

WEST LANCASHIRE'S HISTORICAL COMMUNITY STATIONS

RUFFORD STATION



Rufford Station in the 1930's - photo courtesy of Lancs & Yorks Railway Society



Rufford Station in the 1980's - photo courtesy of Brian Haworth



Rufford Station in 2009 - photo courtesy of Brian Haworth

The Liverpool Ormskirk and Preston Railway Company received parliamentary authorisation to build the line on the 18th August 1846. At this stage the East Lancashire Railway acquired the company and responsibility for the construction of the new line. It accepted a tender from McKenzie, Brassey and Stephenson for £200,698 on the 20th January 1847 and the first sod was cut near Maghull on 16th March 1847.

Rufford Station opened on April 2nd 1849. By 1904 the station was equipped for dealing with passenger traffic, goods traffic, furniture vans, livestock, horse boxes and prize cattle vans. The small goods yard boasted a five ton crane.

During the lines construction its passage across the marshy valley of the River Douglas gave the engineer Sturgess Meek major problems. As fast as earth was tipped to form embankments it sank without trace into the marsh. Meek overcame the problem by carrying the line on a timber frame four hundred yards in length which sat on wooden piers driven forty feet into the marsh. The River Douglas was originally spanned by a timber bridge which was later replaced with a more substantial structure to stand up to the fast flowing river.

A timber and brick signal box was situated adjacent to the level crossing-gates. This has now been re-located onto the platform due to the structural weakness of the original box. Rufford station however, still has two platforms in use as it hosts a passing loop and tokens are exchanged with the crossing keeper for the block sections.

Beyond the station towards Burscough Junction at the very edge of the moss water troughs were provided to allow steam locos to replenish their water supply whilst on the move.

The station today is a shadow of its former self but its picturesque setting on the edge of the village with colourful canal marinas close by gives it a real country station feel. Looking toward the village the tower of St Mary's church built in 1869 is easily picked out and Rufford Old Hall built in 1485 can be glimpsed among the trees.

GRADIENT PROFILE

