

# Transport Trail

## About the Transport Trail

Huddersfield's transport history illustrates the means by which the rapid growth of the town, especially through the 19th century, was stimulated by major developments involving canal, rail and road transport.

This trail takes you from the UK's finest railway station frontage to the great engineering achievements of the canal age and identifies sites associated with Huddersfield Corporation's pioneering role in developing a public transport network.

*Text:* Philip Jenkinson, Robert Barratt

*Images:* Kirklees Image Archive, Steve Lockwood, Tony Belton, Roy Brook Archive, Trevor Ellis Collection, Neil Fraser

## Information

For more information about Discover Huddersfield or to learn more about the project and how to get involved, please get in touch through the following media:

[www.discoverhuddersfield.com](http://www.discoverhuddersfield.com)

*Email:* [info@discoverhuddersfield.com](mailto:info@discoverhuddersfield.com)

[@discover\\_hudds](https://twitter.com/discover_hudds)

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### Key:

- Pedestrian area
- Parking
- One way traffic flow

Discover Huddersfield offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.



## 1 Huddersfield Railway Station

It was opened in 1850 and has perhaps the finest station façade in the country. Although the central section was intended as a hotel it seems doubtful that it was ever more than a refreshment room, while the two owning companies had separate booking offices at either end of the building. Each is now a pub; the Head of Steam displays the device of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (lines to Penistone, Halifax, Bradford & Wakefield) while the Kings Head carries the arms of the Huddersfield & Manchester (the main line from Leeds across the Pennines).



## 2 Transport Offices

In 1883 Huddersfield Corporation became the first municipality to operate its own transport system and successively operated steam and electric trams, trolleybuses and motorbuses until control passed to the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro) in 1974. Its head offices were at 66 John William Street and its clock still looks out over the junction with Northumberland Street.



## 3 Goods Yard, Warehouses and Water Towers

The original 1850 station comprised little more than the main building and platform; this angle shows its enlargement in the early 1880s with an island platform, a large goods yard and the huge brick warehouse built on behalf of both companies by the London & North Western Railway (which took over the Huddersfield & Manchester). Just visible at the far corner is the hydraulic hoist which lifted wagons into the upper storeys, the mechanism for which was housed in the red-brick water tower to the left. The stone building across the line has a roof tank which collected rain-water for non-drinking (locomotive, washing, toilet) purposes and has recently been restored as the headquarters of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. The stone goods shed nearest the tunnel (now the children's centre) was built in around 1890 on the site of earlier Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway warehouses.

## 4 Railway Viaduct

In order to gain height to cross the Pennines without involving too steep a gradient, the line was brought through the top side of the town, necessitating the long viaduct which carried five tracks after the widening of 1880-83. Previously the principal landowners, the Ramsden estate, had been unenthusiastic and there had been the threat that Huddersfield would only be served by a branch line terminus at Aspley. But from 1845 their new agent George Loch allied with local businessmen to secure the through route.



## 5 Former Bus Depot and Works

The site between Great Northern Street and Leeds Road now occupied by the retail park was formerly Huddersfield Corporation's Great Northern Street tram depot and workshops (1888). A motorbus depot (facing Leeds Road) was added in 1928. The 1888 depot became the engineering works until 'Metro' progressively resourced this work out of town and concentrated bus operation on the site. First Bus ultimately inherited it and replaced it with a new depot further down Leeds Road in 1995 and the building here was quickly demolished.

## 6 'Gasworks' Railway

Between 1922 and 1966 a railway ran from the 'Newtown' goods yard (now the industrial estate off St John's Road) down Beaumont Street to the gasworks and power station. Coal was brought in and coke taken out by trains preceded by a man with a red flag. From the canal bridge in Gasworks Street the railway bridge abutments can be seen on the left. The track can still be seen in Beaumont Street where the tarmac has worn away and more is visible next to the Gas Club.



## 7 Locomotive Bridge (Turnbridge)

The somewhat flimsy swing bridge which gave its name to this part of town was replaced by the present device of wheels, chains and counterweights in 1865. It was rebuilt and strengthened in 1975, electricity replacing the original windlass operation, and duly scheduled as an Ancient Monument, although it is debateable how much of the original structure survives.



## 8 Aspley Basin

Opened around 1780 as the terminal port of the Sir John Ramsden (or Huddersfield Broad) Canal, this soon became the bustling centre of canal-related industries like boat-building and rope-making, and from 1824 there was a through shipping service to London. The restored warehouse immediately next to Wakefield Road, opened with the canal, is one of the earliest buildings surviving in the town. A short way further West, within today's University campus, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal subsequently opened in 1811, enabling navigation across the Pennines through the three-mile Standedge Tunnel.



## 9 Trolley Poles in Oldgate

Huddersfield operated trolleybuses from 1933 to 1968 and, following the 1963 widening of Southgate, they ran out towards Wakefield Road along Oldgate. The poles supporting the street lighting here can be recognised as former trolley poles by the way they lean backwards in order to take the strain of the overhead wires.



## 10 Coaching Inns

After leaving Southgate the trail continues up Kirkgate. Prior to the railway age, this was the heart of the town and several coaching inns were located here. Nine turnpike roads radiated from Huddersfield – in essence today's A and B roads – and in 1837, almost 40 daily coach departures were listed from seven town centre inns. Whilst little evidence of these remain the name of one – The Pack Horse – still gives its name to a modern shopping arcade.