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Wakefield's Westgate Stations by Ian Kyle and Kate Taylor

The first station to be built in Westgate opened in 1856. It was built for the Great Northern Railway line from Leeds to Doncaster and, crossing Westgate on an embankment, cut through the mansion on the south side of Westgate which has been built in the mid 18 century for John Milnes. Much of the house was knocked down, including 'most of the large and small dining rooms, two drawing rooms, fifteen bedrooms, and the library'. The rest of the house became the station. It served the line for ten years.

The new line gave Wakefield its 95-arch viaduct.

The second Westgate Station, designed by J B Fraser of Leeds, was opened on the north side of Westgate in May 1867. It was built for the Great Northern, Midland and Manchester, and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways. The site of the earlier station was cleared. (The Wakefield School Board built Westgate School there in 1973) Initially the station had its turret but no clock but, after pressure from Wakefield Tradesmen's Association, the clock was added in June 1880. The clock was designed by an eminent horologist, Sir Edmund Beckett. It had four skeleton dials made of cast iron, each with a diameter of 7 feet six inches, filled with strong polished plate glass. The hands were of copper painted in black with a gilt line up the centre. The *Wakefield Herald* noted that by now Wakefield was well supplied with public clocks. There was one on St John's Church another on the parish church (which became the cathedral in 1888) and one on the Wakefield and Barnsley Union Bank a little higher up Westgate and on the southern side. The clock on the new Town Hall was installed in



The second Westgate Station with its 1880 clocktower

December 1880. Like the one on Westgate Station it was by William Potts of Leeds.

Many of the station buildings, including the clock tower, were demolished in 1967. The station was replaced in 2013 by the third Westgate Station, to the north of the second one, which was built as part of the Merchant Gate redevelopment scheme and opened on 22 December. .



The present Westgate Station, opened 2013 (photograph ©Kate Taylor)

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