

CRAVEN'S HISTORICAL COMMUNITY STATIONS

BENTHAM STATION



One of the earliest photographs of Bentham Station with its original 'mock Tudor' buildings taken in 1898, -
Photograph courtesy of David Johnston Collection



A 1930s view from the Station Road bridge; Leeds service approaching -
Photograph courtesy of David Johnston Collection



A Leeds bound freight, headed by Midland Railway built 0-6-0 locomotive No. 43295, passing the new station building on 12th May 1956 - Photograph courtesy of David Johnston Collection



Bentham Station bedecked with bunting and flags for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in June 2012 -
Photograph courtesy of Gerald Townson

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BENTHAM STATION

The railway first came to Bentham on 2nd May 1850, with the opening of the Wennington to Bentham section of the 'Little' North Western Railway between Leeds and Morecambe, via Skipton, Clapham Junction, Wennington Junction and Lancaster Green Ayre. The last part of the route, between Bentham and Clapham Junction was completed less than a month later and trains began running on that section on 1st June 1850.

Though originally a single track route between Skipton and Morecambe, it was soon 'doubled', between Hellifield and Hornby, and both tracks through Bentham were in use by late 1850.

The November 1850 issue of Bradshaw's Timetable shows four trains each way on the route between Lancaster and Skipton, with one 'express' calling only at Caton, Hornby, Bentham, Settle (now Giggleswick) and Gargrave.

From 1st June 1852 the services were operated by the Midland Railway and full incorporation followed in 1871. The Midland Railway was amalgamated into the London Midland and Scottish Railway when the 'big four' railway companies were formed in 1922.

On taking over, the Midland developed several goods sidings on both sides of the line and built a water tower, cattle pens and a goods shed. By 1880 the goods yard on the north side of the station was busy with products for the local silk mills, with raw materials arriving and finished yarns and cloth goods departing by goods trains. Livestock, coal and stone also passed through the yard and a siding on the south side served Pye's Mill.

When nationalisation of the railways took place in 1948 the station and services were operated by British Railways. In 1954 British Railways demolished the original station building and replaced it with a modern brick and concrete structure in just fifteen weeks.

The station became unmanned in 1970 and since then tickets have been obtained on the trains. For several years one of the rooms was used by the Bentham Homing Pigeon Society until the building became an equipment store and canteen for local railway maintenance gangs.

In 2008, the building was renovated with funds from North Yorkshire County Council and became home to the 'Little Red Bus' company and the Youth Café.

Today, the trains which call at Bentham are operated by Northern Rail who provide services throughout the North of England. There are ten services which call at Bentham, Monday to Saturday, and eight on Sundays. Half of these services are westbound, via the Upper Wenning and Lune Valleys, to Carnforth, Lancaster and Morecambe. The other half head eastwards, through the Wenning Valley and Airedale to Skipton, Keighley and Leeds.

