challenges in the years ahead is to find the extra capacity on our trains to accommodate continuing growth.

We hope you have enjoyed this review of 'where we've come from' – whether you are a Northern employee or one of our many stakeholders or passengers. Let's apply the lessons of the past and look forward to a future which is looking increasingly optimistic for railways.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the tremendous assistance of the National Railway Museum, who provided most of the pictures.

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We are also indebted to Backtrack Magazine, Simon Clarke and Dave Hardy.

Want to know more?

This is only a very short introduction to Northern's heritage. If you are interested in learning more about the history of the railways, the National Railway Museum at York has a superb archive and a well stocked book shop.

If you are employed by Northern, you may want to get involved in 'the Northern History Group' – for details email Paul Salveson, our Head of Government and Community Strategies on: paul.salveson@northernrail.org

USEFUL HISTORICAL WEBSITES

Midland Railway: midlandrailwaysociety.org.uk

London and North Western Railway: lnwrs.org.uk

Great Central Railway: gcrs.org.uk

Great Northern Railway: gnrs150m.com

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway: lyrs.org.uk

Cumbrian Railways Association:
cumbrianrailwaysassociation.org.uk



London, Midland & Scottish Railway station staff at Thatto Heath station, Lancashire, 1939. Before British Railways' modernisation plans in the 1950s and 1960s even relatively small stations like Thatto Heath employed several staff.



The North of England rail network in 1950 - little changed since 1880. But very different today! Despite the Beeching cuts of the 1960's, Britain's railways are today carrying as many passengers as they did in 1946.

Price £2.50

(£1 from all sales go to The Railway Children Charity)

www.railwaychildren.org.uk



www.northernrail.org