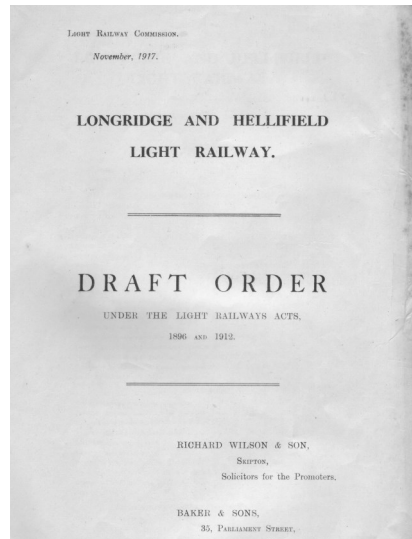

The Longridge and Hellifield Light Railway - "A Railway that never was"

The planning for this light railway first came to light around 1911. When the Fylde Water Board revealed its plans to construct Stocks Reservoir in the forest of Bowland, a group of local landowners and business people saw an opportunity for a new line. The plan was to link Longridge Station on the joint Lancashire and Yorkshire, London and North Western railway's line from Preston to the Midland railway at Hellifield.

Permission to build the reservoir was obtained by 1912 but construction was delayed until 1921 because of the outbreak of the first world war. Despite this, in 1917 railway engineer Edgar Ferguson completed a survey of the 24 mile single track route leaving Longridge, with stations at Chipping, Whitewell, Dunsop Bridge, Newton, Slaiburn, Tosside and Wigglesworth. This route would pass by the reservoir construction site and thus aid the works.

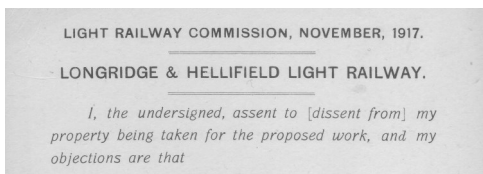
The Midland Railway refused a connection to the line at Hellifield, so it was planned to terminate the line between Hellifield and Long Preston in a field alongside the Midland railway's carriage sheds. A light railway order was proposed, but two main factors went against it:

- there was a lack of funding,
- the Fylde water board went ahead with plans to supply the reservoir



The draft order for the line from 1917

site from new sidings on the Midland Railway at Long Preston, and then by road to Tosside where materials would transfer to the water company's own three foot gauge railway to the construction site.



Postcard issued to land owners that the proposed line would pass through

As a consequence, the plan was abandoned in 1918.

With the grouping of Britain's railways in 1923 all the involved railway companies became part of the London Midland and Scottish Railway company (LMS) who reviewed the plan again but

declined to operate the line. There was finally abandoned in 1924.
moral support from the water board
and local community but no financial John Percy
support was offered so the plans were March 2020