

2

timeline

- railway
- road
- coach
- waterway

1845-49

Opening of the Leeds & Thirsk Railway via Arthington (North Eastern Railway from 1851)

19.9.1854

Bramhope Tunnel accident

1863-64

Construction commenced on Otley & Ilkley Joint Railway (MR/NER)

1.8.1865

Otley & Ilkley Joint Railway opened for passenger traffic

1865

Stagecoach services in Wharfedale largely disappear with the arrival of the railway

1.7.1866

Ben Rhydding station opened

4.12.1876

Shipley & Guiseley line opened for passengers

1.8.1877

NER Harrogate to Bradford service commenced

1.10.1888

Skipton & Ilkley Line opened for all traffic via Addingham, Bolton Abbey & Embsay



11 First train from Bolton Abbey to Ilkley, 1888

26.2.1894

Yeadon Branch opened for mineral traffic (no regular passenger service ever introduced)

29.7.1902

Yorkshire Dales Railway to Grassington opened for passengers and goods

railways



6 Arthington station

Before 1865, Ilkley was flourishing due to its prosperous spa industry. However, its relatively poor communication with the outside world held it back from its full potential.

The turning point came well into the 19th century. Ilkley's transformation from a small rural township to a handsome town was in part due to the popularity of its waters and its development as a centre of hydrotherapy, but the coming of the railway and land sales created a period of radical change.



8 Ilkley station, 1880s

At the mid-point of the century the only significant new buildings in the town were the group of hydros in the Cow Pasture and the hugely influential Hydropathic Establishment in Ben Rhydding. By 1900, one could "step out of the busy station and look upon the broad and handsome streets with their numerous well-built houses, shops and hotels ... while reaching far along the hill sides are stately residences and even castle-like hydropathic establishments."

The impact was accentuated because the importance of the spa industry was recognised by the railway builders. Among their contributions was the provision of a station at Wheatley specifically for visitors to *Ben Rhydding*. This increase in the number of residential and day visitors as a consequence is indicated by an estimate of around 200,000 per year in 1900. Some visitors would have still used the roads, and some walked to Ilkley over the moor from Saltaire, Bingley and Keighley.

The route from Bradford to Ilkley was via Apperley Bridge until 1876 when the line extension from Shipley to Guiseley via Baildon was opened. In the 1870s, the Midland proposed a westward extension to Skipton, requiring a bridge across Brook Street. A mock-up was displayed in 1874, which caused a strong reaction from those concerned that it would become an eyesore. Despite this, the new line was opened by 1885. A bridge was erected [fig 9], along with a viaduct carrying the railway over the west of Ilkley [fig 14].

Mid-19th century coach transport was very slow and uncomfortable; people tended to travel only short distances, which limited the catchment area of the spa. Travel time between Ilkley and Harrogate, only 18 miles away, was two hours, and it took one and a half hours to reach Leeds (16 mi) or Bradford (14 mi). For most people living further away from Ilkley, the cost of the journey was too high in terms of time and comfort. Services were infrequent - one coach per day was the maximum between Leeds, Bradford or Skipton and Ilkley. Out of season, coaches varied from three per week to only once a week, and Ilkley was very isolated.



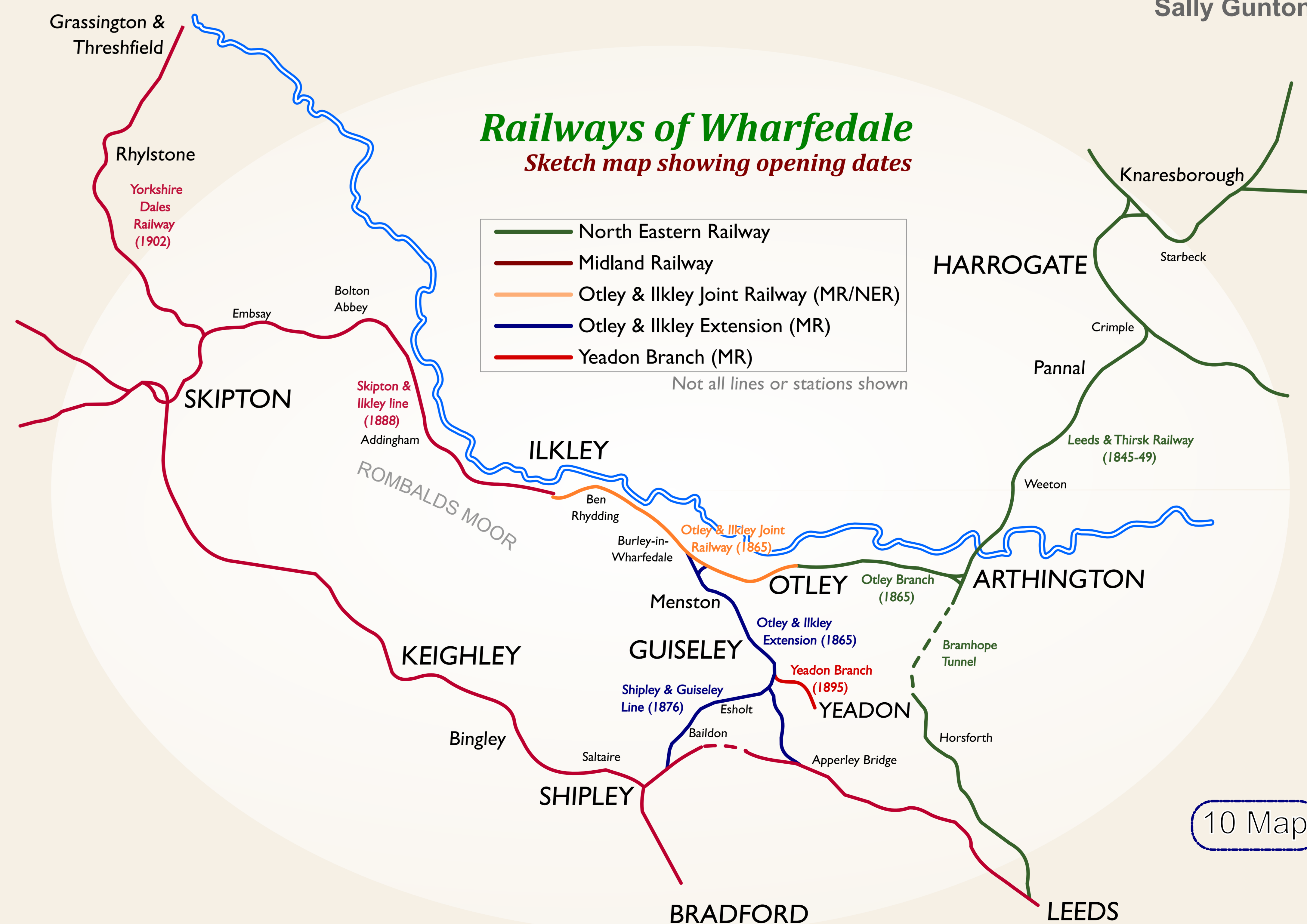
7 Bramhope Tunnel

Improvements began when railways were built elsewhere, particularly the North Eastern Railway's line from Leeds to Thirsk, which had a station at Arthington [fig 6], from where visitors were brought up the valley. Work on the railway through Wharfedale began in 1863 by various companies [see map, fig 10]. The branch line joined the NER line at Arthington where a triangle was constructed just above Bramhope Tunnel [fig 7], and connected with the Midland via Guiseley. On reaching Ilkley the railway had an enormous impact. From that date (1 August 1865), other parts of the country immediately became more accessible, and this meant larger numbers of visitors to the spa, assisting Ilkley to become one of the country's top hydropathic resorts.

9 Brook Street railway bridge



Sally Gunton



10 Map