

THE LITTLE NORTH WESTERN'S HISTORICAL STATIONS

LANCASTER GREEN AYRE STATION

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LANCASTER GREEN AYRE STATION

Lancaster Green Ayre was the third station to open in the city, after the original at Greaves in 1840 and Lancaster Castle in 1846. Designed by Edmund Sharpe for the Morecambe Harbour and Railway Company, Green Ayre opened on 12th June 1848. The line originally ran from Lancaster to Morecambe Harbour.

Within a year, the company was amalgamated with the "Little" North Western Railway which continued the line eastward from Green Ayre, along the south bank of the River Lune, in November 1849 to Halton, Caton, Hornby, Wennington and Bentham to join the line it had constructed westwards from Skipton at Clapham. The completed line between Morecambe and Leeds opened on 1st June 1850.

A connecting curve, with a relatively steep gradient, was built between Green Ayre and Castle stations, opened on 18th December 1849. Immediately west of the station was the junction between the connecting curve to Castle and Green Ayre's engine shed and the Leeds - Morecambe line, which then crossed the Lune via the Greyhound Bridge.

The "Little" North Western Railway was formally taken over in 1874 by the Midland Railway, which had previously operated, then leased the line, from its early days and became a significant route for that company, giving access from its Yorkshire lines to the Lancashire coast in an area dominated by its major rival, the London and North Western Railway.

The Lancaster-Morecambe section of the line was electrified in 1908. This was the first high-voltage overhead electrification of a line in the United Kingdom and was at 6,600 volts AC 25Hz; it was the pioneer for such systems. It was intended to be a test bed for further mainline electrification by the Midland Railway. In 1952 the original rolling stock was life expired and was withdrawn. Steam traction took over for a short while and then the power supply was upgraded to 50Hz and some new stock provided; this was to act as a test-bed for further main-line electrification in the United Kingdom. This section of line became particularly busy.

The line between Wennington and Morecambe via Green Ayre fell victim to the Beeching Axe. It closed to passengers on 2nd January 1966, although the line through the station continued to be used for freight until 16th March 1976. The station was demolished that year. The Greyhound Bridge was converted for road use in 1972.



The imposing facade of Green Ayre station, designed by Edmund Sharpe. Seen here in the 1940s. Courtesy of the Science Museum.



One of the pioneering local electric services at Green Ayre in the 1960s. The services ran between Lancaster Castle, Green Ayre, Scale Hall, Morecambe Promenade and Heysham Harbour. Courtesy John Robinson Collection.



At the western end of the station was Green Ayre engine shed. On the turntable, in this early 1960s photograph, is a Stanier Black Five No.44889. Courtesy John Robinson Collection.



A mid-1960s eastbound service setting off for Leeds, headed by a Class 45 'Peak', No.D75. It would be joined to a service from Carnforth at Wennington. Courtesy John Robinson Collection.

