

The cycle ride will take us on a circular route going round the outskirts of Padiham via the old Padiham Loop Line towards Gannow using the canal, through Ightenhill and back to Padiham via the River Calder Greenway. *We are taking the route anti-clockwise as this avoids having to climb up a steep hill.* Whilst this guide is primarily about railway history there are many other historical features that we will note.

Starting our journey

We start our journey at the rear of Padiham Leisure Centre. *The greenway is a great way to get to the sporting facilities and swimming pool.*

Padiham Greenway

Opened in 2010, this greenway follows the route of the old Padiham Loop Railway Line. It was opened to goods traffic in 1875 and to passengers in 1876. It went from Blackburn, through Great Harwood to Rose Grove. Its construction gave the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway the opportunity to tap into the heavy cotton trade in Padiham and coal traffic from the numerous pits around the line. It was said to be the most expensive line built by the company at almost £300,000.



Bridge 13 is an impressive 3 arch structure constructed with local stone which carried the railway and footbridge over the River Calder.



Adjacent sits the large steel plated bridge 12 carrying the line over Park Road.

It is worth cycling over the viaduct towards the Memorial Park to view its construction and to see the last remaining bit of track work which was the head shunt into private sidings. Also note the original Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (LYR) railings still in situ.



Turning back across the viaduct and across the road bridge the entrance to the goods yard on the right is clearly visible.



Former Padiham Station

Former Padiham Station & Bridge 11

Once past the goods yard we arrive at what was the site of Padiham station. The station was demolished in 1967. On the site there had been a number of buildings and a subway, though no trace remains.



Bridge 10 over Station Road

This bridge carries us high over Station Road, with Bridge 10a serving sidings adjacent to it, taken down in 1961. Constructed of steel with stone abutments the rivets used in its construction are clearly visible and the original LYR railings on the parapet can be noted.



Bridge 9 Green Brook Bridge

This is a stone arched bridge with stone abutments and an adjacent footbridge.



Bridge 8 Green Road Bridge

Curving now our route continues and we cross over bridge 8 (Green Road bridge.) Constructed of steel girders with plated infill's this large bridge is supported on stone abutments with pilasters and large wing walls and at the time of writing the words 'Station' can still be made out from road level directing would be passengers to the nearby station.

Towards the former bridges 7 & 6

Coming off the curve the route up Padiham Bank is clearly visible. We can imagine the sight and sound of a steam engine hauling freight up the incline. There is no trace of bridge 7, a public footbridge linking Pendle Street which was constructed of steel piers and open lattice steel webs.

The development of the Greenway has seen changes to the original formation here, but the line of the old railway is clearly seen. A section of embankment and bridge 6 has been removed, but fortunately stone from the bridge pilasters have been used on the newly constructed walls. *You can get to Gawthorpe Hall, a National Trust property with a cafe by following Shakespeare St.*



Bridge 5

This bridge that we now cross was very similar in design to the former bridge 6, cast steel with stone abutments.

The climb is more noticeable now and we cross Green Brook for the second time on a bridge that is not at all visible from the embankment.



Bridge 4 Green Brook culvert

It is a single stone arch which carries Green Brook under the embankment in a stone culvert. Additional abutments and retaining walls are in place to support the embankment and prevent erosion from the fast flowing water.



Bridge 3 Knotts Lane

Our route is dead straight as we continue to climb and cross Knotts Lane. This is another structure hardly visible from the path, but if one takes the trouble to look under a well proportioned stone arched bridge is revealed with four large wing retaining walls. Lewis holes used for lifting the large stones into place during construction are clearly visible.



Bridge 2 and 1

Bridges 1 (Bentlywood bridge) and 2 (Knotts occupation) soon come into view, both are made of local stone and well proportioned.

There are fine views back to Pendle Hill.

Closing the Padiham Loop Line

The last passenger service ran in 1957, though it was opened to excursion traffic during wakes weeks until 1963. Goods were transported until 1964 when the line was closed except for servicing the former Padiham Power Station.

We now leave the Greenway and turn left onto the canal towpath.

2 Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath

Turning left we immediately pass under a modern concrete motorway bridge and then the East Lancashire Railway line twice in quick succession as the canal curves rapidly round.

ROSE GROVE



The site of the old steam engine sheds at Rose Grove was close by. The railway extracted water from the canal to supply its large stud of steam engines. Unfortunately the motorway construction removed all traces of the sheds. Rose Grove station also boasted a huge goods yard which handled all manner of freight traffic, in particular coal for local power stations.

The canal played an important part in the development of Burnley with mills being built along its banks. In the nineteenth century Burnley was the cotton weaving centre of the world.

Following the canal we skirt round the periphery of Rose Grove passing the British Waterways depot on the approach to Gannow. We now pass under two towering concrete road bridges and it is interesting to compare their construction with the earlier railway bridges we have seen. Round the next bend the entrance to the 559 yard long Gannow tunnel comes into view and it is here we leave the canal via the steep slope to the left of the tunnel mouth.

3 Gannow to Ingtenhill

Once at the top of the slope leading from the canal we turn left and enter the Gannow subway complex coming out at the exit for Padiham Road. Almost immediately we turn right into Claremont Street, then at the end of the street turn left into Tabor Street - passing Whittlefield Primary school on our right. We then turn right onto Clifton Road then left into Newton Street. We continue until we reach the bottom of the hill where we turn left onto Ightenhill Road. Shortly we pass Ightenhill Park on our left and our route lies straight ahead, meeting Ightenhill Park Lane. Soon the houses on both sides thin out and we start the decent to the River Calder. Passing through a gate we reach an off road section of the ride and as we descend there are splendid views all around. To our right the massive Brierfield textile mill built by Tunstall is in the distance and to our left Ightenhill Manor once stood on the high ground overlooking the valley.

4 River Calder Greenway to Padiham

Now we pass through a gate and cross the River Calder at Ightenhill Bridge, gaining access to Grove Lane through another gate off the bridge.

As we follow the narrow Grove Lane the River Calder slowly meanders away to our left and there are fine views all round.

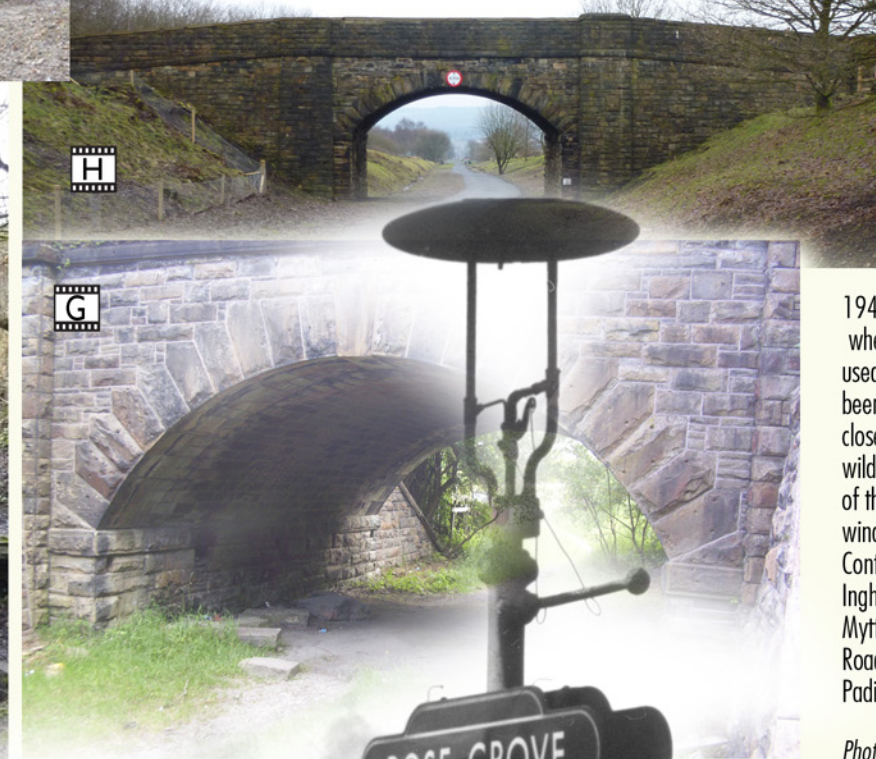
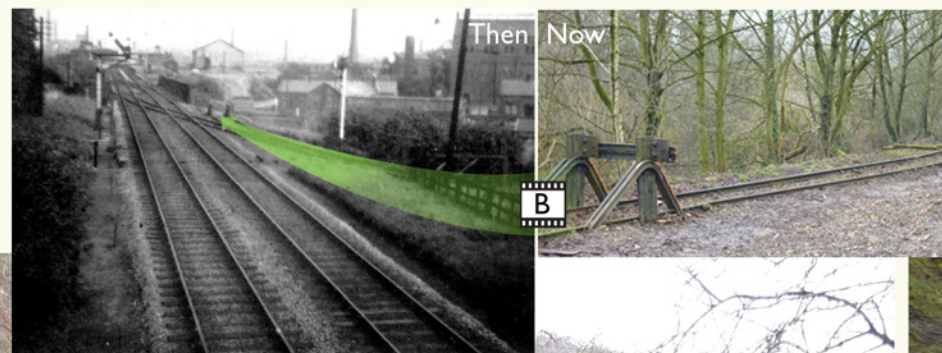
After a short distance the road takes us through a wooded area and here there is an alternative woodland track, the 'path of words' where a partnership of local school children and a local artist have created an interesting feature.

Beyond the woods Gawthorpe Hall, the 17th century home of the Shuttleworth family can be glimpsed. The River Calder has been diverted here and many coal mines existed in this area at the turn of the century. The last pit closed in

1949 but open cast mining commenced in 1960 when a massive Marion walking excavator was used until the coal ran out. The land has now been returned to nature and the marshy ground closest to the River Calder attracts a good selection of wild birds. The large stones are the only remains of the coal industry and were part of the ginny winding gear mechanism.

Continue into the town on Grove Lane. Turn left onto Ingham Street and 1st right into Mytton Street. Follow Mytton Street to its end. Take a left turn into Burnley Road and first right into Station Road, returning to Padiham Leisure Centre where the road becomes Park Rd.

Photographs courtesy of Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Society, Bernard Bond, Norman Graham and Brian Hawarth



www.communityrailancashire.co.uk

www.lancashire.gov.uk/cycling