

= Preston railway station =

Preston railway station serves the city of Preston in Lancashire , England , and is a major station on the West Coast Main Line , and is the notional half @-@ way point on the WCML between London Euston and Glasgow Central 194 miles from Glasgow Central and 206 from London Euston although ( the actual half @-@ way point is at Leyland , approximately 6 miles south ) . It is served by Northern , Virgin Trains , and TransPennine Express services , plus Caledonian Sleeper overnight services between London and Scotland .

A station was first opened on this site by the North Union Railway in 1838 . It was extended in 1850 with new platforms under the separate management of the East Lancashire Railway , and by 1863 , London ? Scotland trains stopped here to allow passengers to eat in the station dining room . The current station was built 1880 and extended in 1903 and 1913 , when it had fifteen platforms . A free buffet for servicemen was provided during both World Wars . The " East Lancashire " platforms were demolished in the 1970s as connecting lines closed . Only eight platforms remain in regular use today .

As well as intercity trains to London , Birmingham , Manchester , Glasgow and Edinburgh , the station is served by local trains to most parts of Lancashire , and parts of Cumbria , Greater Manchester , Merseyside and Yorkshire .

= = Station layout and amenities = =

The main entrance to the station is at the bottom of the station approach , a ramp off the bridge that carries Fishergate over the railway . The ticket office exists within the small concourse . This concourse gives direct access , down the ramp , to the intercity platforms 3 and 4 . There are footbridges on either side of this ramp to all other platforms . The eastern footbridge ends at an alternative entrance to the station on Butler Street , giving closer access to Preston city centre and the station car park . There also exists a subway which provides step @-@ free access to all eight platforms in use at the station and with platform 7 , at the south end of which is another entrance serving the station car park .

The island forming platforms 3 and 4 is a very wide island platform with a long series of buildings . Inside these buildings are services and amenities including a newsagent and several food outlets including a licensed restaurant . There are also toilets and a large waiting room . A small travel centre on platform 3 , near the ramp , is operated by Virgin Trains staff to give information for passengers on the platform . In addition to these main amenities , there is a small coffee shop outlet on platform 4 , as well as an additional shop on platforms 1 and 2 .

Passenger information systems were updated during 2007 and now use dot matrix display screens . Preston retains a manual tannoy system , a rarity amongst the larger stations in the UK . In 2009 the station was identified as one of the ten worst category B interchange stations for mystery shopper assessment of fabric and environment , and was set to receive a share of £ 50m funding for improvements prior to a public spending review initiated in 2010 .

= = Services = =

There are currently six through and two bay platforms in use at Preston , with two more available for emergency use . All lines are electrified , allowing any train to use any platform .

= = = Northern = = =

4tph to Blackpool North

6tpd to Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness

2tpd to Windermere

1tph to Liverpool South Parkway

2tph to York

1tph to Colne  
1tph to Manchester Airport  
1tph to Manchester Victoria  
1tph to Hazel Grove  
1tph to Ormskirk

= = = TransPennine Express = = =

1tph to Manchester Airport  
1tph to Glasgow Central or Edinburgh Waverley ( Alternates )

= = = Virgin Trains = = =

2tph to London Euston  
1tph to Glasgow Central  
1 train every 2 hours to Edinburgh Waverley

Serco operate their " Highland " Caledonian Sleeper service with a call at Preston to and from the Scottish Highlands . They are the only services through the station not operated by the three companies listed above . London Midland 's single evening peak service from Birmingham New Street no longer operates , having been withdrawn at the end of the 2007 @-@ 08 timetable .

Great North Western Railway has been given permission to run 6 trains a day from London to Blackpool North from 2018 , which will call at Preston . The London terminus will be either Euston or Queen 's Park , depending on network capacity during planned infrastructural work to the West Coast Mainline . Additional intermediate stations at which the service will stop are also dependent upon future capacity .

= = History = =

In coaching days , Preston was an important centre for both passenger and postal traffic . This importance continued into the railway age , both as a major junction and as a stopping point about half way between London and Glasgow .

= = = Preston ? s railways = = =

The first rail lines in Preston were those of the Lancaster Canal Tramroad , a horse @-@ drawn line connecting two parts of the Lancaster Canal . It opened in 1805 , but never carried passengers and never converted to steam . It ceased operating in Preston in 1862 .

The first steam @-@ hauled passenger railway in Preston was the North Union Railway ( NUR ) . On 31 October 1838 it opened its line from Wigan to a station on the site of the present @-@ day Preston Station . This immediately linked the town to London , Birmingham , Liverpool and Manchester .

Each subsequent line was built by a different company . Rivalry often prevented any cooperation over shared facilities , and so almost every railway line into Preston used its own station . It was not until 1900 that all lines in Preston shared a single station , by which time all the companies had been taken over by one or both of just two companies .

The second passenger railway into Preston was the Preston and Longridge Railway , which opened as another horse @-@ drawn tramway on 1 May 1840 , to a terminus in Deepdale Street . It converted to steam in 1848 , but did not run its trains into the North Union station until 1885 .

The Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway ( L & PJR ) was the third line , which opened on 25 June 1840 , initially using the North Union station . However , relations between the NUR and L & PJR soured , and , from 1 January 1842 , most L & PJR trains used , instead , Maxwell House railway station , a short distance to the north of the North Union station . A few trains passed through , but the NUR charged a toll of 6d per passenger . Most passengers refused to pay ,

preferring to alight at Maxwell House and walk the 200 yards ( 200 m ) to the North Union station , but the NUR refused to hold the train to allow passengers to walk and rebook . The NUR advised northbound passengers to travel by the Lancaster Canal rather than the L & PJR . On 1 January 1844 , Maxwell House station came into the possession of the NUR , and lack of agreement led to several weeks when hapless L & PJR passengers had to alight on the trackside at nearby Dock Street ( off Pitt Street ) . Lancaster trains were able to use the North Union station from 12 February

Preston's fourth railway was the Preston and Wyre Joint Railway to Fleetwood , opening , just a few weeks after the L & PJR , on 16 July 1840 , to its own terminus at Maudlands in Leighton Street . After 12 February 1844 , regular Preston and Wyre trains used the North Union station , along with the L & PJR , although Maudlands Station continued to be used for excursions for some decades .

The fifth company to run trains into Preston was the Bolton and Preston Railway ( BPR ) , from 22 June 1843 . Its line joined the North Union's at Euxton , 5 1/2 miles ( 9 km ) south of Preston , but the company used Maxwell House station instead of the North Union's . However , the NUR charged 1s per passenger to BPR trains over its tracks , and eventually the BPR resorted to ferrying its passengers by road between Euxton and Preston . The BPR was driven into submission and was taken over by the NUR from 1 January 1844 .

The sixth line into Preston was that of the Preston and Blackburn Railway , which opened on 1 June 1846 , joining the North Union line immediately south of Farrington Station ( respelt Farington from October 1857 ) . The railway company was absorbed into the East Lancashire Railway ( ELR ) on 3 August 1846 . Once again , the NUR charged high tolls for the use of its line which led the ELR to build its own line into Preston . The line was initially opposed by Preston Corporation , but was eventually permitted on condition that the embankment north of the Ribble ( which later became the dividing line between Avenham and Miller Parks ) be ornamentally laid out , and that a pedestrian path ( still in use today ) be provided on the river bridge . The line ran into new platforms built on the east side of the North Union station , which were managed and staffed by the ELR , and which had their own booking hall and entrance in Butler Street . The new platforms were effectively a separate station . The new line and station opened on 2 September 1850 .

The seventh line in Preston was the North Union's own Victoria Quay Branch to Victoria Quay on the River Ribble ( later extended to Preston Docks in 1882 and which now connects to the heritage Ribble Steam Railway ) . The single @-@ track goods line opened in October 1846 from a south @-@ facing junction immediately south of Preston Station , through a tight curve into a tunnel with a gradient of 1 in 29 , emerging north of Fishergate Hill near the riverside .

The eighth line to Preston was the Liverpool , Ormskirk and Preston Railway , owned by the ELR and connected to its Blackburn line into Preston . It opened on 2 April 1849 . From 1891 , its trains used a new curve at Farington to enter Preston via the North Union line .

The ninth and final line into Preston was the West Lancashire Railway ( WLR ) from Southport . The railway arrived in Preston on 16 September 1882 , by which time all the town's other lines were owned by the London and North Western Railway ( LNWR ) or the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway ( LYR ) , or jointly by both . The independent WLR built its own Fishergate Hill station . It also built a connecting line to the former ELR ( then LYR ) line , via which the majority of Southport @-@ to @-@ Preston trains continued to Blackburn . The railway was not a success , and on 1 July 1897 it was taken over by the LYR . This resulted in the diversion of all passenger services to use the East Lancashire platforms of Preston Station from 16 July 1900 .

The network of lines south of Preston allowed great flexibility in the routing of trains . A train approaching the town on any of the lines from the south ( except the WLR from Southport ) could be routed to enter the station via either the North Union or the East Lancashire line . It was even possible for trains from the north to perform an effective U @-@ turn , a feat sometimes carried out by trains between Scotland and Blackpool that would otherwise have had to reverse .

== Station development ==

When the station was first opened in 1838 by the North Union Railway , the line north of the station

passed through a tunnel under the west end of Fishergate ( then Preston ? s major thoroughfare ) . It was on a slope so steep that sometimes station staff had to push trains out of the station . By 1846 , the station was already very busy , handling trains from Wigan and the south , Bolton , Fleetwood , Blackpool , Lancaster and the north , and Blackburn . There were no footbridges ; passengers had to cross the lines escorted by station staff . North of the station was a network of goods lines around the end of the Lancaster Canal . The coal yards and sidings here continued to operate long after the canal had fallen into commercial disuse .

The station ? s first expansion came in 1850 when the new East Lancashire line used new platforms staffed and managed by the East Lancashire Railway , with their own entrance and booking office in Butler Street . From 1863 , trains between London and Scotland , having no dining cars , were scheduled to allow 20 minutes at Preston for passengers to eat in the station ? s dining room . The pressure on catering staff was increased when northbound and southbound trains would often arrive about the same time . The condition of the station deteriorated to the extent that on 18 August 1866 part of the roof on the East Lancashire side collapsed injuring three people , one seriously . By then , 150 trains a day passed through the station .

Eventually the station was rebuilt , at a cost of a quarter of a million pounds , reopening in July 1880 , and with seven through platforms and four bay platforms . At this time , both the Ribble bridge and the line as far as Euxton , were widened from two tracks to four . A striking feature of the new station was its long and wide central island platform , 1 @, @ 225 feet ( 373 m ) long and 110 feet ( 34 m ) wide . It was larger than any of the London terminal station platforms , the longest being Kings Cross at 990 feet ( 302 m ) . Along the centre of the platform were refreshment rooms , offices , and waiting rooms . A booking hall at the north end of the station was accessed from the middle of a new bridge carrying Fishergate over the railway . A broad ramp led down to the main island platform , with footbridges to smaller platforms on either side . Further south , the platforms were also linked by a passenger subway and a separate subway for luggage , accessed via hoists . At the south end of the main platform , a footbridge led to the nearby Park Hotel , a joint LYR / LNWR property , opened in 1883 .

On 30 January 1877 a heavy storm blew the roof completely away from the station , but a more serious accident occurred on 13 July 1896 when a Euston to Glasgow train passed through the station at an estimated 45 mph ( 70 km / h ) , despite a 10 mph ( 16 km / h ) speed limit . It was derailed on a tight curve at the north end of the station , killing one person . As a result of this , the tracks were realigned . Charles Street , to the west of the station , was demolished , as were more houses northwest of the station . Fishergate bridge was extended on its west side . This allowed more tracks and platforms to be built on the west side of the station , with gentler curves . The Ribble bridge was widened again , from four to six tracks . These enlargements were completed by 1903 . The east side of the station was also extended in 1913 .

By 1926 , the lines and platforms were used as follows , from west to east :

Southwest of the station was Christian Road Goods Station ( previously known as Charles Street Goods Station before 1903 ) .

Next was the single @-@ track goods line that curved west to enter the tunnel to the docks .

North of the tunnel was a goods loading platform , added in 1903 .

Then were two through lines for non @-@ stop traffic , added in 1903 .

Platforms 1 and 2 formed a large island platform , added in 1903 , with station buildings , handling through traffic to and from Blackpool . Platform 2 was also used as a terminal platform for Longridge trains , and as a reversal platform for trains between Lancaster and Blackpool .

Between platforms 2 and 3 was a centre line used as a run @-@ around loop .

Platforms 3 and 4 formed a narrow island platform without buildings . Platform 3 was used for terminal and reversal trains , as Platform 2 . Platform 4 was a loop platform for Platform 5 .

Platforms 5 and 6 formed the main , wide island platform , with a full set of buildings along its centre . The platforms were used mainly for West Coast Main Line services , northbound and southbound respectively . At the south end were two bay platforms , between platforms 5 and 6 , used for short trains and goods vans .

Platforms 7 and 8 formed another narrow island platform , somewhat shorter than the other

platforms . Platform 7 was a loop platform for Platform 6 . Platform 8 was the northbound East Lancashire through platform .

Platform 9 was the main southbound East Lancashire through platform , containing more buildings and linked to the Butler Street station entrance .

Platform 10 was added in 1913 , as another southbound East Lancashire through platform , which trains accessed via a short tunnel underneath a rebuilt Butler Street entrance .

Platform 11 was a bay platform , set back at the south end of Platform 9 , and curving sharply to the east .

Platforms 12 and 13 were bay platforms , between Platforms 11 and 10 , also curving east . All three bay platforms were for terminating services to and from Southport , Blackburn and Liverpool via Ormskirk . Platform 13 was added in 1913 .

To the east of the station was Butler Street Goods Station , with a large number of sidings and two warehouses .

Later , platforms 11 , 12 , 13 and 10 were renumbered into the more logical sequence 10 , 11 , 12 , 13 .

= = = Contraction = = =

A number of lines around Preston have closed , including the Longridge line in 1930 and the West Lancashire line in 1964 . The old island platforms one and two were closed in 1970 together with the goods lines to the west of the station , but it was then extended northwards to allow platform two to become a dedicated parcels platform . The line towards Liverpool was truncated and singled in summer 1970 , with Preston services terminating at Ormskirk . This was followed by the closure of the East Lancashire line , between Preston and Bamber Bridge , via its original direct route , in April 1972 . The East Lancashire platforms 10 to 13 were demolished , along with the Butler Street Goods Yard . Their site is now covered by car parks for the station and the adjacent Fishergate Shopping Centre , which was built in the 1980s , partly over the north end of the former goods yard . The remaining platforms 3 to 9 were renumbered 1 to 7 .

Some of the station 's heritage can still be seen :

At the far north end of platform 4 are the remains of the Ladywell Sidings , most of which was swept away by the ring road built in the 1990s .

At the north end of platform 3 , a disused bay platform can be seen . It follows the original alignment of the main platform before the 1903 expansion .

There is a tunnel between platforms 3 and 4 , under the station approach . Locomotives and trains are occasionally stored there .

At the north of platform 7 is the blocked up remains of the tunnel which took the platform 13 ( originally number 10 ) through @-@ line from the north , under the Butler Street entrance .

At the southern end of platform 7 , the platform edge curves away to the east but the line now turns westward to join the main line .

The former platforms 1 and 2 are also still in existence , but closed to passengers , and was used for Royal Mail Parcelforce services until recently . Old platform 1 and the lines to its west have been broken to form two bay platforms . Network Rail has its offices here .

= = = Special features = = =

A free buffet for servicemen was provided at the station during both World Wars . The Preston Station Free Buffet Association served free hot drinks , biscuits and buns and sold sandwiches at cost price to anyone in uniform 24 hours a day for the duration of the First World War . Four hundred women working 12 @-@ hour shifts served over 3 million men between 1915 and 1919 . 12 million cups of tea were served between 1939 and 1945 . It was funded by subscription and had its own marked crockery . The station was on a major north @-@ south route for troops . There are three commemorative plaques related to the First World War buffet in the waiting room on platforms 3 and 4 , the former site of WWI buffet . One of the drama segments of the televised Preston Passion of

2012 was set in the First World War servicemen 's buffet . The Second World War buffet was located in the southern building further down platforms 5 & 6 ( now platforms 3 & 4 ) .

One of the catenary stanchions on platform 4 is notably better kept than others , and carries a small plaque detailing the visit of Queen Elizabeth II on 7 May 1974 , after the completion of electrification of tracks north of the point where it stands . This was significant because it marked the completion of the total electrification of the West Coast Main Line .