

# Railway Mania Comes to Penistone!

The arrival of the railway in Penistone in 1845 transformed the town from a sleepy hamlet to a large, bustling railway junction. Bringing industry and wealth to the town, Penistone was a key station both for passengers and freight. Almost a quarter of freight trains carried coal, but a range of other

commercial goods were transported including steel, Grimsby fish, Kentish fruit, poultry, greyhounds, cattle, and pigeons. Local people embraced the opportunity to travel, enjoying shopping; holiday-making; nights out, and going to football matches. A vision made real by entrepreneurs who grasped the possibilities

of railway travel; the reduction in coal and passenger traffic - and the huge cost of replacing the outmoded electrical supply system - brought the dream to a halt in 1985. Today, only the line between Sheffield and Huddersfield survives, transporting people to and from our busy town.



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## Penistone's First Station

The original railway station was built on the other side of Penistone in 1845. It consisted of a neat white station house, a booking hall, a general waiting room with a small compartment devoted to ladies, and a tavern. It closed to passengers in 1873, and became the goods station.

The station master, Benjamin Rooth, was presented with a purse containing 100 guineas on his retirement in 1874.

## The Second Station

The present station was erected, in its current location, in 1873. Costing around £6,000, it was built by Messrs Wetherby and Rymer of York using local stone. Including a station master's house, refreshment rooms, booking offices, and a parcel office, there were also first, second, and third class waiting rooms, and conveniences for ladies and gentlemen.

There were six platforms - each was flagged and well-lit with gas lamps, and two of them were 500 feet (152m) long and had canopies to keep the rain off. A footbridge and an arched subway allowed passengers to reach the platforms without crossing the lines.

*'I liked to go on to the platform and take it all in... the gas lighting, the big two-faced clock, the tiny newspaper kiosk which only opened in the mornings, the letter box on the wall, the red penny chocolate machine, and the barrow: ready for action at the end of the platform...there was even a roaring fire in the third class waiting room with a bucket of coal at the side for passengers to use.'*

*'The subway...became a favoured rendezvous of ladies from Barnsley and Sheffield with American soldiers. Certain young women, both married and unmarried, were clearly not averse to dalliance.'* Margaret Penning: Booking Clerk 1945 - 47

*'The ticket office was just as you entered the station from the car park. I remember walking under the subway with the white tiled walls to get to the central island platforms one and two. Standing on the platform the ground shook when a big Black Five locomotive rumbled in.'* (Harold Haigh - passenger c.1950)

## Development of the Railway in Penistone

*'It has...been said...that Penistone is the most perfect town in the kingdom, so perfect, that no improvement has been made in it during the last hundred years. I flatter myself that Penistone has now got over that period of its existence, and that henceforward it will become a thriving and prosperous town.'* Lord Wharnccliffe. Ceremony to celebrate 1st sod being turned for the Huddersfield Line.

Sheffield Independent Sept, 1845

**1835** Sheffield, Ashton-Under-Lyne, and Manchester Railway (S.A.M.R.) Company formed.

**1838** Work on the Woodhead Line commences.

**1844** Manchester - Woodhead section opens to the public.

**1845 July** Sheffield to Dunford Bridge section opens to the public.

**1845 23rd December** Whole route opens to the public following the completion of the Woodhead Tunnel.

**1847** S.A. & M.R. merges + three other companies to form Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (M.S.L.R.) Company.

**1850 July** Huddersfield line opens.

**1852 Feb** Completion of second Woodhead tunnel.

**1854 July** Barnsley line opens.

**1897** M.S.L.R. changes name to Great Central Railway (GCR) in anticipation of line extension to London.

**1899** Line extended to London.

**1923** GCR becomes a constituent of LNER (London & North Eastern Railway).

**1948** Becomes British Railways Eastern Region.

**1954** Third Woodhead tunnel opens, completing electrification of the line.

**1970 5th January** Passenger services close on Woodhead Line (Sheffield - Manchester Piccadilly).

**1981 18th July** Last freight train on Woodhead Line.



Lord Wharnccliffe. ©National Portrait Gallery CC BY 2.0

## Penistone - an Unlucky Place to Cross the Pennines!

**16th July 1864** Bullhouse Bridge derailment: 24 dead.

**January 1885** Goods wagon crashes into excursion train: 3 dead.

Penistone '...the shrieks and groans of another ghastly railway tragedy rose over the bleak landscape of the Penistone district.'

Sheffield Daily Telegraph January, 1885

**March 1889** Boat Race excursion train overturns at Huddersfield Junction: 1 dead, 18 injured.



Boat Race Train accident. ©Barnsley Archives and Local Studies Department

## ALARMING ACCIDENT ON THE MANCHESTER, SHEFFIELD AND LINCOLNSHIRE RAILWAY

25 February 1871

At 4am on a stormy night a goods train stopped at Dunford Bridge Station to pick up three wagons. While the engine went to fetch the wagons from the siding, the heavily-laden wagons left on the down line began rolling towards Penistone; quickening their speed on the steep downward gradient. Four minutes later the runaway wagons careered into Penistone - tearing into the sidings, ripping up lines and colliding with goods wagons, which were pitched into the Huddersfield and Penistone turnpike road. The wagons ploughed on into the warehouse, smashing it to pieces!

Sheffield Independent Tuesday 21 February 1871

Seven defendants were each fined 20/- for travelling without tickets...One of them was found under the seat, another had succeeded in wrapping himself up in a brown overcoat and getting on to the luggage rack.

Barnsley Chronicle Saturday 28 March, 1902



Penistone was known as the coldest station...

**In October 1882** a passenger train left Barnsley in heavy snow at seven o'clock on Wednesday evening, arriving in Penistone at eight o'clock on Thursday morning - all night to travel seven miles!

**In 1892** Francis Edward Lee, a solicitor from Sheffield, was travelling to a funeral at Penistone to read a will. When the train rushed through Penistone Station without stopping, he pulled the Communication Cord, bringing the express to a standstill. The guard refused to allow him to get out of the carriage, but as the train started, Lee climbed out through the window and ran back to Penistone!

Snowplough 1947. ©Barnsley Archives and Local Studies Department

## Station Staff

**1920s** porter Ernest Edward Worsfold (known as 'Cocky' Worsfold) was famous for balancing parcels on his head. He was regularly seen cycling through Penistone with a tray on his head, delivering the buns and cakes which had arrived by train.

Neville Whitwam: Holiday and Sickness Relief 1960s. *'I opened the guard's van and a greyhound leapt out and bounded down the platform. My instructions were 'Catch that greyhound!', but there was no chance!* Research by Florence Green, aged 5

**Dolly Cartwright**: Porter 1947 - 50s. *The train stopped and a man opened the carriage window: "Are there any tunnels between Penistone and Manchester?" "Yes" I said, "There's one that's four and a half miles long." He got his luggage out straightaway and rang for a taxi to take him the 28 miles to Manchester!*

**Bernie Guest**: Signaller 1943 - 1994. *'I used to love putting my head out of the signal box window at two o'clock in the morning when the fruit trains were going up from Lincolnshire to Manchester market - what a smell - we used to close the windows when the fish trains went past.'*

## SHOCKING FATAL ACCIDENT AT PENISTONE STATION

It is supposed that Elliot Hawkyard mistook the parapet of the viaduct for the station platform, as the night was dark and he was rather short sighted. Hawkyard, who had been to the funeral another step forward and fell headlong to the ground beneath. A search was made at once for the body, which was found in a terribly mangled state in the roadway below.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph Wednesday 10 September 1884

## The Viaduct

Engineered by Sir John Hawkshaw and built using local stone by Messrs Ingham and Bower in 1850; the Grade II listed, 29-arch viaduct is 98ft (30m) high.

**In February 1916**, following prolonged heavy rain, one of the arches near the station collapsed and a locomotive crashed into the valley below. Driver George Lockwood and his fireman saved their lives by jumping clear just as the engine plunged from the rails!

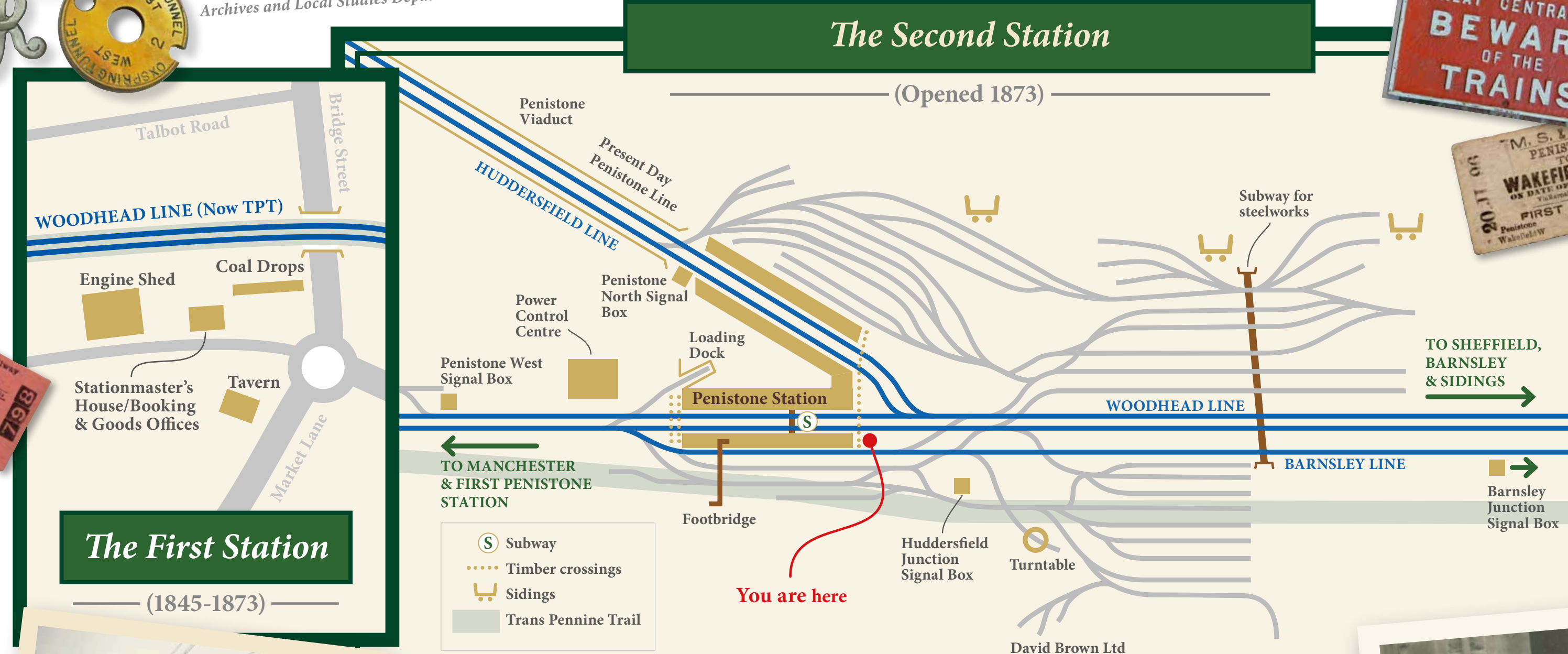
1916 viaduct accident. ©Barnsley Archives and Local Studies Department



61105 #2957 engine. ©Brian Stephenson

## The Turntable

The turntable was used extensively to turn goods locomotives and, at one time, to turn the Huddersfield engine around for the return journey. 32 points/lever changes were required to move the engine between the station and the turntable, but just two men were needed to push it around! You can still see the remains of the turntable today 200m (about 220 yards) SE of the station.



## Electrification

The idea of electrifying the Manchester, Sheffield, and Wath lines using overhead 1500V DC began in 1936 as a means of increasing efficiency: invariably up to four steam locos were needed to haul the heavy coal trains out of Wath Yard and up the steeply-graded Wentworth Incline. Electrification meant that only two engines (front and rear) were now needed. The first main line to be electrified in the UK; work was delayed by the Second World War, and finally began in 1949, with full service between Wath and Dunford Bridge in February 1952. Electrification of the whole line was completed in September 1954 following the opening of the third Woodhead tunnel in June. The locomotives were called Bo-Bo's and Co-Co's although the pioneer Bo-Bo No.26000 was affectionately named "Tommy" by the Dutch railwaymen, following its spell in Holland on trials there after WWII.

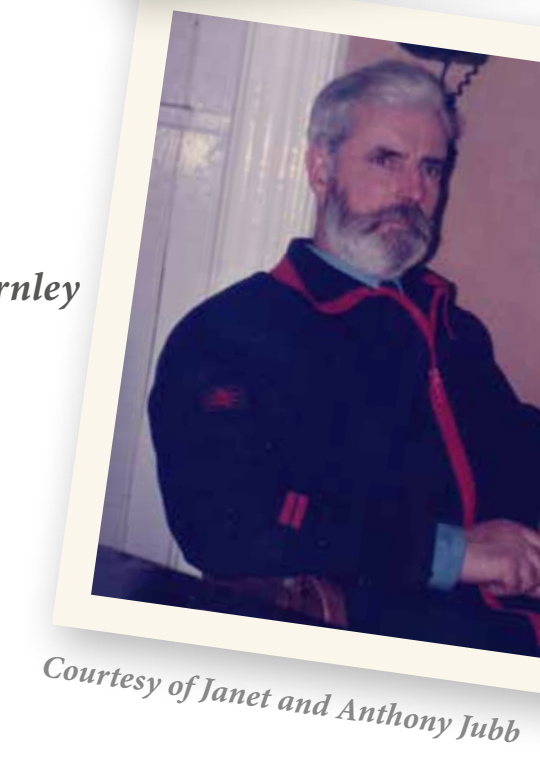
## Day Trip to Blackpool

*I remember day trips to Belle Vue and Blackpool with sandwiches made and thermos flasks filled. We could see the train arriving by the plumes of smoke; the platform would begin to shake and I'd hold my dad's hand tighter as the double steam monsters pulled into the platform hissing and steaming. Then came 'All aboard!', with excited kids and slamming of the heavy carriage doors - the guard blew his whistle and off we went!* Christine Haigh, Passenger c. 1950



## Station Masters

- First station master: **John Bedford** 1855 - 1874
- Benjamin Rooth** 1881 - 1887
- William Vernon** 1887 - 1903
- Robert Hunt** (right) 1927-1941
- F. R. Fishbourne** 1941-1950
- Mr Peabody** 1950-1952
- Matthew Norman Thornley** 1956
- Mr E. A. Binch** 1962
- G. Rimmington** The last station master; **Roy Jubb** (right) retired in 1985.



Courtesy of Janet and Anthony Jubb



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