

CRAVEN'S HISTORICAL COMMUNITY STATIONS

LONG PRESTON



An LMS 4F 0-6-0 storms through Long Preston heading up freight as a family complete with suitcase await the next down passenger service in the late 1950s. Photo: D. Bins Collection

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LONG PRESTON STATION

Long Preston's railway station was opened on the 30th July 1849 by the Little North Western Railway Company. The station is situated 37 miles north west of Leeds. North west of the station the route divides at Settle Junction from where the Bentham Line services continue to Lancaster and Morecambe whilst other trains head north to Carlisle.

The attractive original wooden station buildings were constructed in the Little North Western 'house style' and were not demolished until the early 1970s. Sadly, the station, now a shadow of its former self, has just two bus-style shelters in place to give waiting passengers a modicum of protection.

The station once boasted a goods yard and both outer arches of the three arch bridge, which carries the road over the railway adjacent to the station, had railway lines beneath them. The goods yard was reached through the arch adjacent to the 'up line' and this is the only remaining clue to the goods yard location. The goods yard was very important for local agriculture traffic but this declined with the development of the neighbouring Hellifield station. A signal box was located just beyond the road bridge opposite the goods yard.



Jubilee Class 4-6-0 45658 Keyes sweeps through Long Preston heading the up 'Waverley' in the late 1950s. Photo: D. Bins Collection

The Railway Clearing House handbook of railway stations for 1904 lists the station with facilities to deal with passengers, goods, livestock, horse boxes and furniture vans. Initially, there was no crane in the goods yard but by 1950 a two-ton crane had been installed.

Interestingly, the goods yard at Long Preston was chosen by the Fylde Water Board as the materials transshipment point for the construction of Stocks Reservoir, in the Forest of Bowland AONB, which took place between 1921 and 1932. Materials for the 3,059 million-gallon reservoir arriving at Long Preston by rail were off loaded into road vehicles and driven to Tosside for onward conveyance on a three-foot narrow-gauge railway. At this time the existing goods yard was not large enough to accept this welcome additional traffic and was quickly expanded by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway and included a short private branch, built to the Fylde Water's specification. This siding came off the 'down line' and passed behind the signal box.



A single car class 153 153378 stands at Long Preston heading the 09-13 Leeds-Morecambe service on 27th August 2019. Photo: Brian Haworth

Long Preston is a very old settlement; its name in Old English means Long Priest's Village. The station is currently listed as a gateway station to the 'Yorkshire Dales National Park' which lies immediately to the north of the line.

