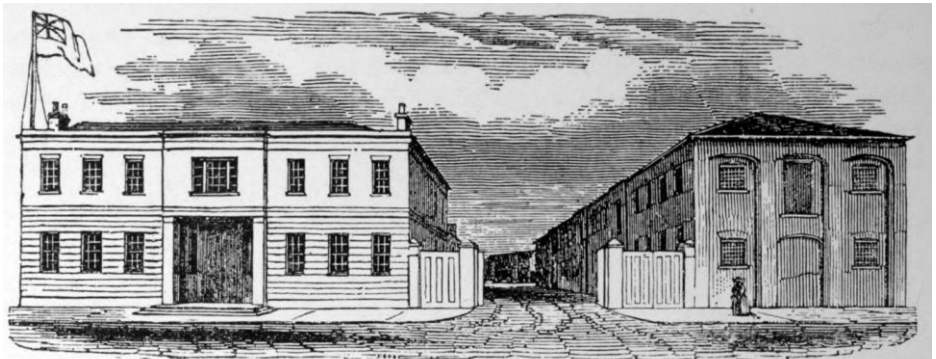


A booklet to mark the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Hull to Selby railway



Woodcut in Hull Packet, July 3, 1840.

FIRST RAILWAY STATION AT HULL (FROM THE HUMBER DOCK SIDE).



A train arriving at Selby from the east in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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The cover images show :

(Top) : The 1840 bascule bridge at Selby opened for river traffic. Three figures - presumably the bridgemen - can be seen at either end of the open span.

(Middle) : The badge of the Hull and Selby Railway Company as it was in 1836

(Bottom) : The original terminus of the line in Hull

## **Why was the Hull and Selby railway built?**

Trade and commerce was the key. Leeds and the West Riding had raw materials and resources. Trading routes to and from the continent lay through Hull and the East Coast ports. As the 19th century progressed, increasing amounts of trade flowed along the rivers and canals, but such journeys were slow, and in the case of currents and shoals on the rivers, potentially dangerous.

The coming of the railroad gave a way to speed up trade. Initial thoughts to create a railroad between Leeds and Hull surfaced in the formation of the Leeds and Hull Railroad Company in 1824, and in 1825, Leeds cloth magnate Benjamin Gott employed George Stevenson to survey a route between Leeds and Selby. However, the plans involved stationary engines winding trains up gradients, and the plans were allowed to lapse. A re-survey of a different route, and the ability to use locomotive power throughout, now that 'Rocket' had proved this possible, meant that the part of the project between Leeds and Selby did prove attractive and went ahead, with the result that in September 1834, Leeds and Selby were linked by the iron road. However, to take goods any further required costly and time consuming transshipment and a slow voyage along the Ouse. It was not long before cries came to extend the railway to the docks at Hull.

## **Planning the Hull and Selby Railway**

Construction of the Leeds to Selby (L&S) railway began in the early 1830s. Even before it was opened, the directors of the L&S were thinking of extending the rails to Hull. Directors of the L&S met a deputation from Hull in February and the clear conclusion was that it would be advantageous to extend the project to Hull.

James Walker and Alexander Comrie, who had surveyed the line to Selby were requested to spy out a route to Hull, and reported their findings to a meeting in that town in August 1834, Whilst they were staid and careful engineers, their enthusiasm for the railway is evident in the initial sentence : *"Those who are at all acquainted with the countryside between Selby and Hull must be aware that it is favourable in purpose for a railway, being free of buildings and*

*nearly level. A line of 30 miles can be laid which, excepting two or three places, can be said to be level."*

They were aware that there were bridges to build over the Ouse at Selby, the Derwent near Hemingbrough and the Market Weighton canal, as well as the question of how to approach Hull - either along the river to the south end of Humber Dock, or across open land to the north end. However, they were confident that these obstacles could be overcome.

Their overall vision was that Selby would mature into an important transport crossroads, being on north-south routes between London and Scotland, and east-west ones with the railways, rivers and canal systems. The contrast between the straightforward 1-hour rail journey between Leeds and Selby and the hazardous 6-hour river voyage from Selby to Hull were clear. Why, as one contemporary commented, should there be a Hull and Selby railway, a man could leave London at 9 am and be in Hull for 9:30 pm!

A favourable report was sent to Parliament in November 1834, suggesting an overall cost of £340 000, about £35 million today or about £1m/mile, somewhat cheaper than today's costs.

The economic predictions of John Exley, a Customs Officer at Hull had a positive response in the Hull papers which persuaded two Hull bankers, Messrs Little and Henwood, to advance an initial £20 000, but other moneys were difficult to come by.

Furthermore, in arguments that seem similar to those advanced against HS2 today, landowners raised objections.

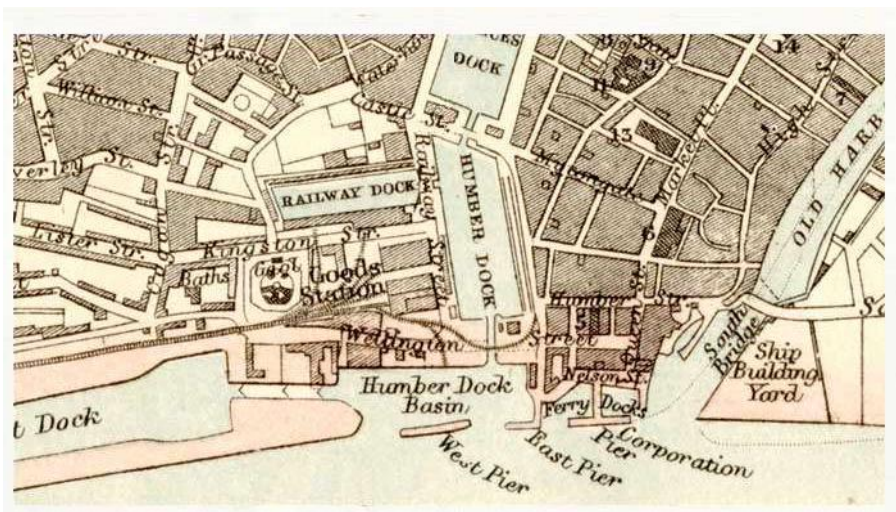
Robert Raikes of Hull claimed the railway would cross his estate in front of his mansion and be a "great eyesore" and "detract from the value of the estate".

Earl Petrie in Selby was concerned that his river wharves would become more difficult to approach due to the new bridge required, and this would lessen his revenue from trade. In addition, a Barlby Bank property he owned would be destroyed. The City of York Corporation weighed in with the worry that a new bridge would "lamentably obstruct" navigation to York on the Ouse. There were several other, more minor, complainants.

As is often the case, dispute resolution came down to money, and the opponents were effectively bought off. Mr. Raikes had the line of the railway suitably altered to avoid his estate, but, sadly, also proposed stations at Welton and North and South Cave. A 'sweetener' of £10 000, around £1 000 000 in today's values, also helped.

The required extra finance eventually arose locally, and also from London (£90 000) and Liverpool (£20 000). The case for rail infrastructure connecting areas of economic activity (as we would put it today) had been made! The Act of Parliament authorizing the line received Royal Assent on 21/6/1836, and construction began on what was a straight line railway over level ground for 30 miles or so. Beyond the curve to the east of Selby Swing Bridge it's over 20 miles to Ferriby : the longest length of straight railway in England. It's so straight that it's said you can see the curvature of the Earth by looking along it. If you stand on the platform at Wressle and look along the line, the effect is clear.

Fullarton's map of 1870 shows how the railway had developed in and around Hull Docks during the course of the subsequent 30 years.





## A new station at Selby

The original Selby station of 1834, visible from platform 3, was literally a terminus. Once a train had arrived in the train shed, goods were taken across Ousegate to the railway wharf, and passengers walked along Ousegate to board their onward transport at a jetty. A railway to Hull would require a bridge over the Ouse, linked to a new station. Once this was opened in 1840, the original station became a goods warehouse, which it remains today, although the rail connection was severed in the 1980s.

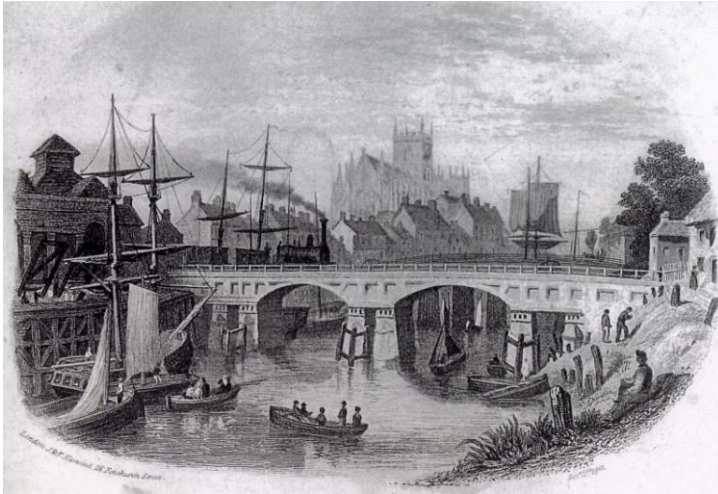
Little of the 1840 station now remains. The 'Hull Packet' of July 1840 describes a manager's house, waiting rooms, booking office and a loco shed being "*ready-built*" and "*slated ready for the plasterers to move in*". Sydney Martin states that, unlike the 1834 terminus, the 1840 building had "*two platforms, with long, low buildings on the Leeds side*". With the opening of the line to York in 1871, the NER rebuilt the station, and further major changes followed at the turn of the 1890s, many of which remain, including the fine footbridge, awnings, verandah (as the contemporary document has it) and columns.

In 1891 the current swing bridge was inaugurated, which required severe alterations to the running lines, with the new bridge being some 20 yards downstream of the old one. A view along platform 1 from the bridge end gives an idea of the swerve needed. A glance down to Ousegate shows the depth of the underpass that replaced the former level crossing.

The 'Selby Times' of February 1891 reports how a gang of 300 men slewed the rails leading to the old bridge onto the new, laid them across the bridge and removed temporary platform arrangements, as well as laying the required new signalling - all in the course of a weekend!

Further modifications took place in 1906, producing a handsome brick and slate building facing onto Station Road, with many rooms for railway business. Much was swept away in the 1960s. The frontage onto Station Road, rooms and siding and shunting facilities were extensively rationalized, the coal drops whose walls remain in the car park were taken out of use along with the bay platform on the opposite face of platform 1. Central running lines were removed when the East Coast main line through Selby was officially closed in September 1983, the last train passing being a Travelling Post Office.

## Selby's bridges



Selby's double bascule bridge of 1840

The original rail bridge at Selby was described as a "double bascule bridge". Each part of the bridge over the river opened vertically, like London Bridge does today. Almost 200 ft wide, it had two opening spans for river traffic of 45 feet. Each leaf was operated by hand, with 2 workmen being stationed on the bridge all day, every day, to operate the lifting mechanism by hand. They were allowed no more than 90 seconds to do this - as well as operating the level crossing gates on Ousegate.

The bridge was constructed of heavy iron, and was subject to severe contraction and expansion, leading to trains being limited in their speed in crossing the bridge. Whilst this was acceptable in the early days of railways, once the network had expanded to the extent that there were the famous 'Races to the North' from London to Scotland, potential delays could not be countenanced, and a new bridge was planned.

Furthermore, in 1840, river traffic had priority over rail. But by the 1880s, a survey showed that there were over 220 daily rail crossings of the bridge, but only 17 lifts for boats passing. When Parliamentary permission was given for a new bridge, rail was granted right of way over sail. This remains the legal position but in practical terms river traffic retains the *de facto* right of way.



An early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of Selby Swing Bridge. Note signal box at the end of the platform



The new bridge, complete by 1891, opened by swinging rather than by lifting.

It was to be operated hydraulically rather than by muscle power, with the brick tower that contained the hydraulics designed by Armstrong's, the famous Newcastle firm, on the Barlby side of the river.

As well as the swing span, there were three other spans. One over the river tow path on the Barlby side, and two on the Selby side. The smaller of the two covers the level former 'tram road' that linked the jetties and the other over Ousegate, with a dip to remove the need for a level crossing. Selby Council stipulated that work was carried out to avoid pedestrians being splashed after heavy rain. During the giving of toasts at a reception to mark the opening of the new bridge, it was commented that the slopes were too steep and would be a source of accidents in icy weather. These slopes were of a suitable gradient to encourage the youth of Selby to roll their 'pace eggs' there at Eastertides in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After commissioning in February 1891, a survey showed that the bridge swung open about 100 times a month in the first three years of operation.

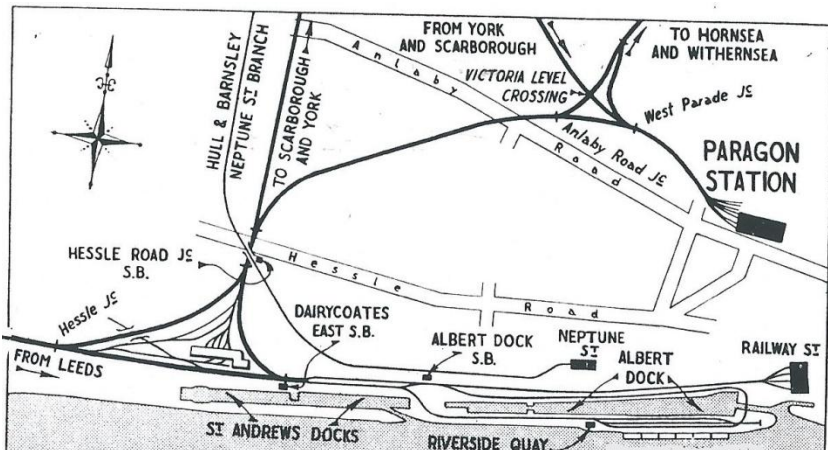
The whole operation had taken around 3 years, with a cost of £30 000 : approximately £3 million today. When the first serious renovation of the bridge in 120 years took place in 2014, the work took a mere 3 months, but the cost was around £8 million.

## Hull's Station

The terminus in Hull was not the familiar Paragon Station of today, but rather a building close to the business end of the world at Hull Docks. But this was not a minor building. The 'Hull Packet' describes a structure encompassing 5 acres. Manor House Street station looked towards Humber Dock and Kingston Street. It was faced with white brick and stone, and contained railway offices as well as public rooms, measuring in all some 100 feet by 70. The ground floor had an entrance hall of 22' x 16' and 3 large offices with long windows reaching from just under the ceiling to floor level.

A 'noble staircase' 31 feet by 12½ led to an opulent directors room and secretary's office, as well as waiting rooms. It was here that the banquet was held on the opening day of the H&S. The train shed was 170x72 feet, lit by 42 clear glazing panels, and held up by 22 iron columns, 40 feet high. There were 4 tracks of rail, and platforms 12 feet high along the whole length of the shed. An acre of water tanks, warehouses and sidings were nearby, with one line leading from the main line direct to the dock head.

After Paragon was opened in 1848, Manor House station became merely a goods depot, before being demolished in 1858 as a new goods complex was built, which served until 1961. Today a few low walls and tracks in the roadway are all that remain as the site has largely been taken over by the Freedom Quay development. In this map the H&S is the line "from Leeds",



## **Other stations on the line**

When the Hull & Selby opened on 1 July 1840, there were 7 intermediate stations, serving the small towns along the line. They were built with modest facilities and goods yards. Most of these were swept away in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leaving basic 'bus shelter'-type accommodation with the few remaining Victorian buildings largely in private hands. Brief details of each are as follows:

### **Cliffe/ Hemingbrough**

Cliffe railway station is in the centre of the village, yet was renamed Hemingbrough on 1 September 1874.

Hemingbrough was the only station on the line to close as a result of the Beeching Report. Goods facilities ceased on 4 May 1964, those for passengers on 6 November 1967



### **Wressle**

It is unclear whether Wressle was an original station on the line. It doesn't appear on the list of places to be served starting from 2 July 1840, but a market day service from "Wressel Bridge" was recorded in 1843, and the station was fully in use by 1855. Listed for closure under Beeching, it remained open as a closure would "cause local hardship".

Becoming unstaffed in 1976, in 2015, six trains a day call at Wressle, but none on Sundays. Latest figures put the annual usage at around three passengers per day.

## **Howden**

Built around 1½ miles north of the town, to prevent deviation of the line, its original name was Howden and Bubwith. It was renamed Howden in 1869, and more appropriately North Howden in 1922 to avoid confusion with Howden Station on the Hull and Barnsley line, much closer to town. After the H&B closed, it became Howden again in 1961.

In 1987 the remaining station buildings were granted Grade II status by English Heritage. The 1873 signal box is currently boarded up, but protected by that listing. An 1840 workers' hut (below) survived in the station car park until recently.



The original platform in front of station house, now in private ownership, was replaced with one at a higher level beyond the level crossing. It had proved impossible to change the platform level in front of the station house. A post box on the station wall reminds us of how the railway worked with the postal service to speed the mail.

## **Eastrington**



This was another station that suffered name changes due to the Hull and Barnsley line. In 1922 it became "South Easttrington", to distinguish it from "North Easttrington" on the Hull and Barnsley, reverting to Easttrington in 1961. Today, very few trains call here.

## Gilberdyke/Staddlethorpe



Another tale of name changing! What is now Gilberdyke Station was originally Staddlethorpe. This time the name change was in 1975, presumably using the name of the village on the main road, rather than the hamlet where the station lies. The later line to Doncaster line branches off the H&S just to the west of the station. The 1982 image of a

steam special shows the more extensive layout and facilities that existed then

## Broomfleet

The infrastructure needed for the level of traffic using the Hull and Selby is shown in this 1961 image. Not listed as one of the original seven stations, Broomfleet today has a very sparse service, but the large signal box remains open.



## Brough



The 1961 image above shows the former extent of the railway in Brough. Much of this was removed in the 1970s, with land now given over to car parking. Recently modernized, Brough is the busiest intermediate station on the line, with around 250 000 passengers annually.

### **Melton Halt**

A privately-built halt for cement workers, open between 1920 and 1989.

### **Ferriby**

This serves the village of North Ferriby.

### **Hessle**

A former ship-building town, now overshadowed by the Humber Bridge

## **The Grand Opening of the line**

Wednesday 1 July 1840 dawned miserable and wet, so rainy that the procession planned to parade through Hull had to be cancelled, but the Manchester and Hull Unity of Oddfellows "*paraded the principal streets accompanied by several bands of music*". Mr. Levitt and his orchestra performed at Railway Street playing '*a number of airs in a most effective manner*'. Holy Trinity's bells rang out, and a special noon chiming told lucky ticket holders to board.

Various engines and carriages had arrived over the line in the days before, and the first train left Hull at 12:10 pm, pulled by the loco 'Kingston', passing through Hessle at "*a lively pace being loudly cheered*" before arriving in Selby at 2:15. Passengers had two hours to explore Selby and partake of a buffet at the 'George' (now the Londesborough Hotel) on Market Place.

At least five locomotives made the trip, including "Prince" which is said to have managed a return journey in 65 minutes! On returning to Hull, Mr. Levitt and his men were again on hand to entertain at the evening celebration - a 'cold collation' consisting of over 750 dishes on 15 tables in the Manor Street building.



Many toasts were made and a series of "*bad speeches*" were delivered. In the audience was the Railway King himself, George Hudson.

The initial timetable saw services leaving from Hull at 7 and 10 am, and 3 and 6 pm. The first week of service saw over 4 500 passengers , and the trains remained popular, meeting the needs dreamed of a decade earlier.

### **A trip along the line today**

The H&S line is served in 2015 by 4 different railway companies. Northern Rail, whose services stop at most of the stations, TransPennine Express who call at the major stations, and First Hull Trains and Virgin East Coast who pass along the line on their way to and from London, with some services calling at Brough and Howden. Directions in this section assume you are facing forward in a train travelling from Selby to Hull. There's quite a lot to see in the first mile or so.

As you leave platform 1 at Selby, named 'Station of the Year' in 2014 by First TransPennine Express, the space at the platform end used to be occupied by the station signal box. Looking left along the river bank, one can see the decaying remains of jetties that used to service ocean-going ships until the 1990s, and then further up river is Selby's road bridge, made toll-free in 1991. Over the bridge, renewed in 2014, is a brick tower on the left which housed the hydraulic machinery that used to operate the swing bridge, and the flattened area is where the tracks used to run to cross the bascule bridge.

As the train curves to the right, you are passing through the remains of the BOCM (British Oil and Cake Mills) complex. Closed around 20 years ago, it is gradually being dismantled to make way for new housing and light industry. Barge traffic used to bring cargoes of seeds up from Hull to be crushed and turned into oil and cattle cake here. On leaving the BOCM site the curve of the road on the left follows the course of the former East Coast Main Line to York, closed in 1985 due to the Selby Coalfield.

On the right can be seen lines that go into Potter's distribution network, Still active in both road and rail distribution, Potters is a regular source of freight traffic along the line, along with modern trains bringing imported fuel to Drax

Power Station. On the left are the faint traces of the track of another former line - that to Market Weighton, closed in the 1960s.

With the curve negotiated, we are now on that record-breaking stretch of straight track, and the train accelerates through Cliffe village.

The next village is Wressle, Just prior to the village, the line crosses the River Derwent, and on the left is Wressle Castle, originally built for Thomas Percy around 1380. It was a base for Parliamentarians in the Civil War, but partially destroyed afterwards. A fire in 1796 caused further damage and it is now classified as a Grade I listed ancient monument and ruin.

Our next call is Howden. The privately-owned station house has an exterior with period touches, and that characteristic low platform. The "Barnes Wallis" pub beyond platform 2 is named after the inventor of the 'bouncing bomb' who was heavily involved in the airship industry that briefly flourished in Howden around a century ago. The town is over a mile away on the right.



The village of Eastrington with its grade I listed church lies on the left and the track then passes under the M62 before pulling into Gilberdyke. Just prior to the station, the Doncaster line goes off at an acute angle on the right. From here into Hull, the line remains controlled by semaphore signalling: a situation that is likely to change soon.

Passing over the Market Weighton Canal prepares the traveller for the halt at Broomfleet, but it's probable that your train won't stop. The village is half a mile away to the right. The pyramid-shaped tower of the Grade II listed Victorian village church of St Mary's can be seen on the right.

As the train moves past Crabley Creek signal box, the Humber estuary comes into view on the right.

Brough is our next stop, and indeed most services halt here. The factory and airstrip of BAE Systems may be seen to the right. This was the world's oldest aircraft factory: Harrier jump jets were built here.

The railway now makes its first slight kink since leaving Selby. On the right is the former Hull Cement Works. An overgrown platform of the former Melton Halt and rusting tracks remain to the right, and a boarded up signal box on the left remain. Ferriby station is in a mile or so, with North Ferriby United's ground on the left just after the station

The railway now skirts the bank of the Humber, and the mighty Humber Suspension Bridge looms. The A63, 'Clive Sullivan Way', named after the 1970s rugby league legend and first black captain of any British national sporting team runs next to the line. Hessle Station is in this section.

As the line curves left, little used track can be seen firstly to the left and then to the right. The original route to Manor House station continued in this direction, past docks and warehousing. Only a stone terminal remains

The modern running line, instigated in 1848, winds through suburban Hull. The KC stadium is on the left, along with tracks to Beverley. Journey's end is Paragon Station. However, if you wish to see where the original Hull and Selby terminated, a 10-minute walk takes you to the site of the 1840 terminus. To inspect what remains, exit Paragon and cross Ferensway at the lights. Turn right, follow Ferensway, cross Mytongate and onto Hull Marina with the Spurn lightship and Railway Dock to the left, onto Railway Street.



Some rails remain in the road along with two wagon turntables. The low walls on your right are all that remains of the frontage of Manor House Street station, but the former warehouse stretching along Kingston Street has been renovated into a restaurant and flats.



The former railway dock, now a marina, lies beyond. The area that was the goods station is now shared between modern housing, a car park and a workshop for yacht repair.

You've now completed a journey that perhaps seems humdrum today, but 175 years ago was at the forefront of modern travel, the most up-to-date way to transport passengers and goods and the first link in a chain that would eventually see people and cargo arrive at the docks in Hull, take the train across England to Liverpool then onwards to the New World!

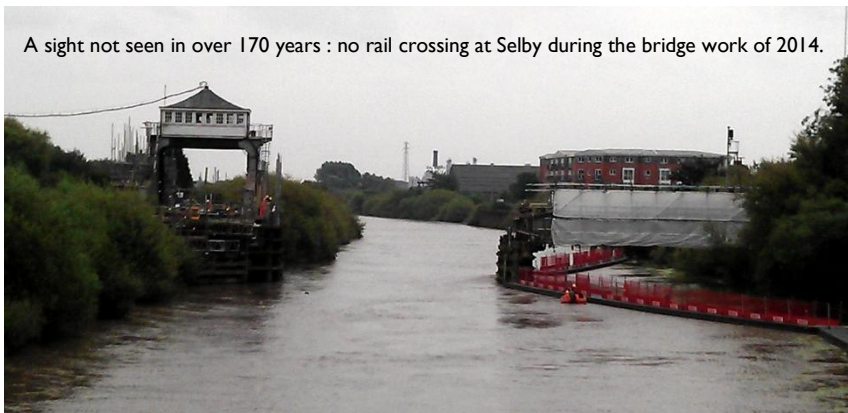
## The future?

Electrification of the line between Selby and Hull has been increasingly spoken of in the last few years. There are no concrete plans at present, but the wires might be in place by 2019 if statements made in the 2015 Budget are adhered to. Given that the original line took around 15 years from the initial proposal to the opening day, then perhaps that doesn't seem too long a timescale. However the 'pause' announced in June 2015 might put sparks back a few years. The difficulty of access to platforms 2 and 3 at Selby for those with mobility problems urgently needs a solution before then.



In the meantime, an £8 million investment renovated Selby's swing bridge in 2014 with work sufficiently thorough to preclude any further major maintenance for 25 years. Removal of signal boxes and their associated semaphore signals along the eastern, rural part of the line is said to be due to begin in 2015. With Hull being declared the 'City of Culture' in 2017, and ongoing recasting of rail franchises further changes to the traffic passing along the H&S might arise. Whatever the traffic, the Hull and Selby will surely remain a vital link between the East Coast and the West Riding

A sight not seen in over 170 years : no rail crossing at Selby during the bridge work of 2014.



## With thanks to

First TransPennine Express  
Hull Civic Society  
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Selby Civic Society  
Selby and District Rail Users' Group  
Viking Shipping Services Limited

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Back copies of the "Hull Daily Packet" and "Selby Times"

## Picture Credits

Sydney Martin (Selby bascule open, Hull Rail Map, Brough); ChooChews (Early Selby Station); Hull Civic Society (Manor House Station); Richard Moody (Swing bridge); Humber blogspot (Eastrington); Ben Brooksbank (1961 images, Cliffe Station); Magnus Mancke (Gilberdyke); David Moss (Selby bridge repair). All other images and maps are either in the public domain or are by David Lewis for Selby Civic Society.





**HULL AND SELBY, OR HULL AND LEEDS JUNCTION, RAILWAY.  
OPENING OF THE LINE  
FOR PASSENGERS AND PARCELS ONLY,**

**T**HE Public are respectfully informed that this RAILWAY IS OPENED THROUGH-  
OUT from HULL to the JUNCTION with the LEEDS and SELBY RAILWAY, at Selby,  
for the Carriage of PASSENGERS and PARCELS, presenting a direct Railway Conveyance from Hull to Selby,  
Leeds, and York, without change of Carriage.

TRAINS WITH PASSENGERS WILL START FROM HULL AS UNDER :

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| AT SEVEN O'CLOCK, A.M. | AT THREE O'CLOCK, P.M. |
| AT TEN O'CLOCK, A.M.   | AT SIX O'CLOCK, P.M.   |

ON SUNDAYS, AT SEVEN O'CLOCK, A.M., AND SIX O'CLOCK, P.M.

The Trains from LEEDS and YORK will depart from these Places at the same Hours, with the exception  
of the Evening Trains, which will leave Leeds and York at SEVEN O'CLOCK, in order that the Passengers  
leaving London at Nine o'Clock in the Morning may arrive in Hull at Half-past Nine o'Clock the same Evening.  
The Trains will leave YORK and LEEDS on SUNDAY EVENINGS at SIX O'CLOCK.

Passengers and Parcels may be Booked through at the Leeds, York, and Hull Stations. Arrangements have  
been made for forwarding Passengers to Sheffield, Derby, Birmingham, London, &c., by the Trains which leave  
Hull at Seven and Ten a.m.

There are no Trains from Hull at 11 a.m. and 5 15 p.m. as Advertised by the North Midland and Midland  
Counties Railway Companies, and owing to an alteration just made by those Companies, Passengers cannot at  
present be forwarded from Hull to London by the Train at 3 p.m.

THE FARES TO BE CHARGED ARE AS UNDER:

|                    | First Class. | Second Class. | Third Class. |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Hull to Selby..... | 4s. 6d.      | 3s. 6d.       | 2s. 6d.      |
| Hull to York.....  | 6s.          | 4s. 6d.       | 3s. 6d.      |
| Hull to Leeds..... | 6s.          | 4s. 6d.       | 3s. 6d.      |

No Fees are allowed to be taken by the Guards, Porters, or any other Servants of the Company.

The Trains, both up and down will call at the Stations on the Line, viz.—Hassle, Ferryby, Brough, Stud-  
diethorpe, Eastington, Howden, and Cliff.

Arrangements for conveying Goods, Cattle, Sheep, &c., will be completed in a short time, of which due  
Notice will be given.

By Order,  
**GEORGE LOCKING, Secretary.**

*Railway Office, Hull, July 1840.*



On the left, a bill announcing the ceremonial opening of the line in July 1840. Directors travelled the line to inspect in late June, various light engines made their way to Hull for the official opening, which was on 1<sup>st</sup> July, and the line was available for public use on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

On the right, the Hull and Selby station at Brough in later British Rail days.

**Production of this booklet has been supported by**

**First**  **TransPennine Express**



**Selby Civic Society**

*stimulating interest in, and  
caring for, Selby*

The information in this leaflet is believed correct at time of writing, July 2015. Acknowledgement for images, where known, has been stated. All other material, and responsibility for accuracy is that of Selby Civic Society, to whom all comment should be sent via [www.selbycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.selbycivicsociety.org.uk)