YORK'S EARLY STATIONS AND GOODS DEPOTS

Page last updated 11 January 2025

Companies

from Warren, Register of British Railway … Companies… (RCHS, 2005), e.o.h.p.):

York & North Midland: joint working with YN&B and Leeds Northern 1 Apr 1853 (Tomlinson p.518); vested in North Eastern 31 July 1854

Great North of England: leased by Hudson (on behalf of N&DJ, Y&NM and Mid) 1 July 1845 (Tomlinson p.459) and worked by N&DJ/Y&N/YN&B; vested in York Newcastle & Berwick 1 July 1850 (so thence into North Eastern 31 July 1854)

Newcastle & Darlington Jn: renamed York & Newcastle 27 July 1846, York Newcastle & Berwick 9 July 1847, joint working with Y&NM and Leeds Northern 1 Apr 1853 (Tomlinson p.518); vested North Eastern 31 July 1854

Openings:

York & North Midland Railway from what is today Gascoigne Wood Jn, *but was then referred to as South Milford, subsequently York Junction or Old Junction*, to stations at York:

a.: passenger: temporary station (on site of which last rail use was Motorail terminal, now car park) outside Bar Walls: ceremonial first train 29 May 1839 at 1306 (1.6 p.m.) (Tomlinson p. 321; *The Yorkshireman* 1 June 1839, p.2); regular passenger service from 30 May 1839 (co. advert *Leeds Mercury* 11 May 1839; report *Wakefield & West Riding Herald* 31 May). No plan of this temporary passenger station is known,

b.: "coal depot and goods wharf near North Postern": regular goods ("Cattle, Coals, Lime and other merchandise") from 30 May 1839 (co. advert *Leeds Mercury* 11 May 1839). Tomlinson p.323 says explicitly: "several waggons of coal … passed through the walls immediately after opening", imputing this statement to *The Yorkshireman* 1 June 1839, p.2. What that paper actually said was: "During the week a number of waggons with coals … have arrived by the railway in this city". Note that this does not specifically say *where* they were discharged (within or outwith the walls). However, earlier in the piece – under Description of the Line – it stated: "The station for goods and passengers is situate without Micklegate Bar, at a short distance from the city walls, and nearly in line with North-street Postern, where the railway terminates, connection being thus established between it and the craft on the river. At the terminus there are a number of convenient buildings forming the depot for coals and lime brought by the railway…. The line from the river to the station for goods runs in a direction parallel to the Bar Walls, through which it passes by means of an arch, now nearly completed." This is slightly confusing for other reports make quite clear that the (temporary) passenger station was outside the Bar Walls, the coal and goods depots being within.

Tomlinson (also at p.323) is ambiguous about whether 'completion' refers to the archway in the Bar Wall or the whole of the goods facilities. *Yorkshire Gazette* 27 July 1839 (which he also cites) says: "This beautiful piece of workmanship, the archway through the bar-walls for the purposes of the railway, has been this week completed."; the whole paragraph is exclusively about the arch – not about other aspects of the railway. In any event, the goods depot – between the arch and the North Street Postern – represents the northern extremity of the Y&NM's line, although arguably siding or depot (rather than running line or 'branch') beyond what became the later turnout for the 1841 passenger station. The goods facilities can be seen on https://maps.nls.uk/view/231287103 (York sheet 11 of 1851) or https://interactivemaps.uk/york-1852/#16.02/53.959507/-1.090873 , in the lower illustration in Plate XVII, opposite Tomlinson p.350, and in plate 7 (ca.1865) and 8 (ca.1965) in *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain,* vol. 4 (1965). Y&NM Board minute 4 Nov 1838 (RAIL 770/20) about the intentions for the proposed passenger station made clear that it and the access line to it from the junction between the two railways

would be a joint operation, for passengers only – but with the exception that the Y&NM could use that section of line from the junction between the two railways to "the commercial branch" *(i.e. their existing goods facilities within the Bar Wall)* for "other purposes*" (i.e. including goods traffic).* Y&NM Board minute 13 Oct 1847 (RAIL 770/3) authorised construction of a "goods sorting shed … adjoining the goods warehouses at the York station" *(i.e. accessed through the second archway at the south end of the 1841 station).*

c.: Y&NM passenger services were extended to the new joint station ("Tanner Row") "and not from the Station outside the Bar Walls" from 4 January 1841 (co. advert *Yorkshire Gazette* 2 Jan1841; Tomlinson pp.350-1). A ceremony was held the same day, rather than before-hand. That this station and the section of line from the junction between the two railways, immediately outside the Bar Walls, was joint would be confirmed by agreement between the two railways, dated 12 July 1839 (correspondence at RAIL 232/29, plan of joint land ownership at RAIL 232/30, legal advice to GNofE at RAIL 232/46 – but the agreement itself seems not to have survived). Although the correspondence and Y&NM minutes include the short section of track between the junction, through the wall, to the new station as being joint, only the station itself is so shown on the plan as RAIL 232/30 – *presumably* because that was the only **land** that was jointly owned, the access track from the junction being on Y&NM land.

d.: Scarborough line opened to reversal point at North Junction: ceremonial 7 July 1845 (Tomlinson p. 461, citing *Herapath's Railway Journal* 1845 p.1123; *Leeds Intelligencer* 5 July); regular passenger trains 8 July 1845 (co. advert *Yorkshire Gazette* 5 July; Tomlinson makes no mention). *Tomlinson's text p.461 and Y&NM plan of 1849 (RAIL 1030/120) both imply trains had been running from 5 July but this is not borne out by the cited advert – unless it refers to goods.*

e.: Y&NM coal depot: In March 1847 was still in Tanners Moat (*York Herald*, 13 March 1847), though removal had already been mooted by the Y&NM: "York Railway Station.-We understand a great improvement is shortly to be effected in the railway station at York, by rendering the Great North of England coal depot, outside the bar walls, available for the coal traffic not only of that company but also of the York and North Midland Railway Company. …" (*York Herald*, 12 September 1846). The new site was adjacent to GNofE's coal depot, on the latter's branch (see **g**. below), as shown by https://interactivemaps.uk/york-1852/#16.02/53.959507/-1.090873 (on which a current road overlay is available). It is not clear precisely when the Y&NM started to use their new depot but it seems the move had happened by May 1849 when a record of a death (*Yorkshire Gazette* 12 May 1849) referred to the Durham Ox public house (in Thief Lane) as being "opposite the coal depôts" *(note the plural)* – and certainly by spring 1851 when *York Herald*, 15 March 1851 records a memorial from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society to the Council which starts: "That the attention of your memorialists has been lately drawn to certain reports in circulation, that the York and North Midland Railway Company are desirous of erecting buildings on the site lately used as a coal-depot, and adjoining the city walls near Northstreet Postern, …" After that removal, OS survey dated 1851 shows the old Y&NM coal depot still in situ; its track was not removed until 1877. *No documentary evidence about the terms for access to the Y&NM's new coal depot has been found.*

f.: Foss Island branch from Burton Lane Jn: opened for goods (including livestock for the cattle market) 8 December 1879 (Tomlinson p.687; *Shipping & Mercantile Gazette* 8 Dec 1879; Cook & Hoole p.NE22 wrongly give 1 Jan 1880).

Great North of England Railway from Croft Junction (Darlington) to York:

g.: for coal traffic by branch to their own coal depot (outside the Bar Wall) on 4 January 1841 (Tomlinson pp.348-9, citing *Port of Tyne Pilot* 9 Jan; *Northern Star* 9 Jan). *One of the two trains also carried GNofE notables to the ceremonial opening of the joint passenger station that day.* GNofE Committee of Management minute of 4 Feb 1840 (RAIL 232/6) reads: "Branch Railway York: The Engineer is desired to furnish a Plan, Section, and estimate of the proposed Branch Railway to the Coal Depôts in Mr. Tyerman's [1] land." An

arch was punched through the Bar Wall at North Street Postern and "the Company had formed a roadway between Thief Lane *[outside the wall]* and North Street *[inside]* giving … access to the Coal Depots"; in retailing this, Tomlinson p.351 (citing *History & Topography of York* (1857)) does not tell us which company. However, *York Herald* 5 Sep 1840 – reporting progress on GNofE construction of contract 18 (York branch) – shows that both that arch and the coal depot branch were *constructed* by GNofE; the GNofE contract of 24 Sep 1840 for construction of the archway is at RAIL 232/30.
OS plan https://interactivemaps.uk/york-1852/#16.02/53.959507/-1.090873 shows a staith projecting beyond the GNofE coal depot, for transhipment of coal to river vessels.
TNA file MFQ1/727 contains a plan by G Andrews, their architect, dated May 1840 of the GNofE coal depot and staith; of course, it contains no hint of a Y&NM facility. Even in 1844 the GNofE engineer referred (in RAIL 232/14) to their York facility as "coal depots" (plural).
By March 1851 the Y&NM had constructed a coal depot of their own alongside the GNofE's depot (see **c**. above).

h.: for passengers to the joint station with Y&NM: ceremonial first trains 30 March 1841 (Tomlinson p.351, citing *Durham Advertiser* 2 Apr); regular passenger service from 31 March 1841 (co. advert *Durham Advertiser* 19 Mar 1841; Tomlinson makes no mention).
RAIL 232/13 contains the GNofE Superintendent's report (29 Sep 1840) of arrangements agreed for running of joint station.

Closures

i.: the 1841 transfer of the Y&NM temporary passenger station to the permanent, joint site in 1841 has been noted at **c**. above

j.: the 1851 transfer of the Y&NM coal depot from within to outwith the Bar Wall has been noted at **e**. above.

k.: as a precursor to clearing the site for the NER's new passenger station, the now-merged coal depots (**e**. and **g**. above) and the GNofE branch to reach them from North Junction were closed, and activities transferred to a new depot which opened 12 October 1874. adjacent to the east edge of the site for York's new Leeman Road goods depot. *York Herald*, 26 October 1874: "OPENING OF THE NEW COAL DEPOT. / THE NEW STATION AND APPROACHES. / The works necessitated by and connected with the erection of the new railway station at York are making satisfactory progress, some of them having already been completed. Amongst the latter are the new coal, coke, and lime depots, which have now been opened for a fortnight. …"

l.: the joint passenger station inside the Bar Wall (**c**. above): closed and replaced by present through station 25 June 1877 (*York Herald,* 25 June 1877). Site retained as carriage sidings.

Note [1] : the spelling in clause 20 of the GNofE Act of 30 June 1837 was George William **Tireman**

Tomlinson: *The North Eastern Railway – Its Rise and Development*, William Weaver Tomlinson, 1914
RAIL and MFQ1 denote file at The National Archives, Kew

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The illustrations referred to in the above piece are these:

Plate XVII, opposite Tomlinson p.350

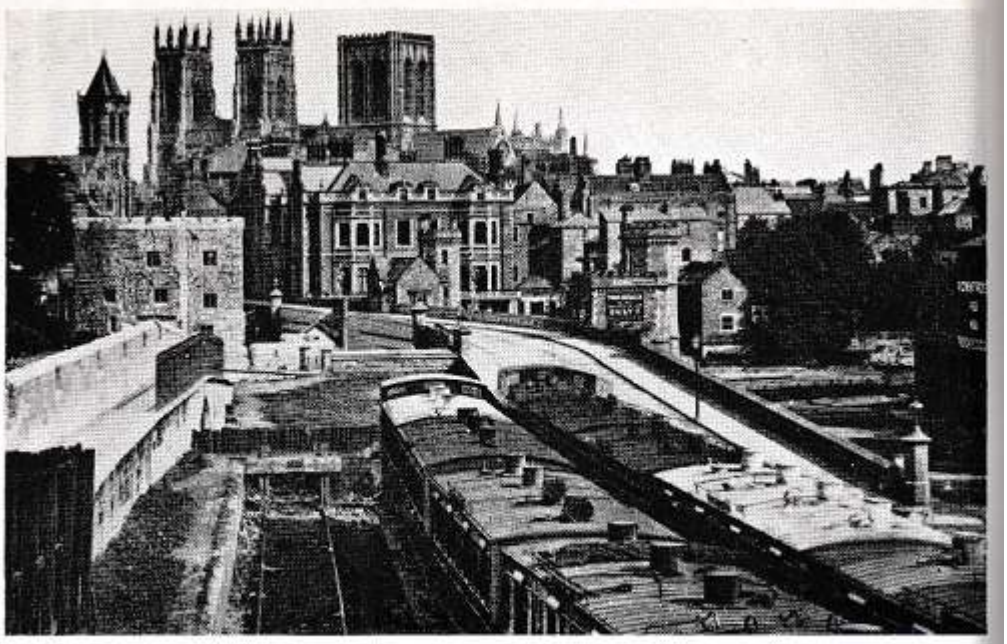
To face page 350. *PLATE XVII.*

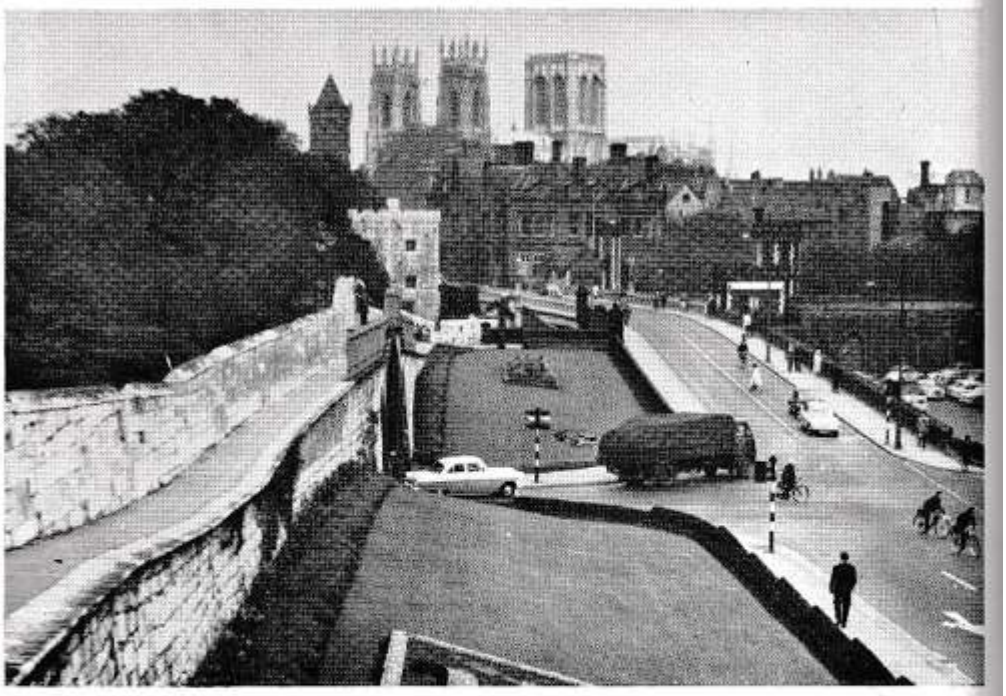




Views of York Old Station.

Plates7 and 8 in Hoole, *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain,* vol. 4 (1965).





YORK & NORTH MIDLAND RAILWAY

(7) *Carriage sidings for Y & NM station c. 1865*

(8) *As* (7) *today*

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