



ON FURNESS LINES

ABOVE: Close to Morecambe Bay's shore is attractive Kent's Bank station, neatly constructed in stone and timber. One of the early 'Derby Lightweight' diesel multiple unit trains leaves after its call on a service to Barrow in May 1967, as the porter wheels a sizeable barrow away; what can have been loaded there?! (J. S. Gilks)

BELOW: LMS 8F 2-8-0 No.48670 approaches Dalton Junction with a freight to Barrow on 13th April 1966. The train is taking the route to Barrow but the junction signal marks the divergence of the 1858 Millwood curve enabling trains from the Carnforth direction to run direct towards Whitehaven without reversal and later to avoid the long circuit through Barrow. The load includes a nuclear flask being taken to the United Kingdom Energy Authority's plant at Windscale, now known as Sellafield, where irradiated nuclear fuel elements are reprocessed. The conveyance of these flasks between Sellafield and other nuclear power stations on special 'Flatrol' wagons has been a controversial traffic on the line but has contributed significantly to its survival. (David Idle)

One of the most scenic — and for too long overlooked — lines in England is the Furness Railway route from Carnforth around Morecambe Bay to Barrow and along the Cumbrian Coast to Whitehaven. Its development was protracted and piecemeal but the route was complete by 1857. The discovery of huge iron ore deposits led to the rapid development of Barrow-in-Furness as an iron and steel centre; the railway constructed new docks and shipbuilding arrived; steamers sailed for Belfast and the Isle of Man. The boom years were not to last, though, and a long decline followed during the twentieth century. The railway, fortunately, has survived and this feature looks at some of the scenes on the southernmost section between Carnforth and Barrow. A second feature later in the year will take us north towards Whitehaven.





ABOVE: An engineering feature of the Furness line is the series of long viaducts carrying it across the wide estuaries of rivers running down from the Lakeland fells into the sea. At Arnside the estuary of the River Kent required a viaduct of 49 spans, 520 yards long. Originally constructed in timber, it was renewed in the 1880s and again rebuilt during World War I. Two Clayton Type 1 diesels combine their meagre resources to cope with the four coaches of a local passenger train from Barrow on 2nd August 1968. (David A. Hill)



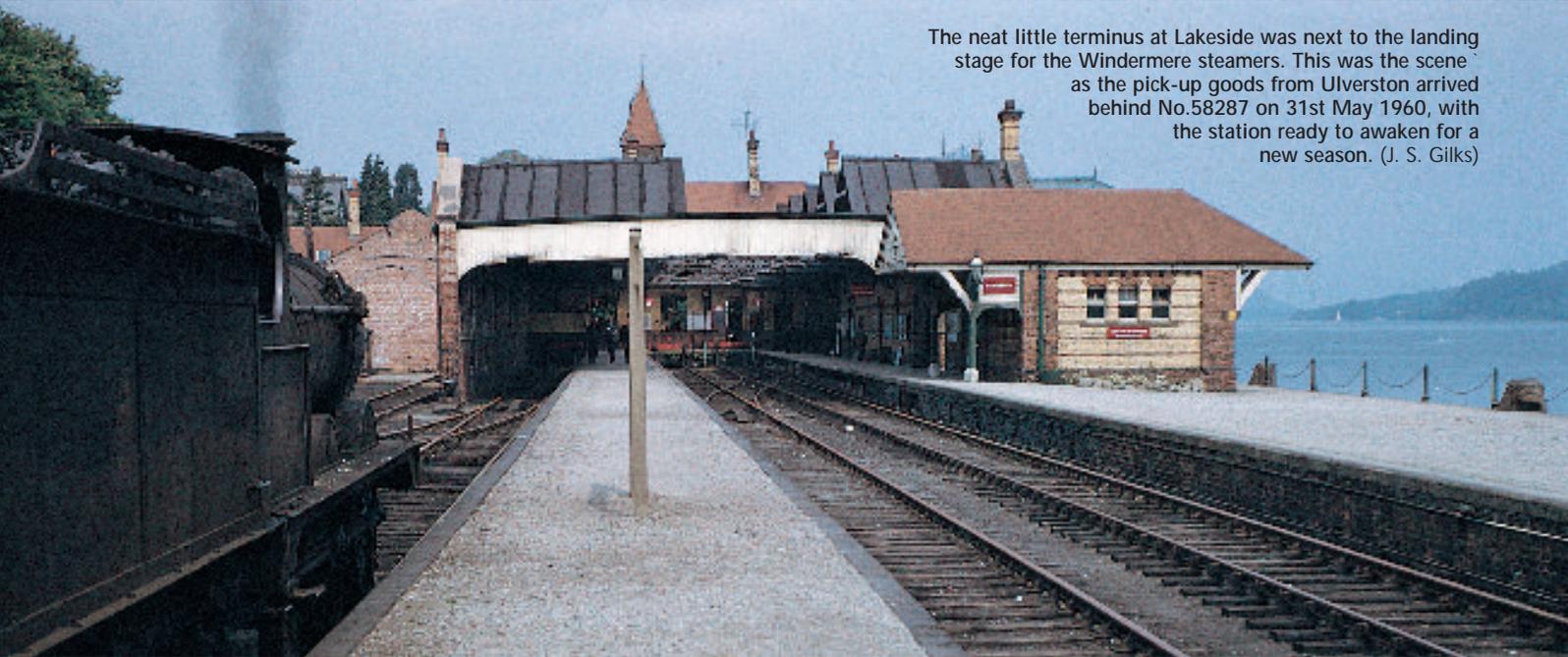
ABOVE: A Preston-Barrow DMU passes Plumpton Junction, east of Ulverston, in July 1975. The junctions here were for the Lakeside branch and for the old Conishead Priory branch on which the passenger service had ended in 1917 but which remained for a short distance for freight from the Glaxo works. (J. S. Gilks)

BELOW: BR Class 4 4-6-0 No.75019 approaches Grange-over-Sands at Blawith Point with a down goods in June 1968. A little further back along Morecambe Bay there used to be a siding at Meathop where sea-washed turf was once loaded for use in bowling greens! (J. S. Gilks)





ABOVE: The branch to Lakeside (Windermere) lost its year-round service in 1938 after which (apart from a wartime interruption) it ran only in summer until 1965. Goods traffic *did* continue, however, and the yard at Haverthwaite seems busy on 31st May 1960 when Midland Railway 2F 0-6-0 No.58287 was shunting the sidings. The station was last used for passengers at the end of the 1946 season but was not officially closed until 1955. (J. S. Gilks)



The neat little terminus at Lakeside was next to the landing stage for the Windermere steamers. This was the scene as the pick-up goods from Ulverston arrived behind No.58287 on 31st May 1960, with the station ready to awaken for a new season. (J. S. Gilks)

Continuing around Morecambe Bay the Leven estuary was crossed by a similar viaduct to that at Arnside, again with 49 spans. In 1903 the carriages of a Carnforth to Barrow mail, which had been forced to stop on Leven Viaduct, were blown over during a 100mph gale! (J. S. Gilks)





ABOVE: Grange-over-Sands developed as a minor but modestly fashionable resort once described, with unerring accuracy, in the *Westmorland Gazette* as "not gay, not fast, not boisterous, not overcrowded". Nevertheless the station was uncommonly busy on 23rd May 1976 when the National Collection's LNWR 'Precedent' 2-4-0 No.790 *Hardwicke* arrived on a special run from Carnforth. (Roy Hobbs)

BELOW: LMS 3F 0-6-0T No.47373 passes Dalton Junction on a trip freight to Barrow on 13th April 1966 under the scrutiny of three railwaymen. Curving sharply round to the right is the Millwood curve to Park South Junction where the loop through Barrow rejoins the line on to Whitehaven. Furness signal boxes were invariably of pleasing design and this one has features of interest: note the brick-lined staircase leading to a 'shed' beneath the entrance landing and the two-bay coal bunker. (David Idle)

