

Looking at things in more detail

Starting on the Bawtry Road bridge, either go down the steps, or take the longer, smoother route around the end. Walk past the Railway Club and observe triangular brick walls to your right. These are the remains of the **coal drops (1)**, where coal would be deposited by freight trains for the merchants of the town to distribute. In many stations, control of this trade was a useful extra source of income for the station master.

To your right is the current platform 1, but until the 1960s this had two faces. Rails were here for trains that ran to Wistow and Cawood and as a bay for locos and carriages to wait between turns. A further spur went to the left, passing approximately where the current gates are, to serve the wood yard. Walk up onto platform 1 either by steps or via the white gates. Whilst access is free now, originally, one would have had to purchase a 'Platform Ticket' to allow access to railway property.

Throughout the station is evidence of the care taken in designing the station. Decorative **finials (2)** on the columns, nicely turned **wooden features (3)** and **glass screens (4)** to keep out the wind are all welcoming design features.

On your left are a post box, café, waiting room and booking office. Such manned facilities were once commonplace but are now rare in provincial stations. The amenities, with an associated phone box, removed in 2008, give an idea of how the coming of the railway centralised and improved communications. Public rooms meant the station was a social meeting area too.

Continue along platform 1. There's a **square bracket (5)** on a column. In the days before digital information, station staff would put the fingerboard describing the next train here. Further on is an original "**Pooley's of Liverpool**" **steelyard (6)**. Founded in 1840 they were once the biggest manufacturer of weighing machines in the world. Along with all manned railway stations until the 1960s, every kind of Parcels Traffic from the public and companies had to be accepted as part of the railway's "common carrier" network. Such machines weighed the goods due to be dispatched. The Goods Office was adjacent to the Pooley.

Beyond the end of platform 1 is the rail **swing bridge (7)** Selby was on the East Coast main line until the 1980s

Firstly: The Overall View

Start the tour on Portholme Road, beneath Bawtry Road Bridge. Here there is an old concrete gate post. This marks the furthest extent of the 1960s rail yard at Selby. The frontages of the new houses mark the old rail boundary.



Look at the bridge and you can see that in earlier times, several more arches admitted rail traffic. Some are now ironically blocked by the very sleepers that used to lie beneath them.

Go up the steps or along the road and back on yourself at the end to get onto the bridge and look away from the station.

Shiny running lines can be seen. One set goes straight on, towards Doncaster. Others diverge to the right to Leeds and ultimately York. In the gap between these lines, where there is now a woodland, fifty years ago a huge goods yard, coaling tower and engine shed were hives of activity, and a workplace for many men. To the left rusty lines disappear into undergrowth. These sidings served the dye factory and gas works.

Cross the road and walk away from town.

On your left, are the concrete posts of a gate that was a vehicle access to yet more sidings.

Retrace your steps towards town and look towards the station from the bridge. The key parts of the rail operation are visible.

From left to right:

- The commercial car park is on the site of a former wood mill. A track crossed Station Road to service it.
- In the foreground are "coal drops".
- To the left of the current platform 1, where cars are now parked was a bay platform.
- The current running lines are next to the platforms. Two more lines formerly ran between them.

● Beyond platform 3 are the white pediments and frontage of the original 1834 station. Tracks went into the train shed, as well as to sets of sidings. Further sidings and rail works existed to the right of platform 3.



Now walk down to the station to take a look at things in more detail...

and there were four tracks where there are now two. In the 1960s, many mighty expresses such as the "Flying Scotsman" thundered through on the centre roads each day on their way between London and Scotland. However, the bridge is not wide enough for four tracks, and rails had to be "interlaced", that is, one pair in the middle of another.

The rail bridge swings horizontally. Bridge opening is rare these days, but electric motors move the deck in under a minute. Until the 1980s, large ships visited Selby regularly. For example, in 1968 over 300 such movements were recorded. Passage of a vessel required the swing bridge to open causing several minutes of delay to train services.

The hydraulic pumps that powered this movement until the 1974 were housed in the **brick tower (8)** visible on the far side of the river.

The **cabin (9)** was placed high over the rails to allow a clear view of approaching river traffic, and was raised further in the 1980s for electric wires to go underneath, but this development then never took place.

The buildings on platform 2 are a variety of public and private spaces, mostly still in use although the Victorian-style urinals can only be glimpsed through railings. Decorative features such as **airbricks (10)** in the same style as the finials are evident, and on the wall the painted outline of the former station clock, and tile display of the entire North Eastern Railway system remain at the far end. Heading away from the river, and beyond the glass screen is platform 3. From here, the full **frontage of the old station (11)** is clearly visible to your left. Beyond platform 3 is a waste area that was once full of sidings. The original Leeds to Selby line ran here. Access to these was via the gate seen earlier. In the distance, the bulk of Ousegate Maltings looms. As Selby is at the heart of an agricultural district, traffic in grain and malt was important.

Cross over the bridge, leave the station and turn right. On the right is a row of railway cottages. At the end of the road is a classic "Station Inn". Turn right here, notice the **19th century railway railings (12)** on Ousegate, and go under the rail bridge.

Immediately on your right is a building with distinctive wheel-design **air bricks (13)** matching those on platform 2. This was the original station master's house,

and beyond it the original station. Passengers went into the house to buy tickets, and thence to the platforms.

The train shed is behind the massive blue doors. In 1834, this was the end of the line from Leeds. To continue to Hull, passengers had to disembark inside the train shed, cross Ousegate, and board a steam packet for the cruise to Hull.

A Civic Society plaque gives historical detail and "1841" on the lintel is the date that the building ceased to serve passengers.

Walking past the doors allows a glimpse into the old Goods Yard. This is private property. On the right are the former railway stables, now used as offices for Viking Shipping. High on the external wall can be seen **pulleys (14)** that were used to lift loads to the first-floor stores. In the yard a **buffer stop (15)** remains as testimony to the rail service. As many as 9 tracks came into this space, with capacity for up to 50 freight wagons to be handled at any one time, with further lines to the Maltings on the left.

Behind you on the riverbank are the **derelict wharves (16)** where trade flourished until the 1980s. Until the 1960s, rails crossed Ousegate and coal wagons would be shunted across, with road traffic protected by a man with a red flag, to allow direct filling of a tug boat's bunkers with coal.

For a final appreciation of the rail infrastructure, walk back up Ousegate to the road bridge, cross, and along the path on the Barlby side of the river.

Depending on the state of the vegetation, old wharves and the façade of the old station are visible on the Selby side. Close to the swing bridge is the brick tower viewed earlier from the platform. The current bridge dates from the 1890s, and is not in the same place as the original. The 1841 crossing was to the town side of the tower, and the remains of the **track bed of this original route (17)** can be seen over a gate.

A contemporary observer wrote as follows in 1835 just after the initial opening of rail services to what was the first rail station in Yorkshire. He praised the "substantial and excellent workmanship which will serve as a model for similar works both in this and foreign countries".

This leaflet is part of a series covering aspects of Selby's Hidden Heritage.

Selby has a rich and proud heritage in shipbuilding, agriculture, manufacturing and transport. These leaflets aim to raise the awareness of this urban inheritance.

The maps used are illustrative only. Information is accurate at the time of writing in Spring 2011.

The other leaflets in the series are:

First Rate Ousegate: Stroll along the street that was Selby's hub.

Signs & symbols on the Shopfront: Unlock the mystery of street-side signs and symbols.

Selby in the 20th Century: Some surprising examples of modern architecture.

Selby Canal Towpath Tour: From the industrial lock basin to tranquil countryside, by the Canal.

Plaque Parade: A tour around sites linked with famous people and events in Selby's history.

The Selby Timeline: Stroll past artwork celebrating a millennium of Selby in a fine riverside setting.

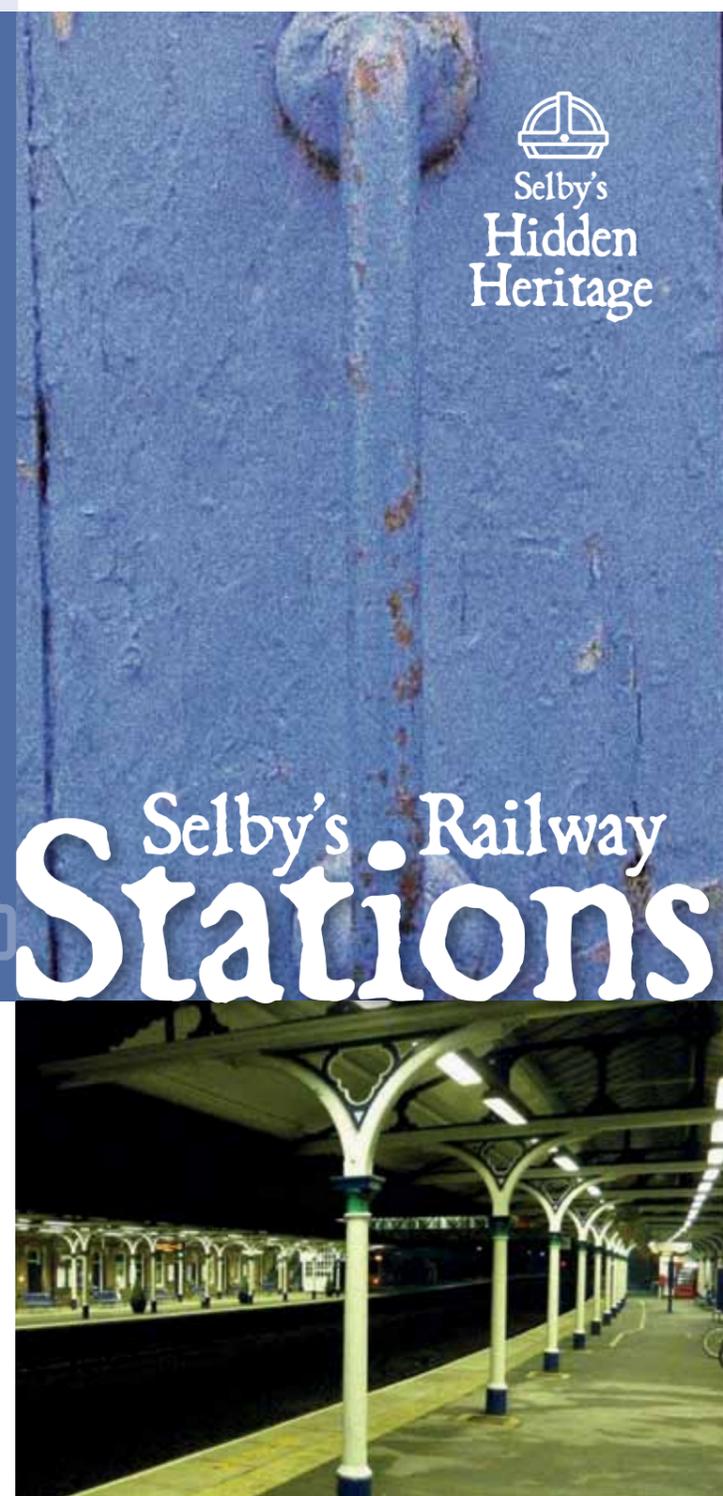
Selby Town Hall: Chapel, clinic, car repairs and civic symbol, the story of over a century of the building's public uses.

Memorials & Markers: A walk around town noting plaques describing people and events from Selby's history.

Copies of these leaflets are available from Selby Library, Groundwork North Yorkshire offices, Selby Civic Centre. Online at www.groundwork.org.uk/nyorkshire. Or the "Hidden Heritage" page of selbytowncouncil.gov.uk.

For further information contact Groundwork North Yorkshire on **01757 703758** or email northyorkshire@groundwork.org.uk, or Selby Library on **0845 034 9540** or email selby.library@northyorks.gov.uk. To contact the Civic Society, call **01757 268418** or via selbycivicsociety@yahoo.co.uk

This project is supported by:



Selby's Railway Stations

What's so special about them?

In many ways, an appropriate comment had it have been written twenty or so years ago.

Many provincial stations were once like Selby's. However, few towns now have a station that shows such clear evidence of the kind of facilities that were once commonplace throughout the rail network.

Take the opportunity to stroll around this little gem, and then relax over a cuppa at another throwback to the past – a genuinely independent station café!

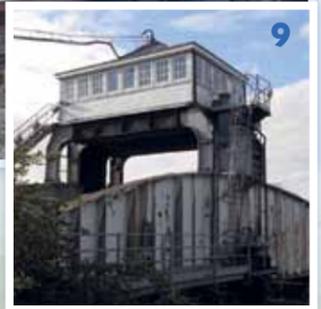
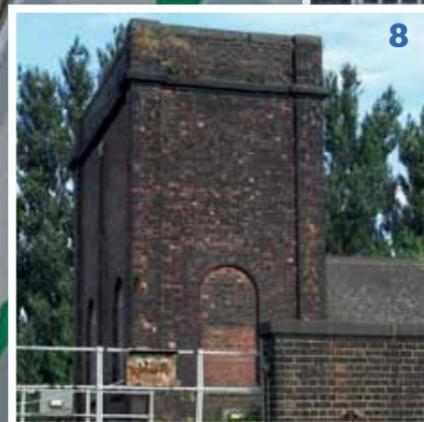
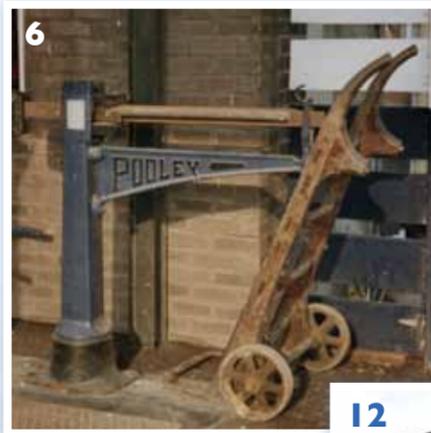
Selby is famous for having the first railway station in Yorkshire, opened in September 1834. The original Selby station is still in business as a goods warehouse, owned by Viking Shipping Services. It can be inspected externally from Ousegate and platform 3. Unrealistic charges led to the removal of rail connections in the 1980s.

The current station dates from the opening of the extension of the Leeds – Selby line to Hull in 1840. Whilst there is no particularly outstanding item of architectural merit that remains in the 1840 building, the general layout is fascinating.

The building has had many owners. Originally erected by the Hull and Selby Railway Company, George Hudson's York and North Midland Railway firstly leased and then bought the company. After 1867, the station became part of the North Eastern Railway (NER).

When railways in the UK were amalgamated in 1923, the station became part of the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER). On nationalisation in 1947, it became part of Eastern Region. After privatisation, in 1990s ownership of rail assets fragmented.

Since 2007, TransPennine Express has managed rail services, although Northern Rail, Hull Trains, East Coast and various freight companies also use the tracks. The buildings are owned by Network Rail. Currently there are around 500 000 passenger journeys from the station annually.



BAWTRY ROAD

RIVER OUSE

OLD STATION

OUSEGATE MALTINGS