

# Cleethorpes

## The prosperous resort created by the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway



For the Grimsby & Cleethorpes branch of the Watkin Society

S.J.Richards – November 2023

<https://watkinsociety.org.uk/>



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Historic England Archive: EPW031924

**Cleethorpes railway station, pier and promenade(1930)**

## Introduction

Cleethorpes is a thriving seaside resort catering for long stay visitors and also welcoming a regular stream of “day trip” visitors, throughout the year.

Cleethorpes owes a major part of its foundation to the coming of the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (MS&LR), who invested in the town in 1863 by building a small station for visitors to the coast. Increasing visitor numbers necessitated the expansion of the station in 1880-81, and then the MS&LR invested in the building of a substantial Sea Wall and promenade in 1884. They invested further in the resort by acquiring the pier, which had been built by a company associated with the MS&LR in 1872.

This paper describes the building of the railway from Grimsby to Cleethorpes in 1863, the significant expansion of the railway in 1880 and then the building of the 3685ft long sea wall from west of the station to what is now known as Brighton Street Slipway.

The MS&LR invested the equivalent of £12m pounds in Cleethorpes in today's valuation.

The driving force behind these developments was **Sir Edward Watkin**, general manager of the MS&LR (1854-1861) and later chairman of the MS&LR (1864-1894). He was a quite remarkable Victorian entrepreneur, who was responsible for many railway projects in the UK and beyond. He was a man of extraordinary vision.

## Background

In the 1830's, the area of northern Lincolnshire running towards the mouth of the river Humber, inhabited by Cleethorpes and Great Grimsby, was in a poor state. The MS&LR recognised the opportunity to invest in the area and this in turn initiated the creation of the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes as we know them today. The railway had reached Grimsby by 1848, with the attraction of the prospect of supplying new markets with fish from Grimsby, serving the capital and the midlands. The docks at Grimsby were further developed through to 1880 and beyond, and it became a thriving commercial and fishing port.

Cleethorpes was also developing as a seaside resort during this time, but with no rail connection, trains would bring large numbers of visitors to the closest place, Grimsby Docks station. From the station, visitors would walk or travel by coach to Cleethorpes, often in processions lead by bands.

The MS&LR, under the leadership of Edward Watkin, recognised the potential offered to the railway by Cleethorpes and plans were put in place to extend the railway from Grimsby to Cleethorpes. Unlike most seaside resorts the railway is built along the shore line, terminating in a station right alongside the beach.

The MS&LR became the Great Central Railway in 1897, when it was decided to focus on building the “extension” from Manchester to London, with sights on reaching Paris via a channel tunnel.

The Great Central Railway’s Official Album made this interesting comment about Cleethorpes;

*“Beyond Grimsby the line has been pushed to Cleethorpes, a village once inhabited by a few fishermen only in winter, but now changed by a unique effort of railway enterprise into the most crowded watering place in Lincolnshire. It is almost entirely the property of the Great Central Railway, who have built there, a massive Sea Wall 65ft wide, the inner side of which is a broad carriage drive, divided from the promenade by a dwarf wall. A pier, a switchback, public gardens, and other places of amusements, have been built by the enterprise of the company, and in summer the town is thronged with excursionists from Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Midlands”*

The railway was opened in 1863 as a single line, however, such was the popularity of this extension, that it required doubling of the line in 1873 and expansion of the railway station at Cleethorpes in 1880. Further to the building of the railway, the MS&LR also invested substantially in the amenities at Cleethorpes in 1884, by building a Sea Wall and promenade, the pier gardens and taking ownership of the pier.

## **Overview of paper**

This paper concentrates upon the development of Cleethorpes in three sections. Firstly, the construction of the railway from Grimsby to Cleethorpes and construction of the first Cleethorpes station on Platform 1 (now known as “The No.1”); secondly, the expansion of the railway following lack of capacity of the initial railway; finally, the construction of the 3685 ft long Sea Wall and promenade both west and east from the station .

The document is mainly sourced from Archives of the MS&LR in both the National Archive in Kew and the Lincolnshire Archives in Lincoln.



## **Part 1- The building of the Cleethorpes branch in 1863 and 1873**

*References are made to the documents LDP/1/73 (1856), LDP/1/77 (1860) and LDP/1/120 (1873) (Further Powers), MS&LR, Grimsby to Cleethorpes Branch, Plans and Sections, in Lincolnshire Archives.*

Various routes through the East Marsh area of Grimsby were considered and discussed with landowners, until the final route was selected, running to the north of the town and closely following the alignment of the river Humber. See figure 3. A single line was built, with a station at Cleethorpes. Figures 4, 5, and 6 show the 2 miles 2 furlong outline of the route. Figure 8 shows the plan for the lines and station at Cleethorpes. However, this is believed to be the station plan after the line was doubled in 1873. Note the provision of a turntable to turn the engines before returning back to their destination.

The archive LDP/1/73 refers to;

*"A railway to commence in the parish of Great Grimsby in the parts of Lindsey in the County of Lincoln, by a junction with the Manchester and Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, at or near their Pumping Engine adjoining the principal entrance gates to their dock called the Royal Dock, and to terminate in the township of Cleethorpes and parish of Clee, in the said parts of Lindsey and County of Lincoln, in a field there called Beacon Field, in the occupation of Thomas Willerton, which last mentioned intended railway will pass from, in, through, or into, or be situate within the several parishes, townships and extra-parochial or other places of Great Grimsby, Clee and Cleethorpes, or some of them in the parts of Lindsey and County of Lincoln."*

For this initial route the line of the railway curves around from the MS&LR docks line, before running in a relatively straight line to Cleethorpes station. This route was subsequently changed as the fishing docks were extended and the line moved further inland with a series of reverse curves. The railway passes through several parcels of land, with the planning document quoting the ownership of each, with familiar names (to locals) such as Alexander Grant Thorold (there is a Grant Thorold Park in Grimsby); the Churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the Parish of Clee; The Master Fellows and Scholars of Lady Frances Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; Robert Suggitt (there is still a Suggitts Lane off Grimsby Road).

The line runs close to the seashore for a large part of its length and terminates adjacent to the promenade and beach. Not many seaside railways stations are in such a unique position, with the station being right alongside the promenade. As Figure 5 shows, the track layout for the first station at Cleethorpes was a relatively simple affair, with a single platform and a run round loop. There was a turntable at the east end of the platform and a single siding. The station building itself, built in 1863, was much more substantial, especially given the initial single platform and is still more or less intact today as it was.



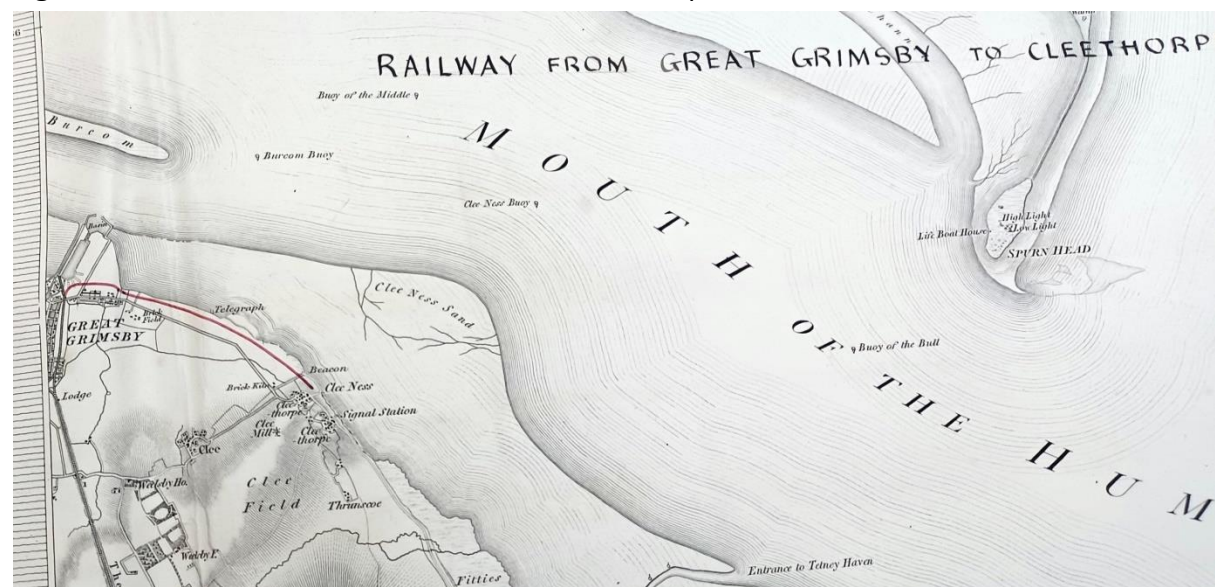
**Figure 1:** Above photograph shows the platform side of the station in 2023, with the addition of a small extension over the original entrance with five arched windows and two doors. On the far left can be seen the base for the water tank for replenishing locomotives.



**Figure 2:** This photograph shows the road side of Cleethorpes station in its condition in October 2023. Note the original main entrance on the left of the picture, with its roof lights. Unfortunately the cycle hub has not proved to be a profitable business, but the buildings to the right house the “No.1” Public House which is a thriving enterprise, which supports the origins of the building. The local Cleethorpes Great Central Society, meet every month in the “back room”, which contains some railway artefacts and documents.

The line to Cleethorpes was approved by the Board of Trade on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1863, as referred to in the document, which can be found in Appendix I.

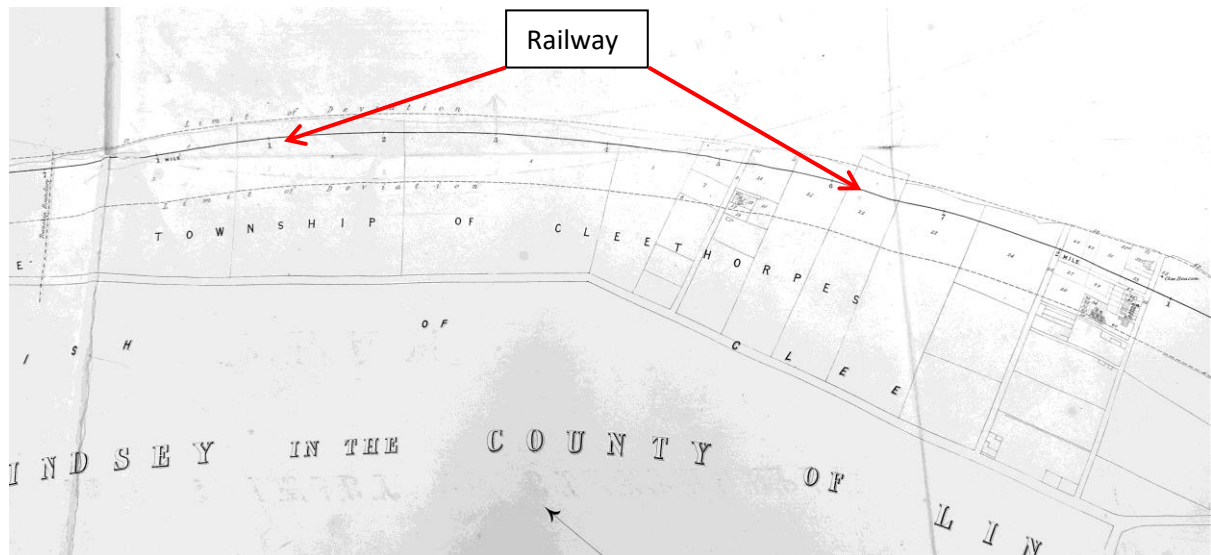
**Figure 4: Overview of chosen route – LDP/1/73 Maps 1856**



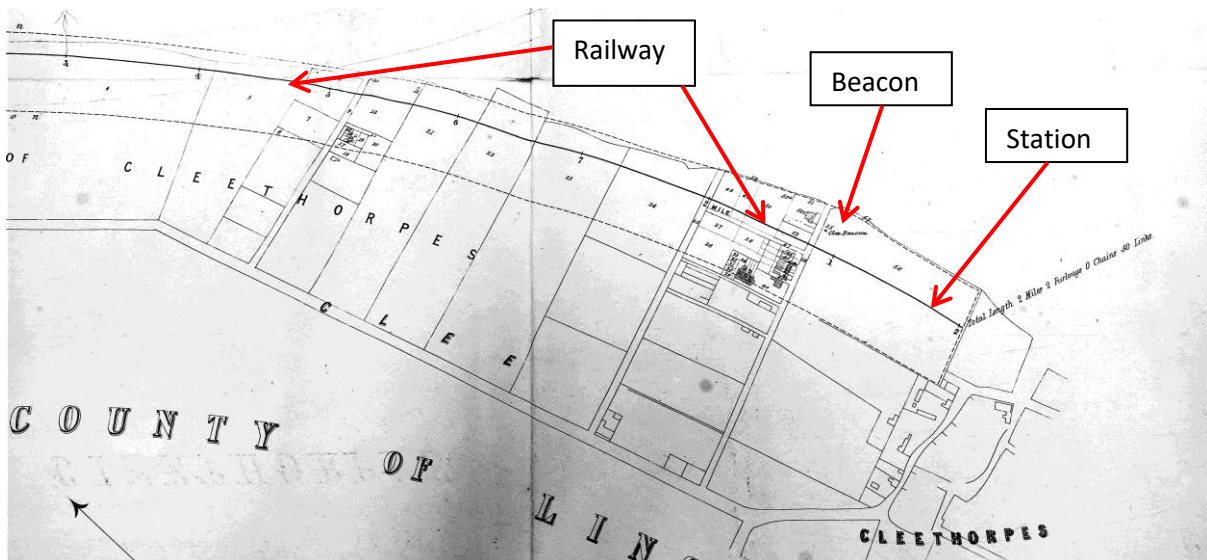
A historical map of the Parish of Great Grimsby and Township of Clee. The map shows the railway line running horizontally across the top, with stations marked at Grimsby, Clee, and Clee St. John. A red box labeled 'Railway' has three red arrows pointing to these stations. The map also shows the parish boundaries and the township of Clee. The text 'PARISH OF GREAT GRIMSBY' and 'TOWNSHIP OF CLEE' are visible. The map is oriented with North at the top.



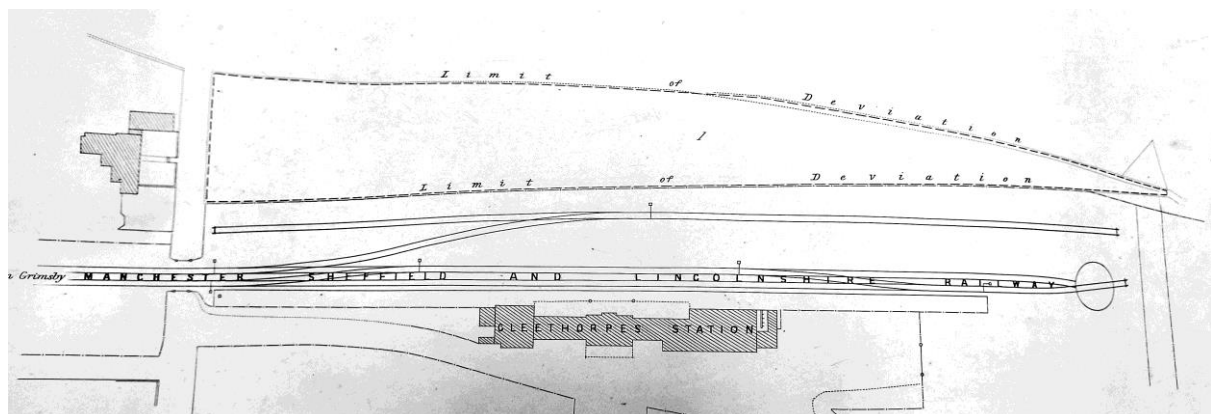
**Figure 6: Second section of route – LDP/1/73 Maps 1856**



**Figure 7: Third section of route – LDP/1/73 Maps 1856**



**Figure 8: Cleethorpes station plan – LDP/1/120 further Powers 1873**



## **Part 2- The extension of the Cleethorpes branch in 1880**

*References are made to the document LDP/1/139, (1880), MS&LR, New Works, Grimsby to Cleethorpes, in Lincolnshire Archives*

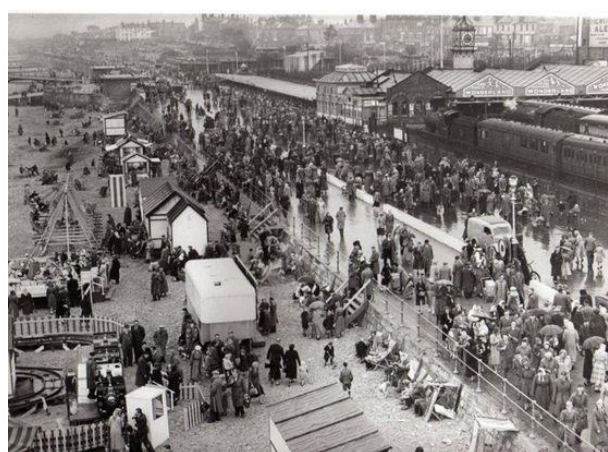
The extension of the railway into Cleethorpes proved to be very successful amidst the growing passion to visit seaside resorts in the Victorian age. It soon became clear that the single line into Cleethorpes and the single platform were incapable of coping with the large numbers of people wanting to access the resort. Watkin and the MS&LR were clearly correct in their vision of the potential of Cleethorpes as a resort.

In the 1890's it was claimed that on one Saturday 30,000 people visited by train on one day, although when considering the availability of space for the trains and the required shunting and rearrangement of passenger stock, this seems an unlikely number! However it does demonstrate how popular Cleethorpes had become. There is further information on visitor numbers in Part 3 on the Sea Wall which equates to around 500,000 visitors per year in 1880.



**Figure 9:** Cleethorpes beach and station.

*Photo: Edward Trevitt, courtesy Wendy Trevitt*



**Figure 10:** Busy Cleethorpes Station

The above photographs, although dated just after the First World War, demonstrate the popularity of Cleethorpes. Necessary plans were put in place to double the railway track to Cleethorpes and enlarge the station to 6 platforms. The planning document for this was the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (New Works) dated 1880.

**Figure 11:** LDP/1/139 MS&LR New Works -1880



This MS&LR document from the Lincoln Archives contains many amendments to the whole route from Manchester, but for the purposes of this document, details the enhancements to the Cleethorpes route. The document details the upgrading of the station at Cleethorpes, by building five new platforms to create a six platform station.

Further to this, new station facilities were provided at the end of the station, including refreshment rooms and a clock tower (c.1884), by John Mann Lockerbie and Arthur Wilkinson of Birmingham. These latter two survive, as shown below, but the other buildings were demolished and replaced in the 1960's.



**2023**



Historic England Archive: AA97\_05736

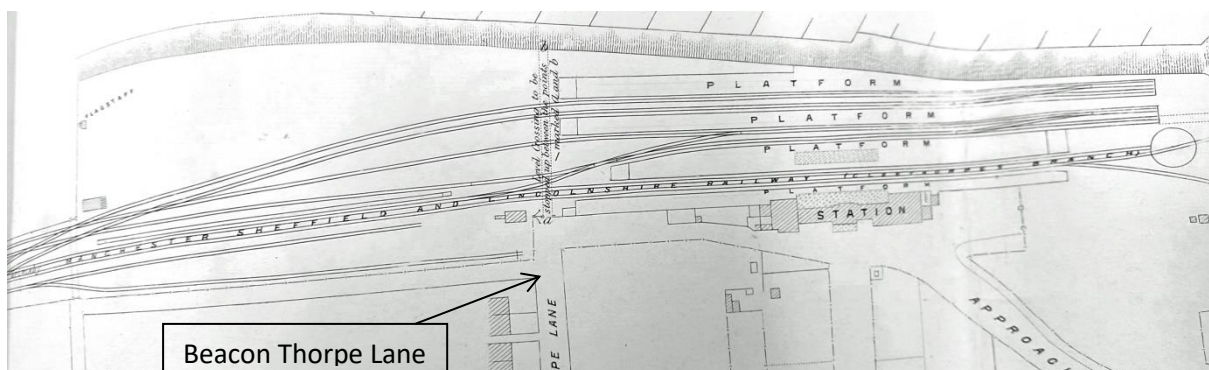
**1898**

**Figure 12:** *Photos of clock tower and station refreshment rooms.*

The diagram below (Fig. 13) shows the new layout of the station with six platforms and there were also two carriage sidings. Note that the turntable is retained in this plan, but this was removed at a later date to the west of the station together, with a signal box at Cleethorpes. In addition, further sidings and a signal box were installed at Suggitts Lane by 1891. The additional sidings became necessary to store the procession of trains arriving at Cleethorpes and to prepare them ready for their return journey.

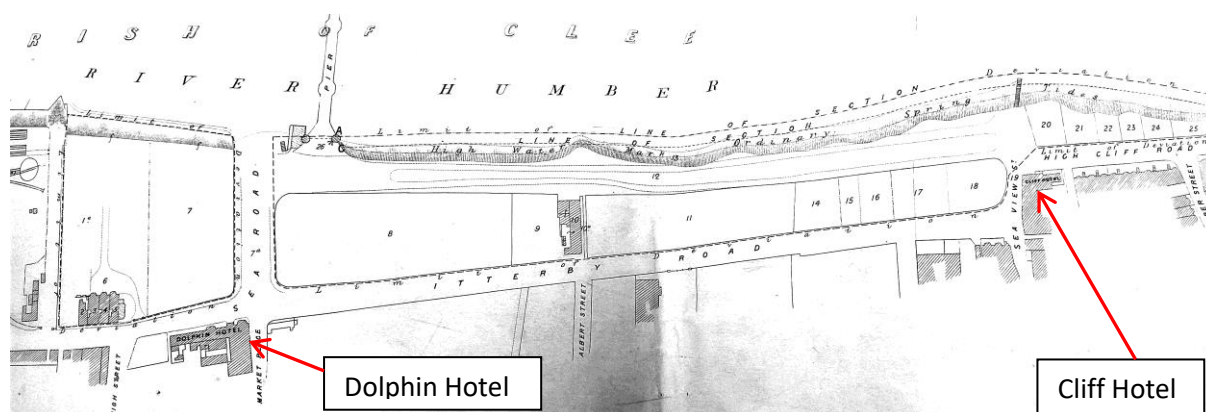
It is interesting to note that Beacon Thorpe Lane (now Poplar Road) in the bottom centre of the diagram, originally had access to the sea and that this access is marked to be closed off. Referring back to Figure 7, this access road can be seen together with the Clee Beacon. Note that the access roads to the station are very much as they are now. Note also that there are very few other buildings to be seen in the plan.

**Figure 13: Cleethorpes station plan 1880**





**Figure 14: East of Cleethorpes station 1880**



The above figure shows the area to the east of the station. This is interesting as it shows;

- The east end of the station, prior to station buildings being erected, on the far left
- The existence of a railway turntable, top left, which was later placed to the west of the station
- Sea Road, which still exists as the road down to the pier
- The entrance to the pier, built in 1872
- The lack of any substantial sea wall (to be discussed in Part 3)
- Itterby Road – now Alexandra Road
- The area to the north of Itterby Road which was to become the pier gardens
- The Dolphin Hotel and the Cliff Hotel with very few other substantial buildings
- Sea View Street is shown to the right with a few buildings around it

The expansion of the station and the associated sidings enabled a far greater number of trains to gain access to the resort and this situation remained until the 1960's, with many excursion trains arriving at Cleethorpes, especially at weekends and bank holidays. After this period, car ownership and a significant reduction in excursion trains, post the Beeching cuts, meant that the excursion to Cleethorpes and many resorts by train, reduced to virtually nothing. This situation is made worse by the singling of the line from Grimsby and the removal of sidings for storing trains. Occasional "specials" come to the resort, but other than that "trippers" have to rely on service trains which, even now, often become over crowded. However, there is still a large influx of people throughout the year by car and bus.

## **Part 3 – The building of the Sea Wall**

*References are made to the documents from the national Archive in Kew;*

- *Letter to the MS&LR from the Cleethorpes Urban Sanitary Authority, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1880, to the MS&LR*
- *Report of meeting re Projected Improvements at Cleethorpes from the Grimsby Observer 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 1880*
- *Contract to build the Sea Wall – 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1883 by the MS&LR, reference RAIL 463/126, Construction of a Sea Wall, promenade and road at Cleethorpes: Arthur F. James*

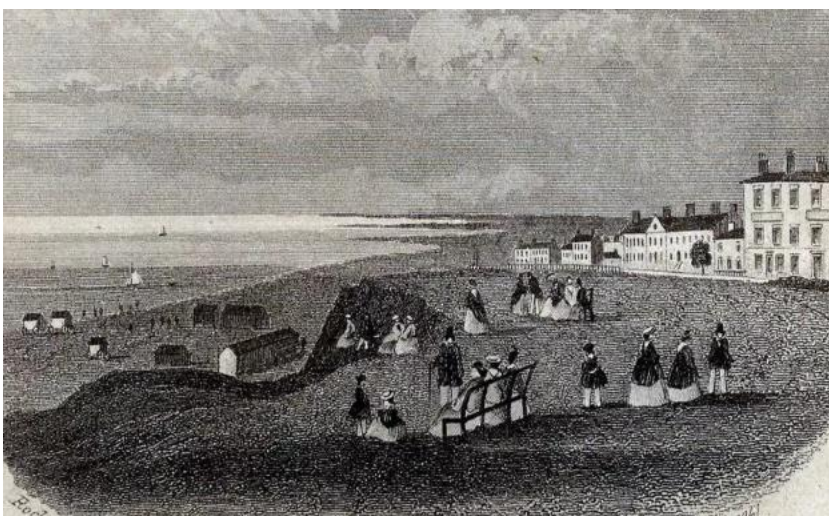
### **3.1 – The problem with the existing Sea Wall**

The MS&LR had successfully promoted Cleethorpes as a seaside resort, but there was one key issue with the future of the resort. The resort was built on silty alluvial soils and glacial clay loams resulting from the Devensian glaciations. (The Devensian period is generally known as the Last Ice Age 115,000 – 11,700 years ago). The soil and clay structure means that the whole area is subject to constant erosion by the sea. These two pictures show the state of the sea wall in the 1800's.



**Figure 15:**

High Cliff looking east – with the Cliff Hotel on the left, the Dock Tower in the centre distance and Clee Beacon in the right distance. Possibly Dolphin Hotel centre?



**Figure 16:**

High Cliff looking east with the Cliff Hotel on the right and High Cliff Road.



If Cleethorpes was to have a future as a seaside resort it was obvious that something needed to be done about the sea wall. Recent history on the Yorkshire and Norfolk coasts demonstrates how rapidly the sea can erode the shoreline.

The Cleethorpes Urban Sanitary Authority\* wrote to the MS&LR chairman and directors on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1880 about a meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July, (see a full copy in Appendix II),

*“Gentlemen, at the meeting of the Urban Sanitary Authority of this place held on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst, it was resolved upon a motion proposed by myself” (Fred A Peck, Sea View Street) “.....that a letter be addressed to the Chairman & Directors of the MS&LR Company”*

*“.....with reference to the present state of the Recreation Ground\*\* and the loss that is continually going on through the action of the weather and high tides with strong N to E winds on which it would be superfluous on my part to state being fully satisfied, **that such are well known to your chairman**” (Edward Watkin) “and some of the Directors, if not all, and the remedy to prevent this waste, or loss of the only piece of natural high ground along the coast, being entirely beyond the powers of the Parishioners to cope with”.*

*“... I most respectfully make application.....to your Board as being considerably interested in the wellbeing of Cleethorpes, as an outlet for visitors and excursionists carried by your line of rails, particularly in the summertime & I no doubt not in the Wintertime, if attractive indoor amusements were started on.....pardon me in asking the favour of your kindly informing me if your Board propose taking any steps, to make the much needed improvements, so greatly to be desired.....your granting the Committee appointed by the Board – an interview with the Chairman and Directors of you Company.....to ascertain what assistance (if any) the Board could be to your Company – trusting to have the favour of a reply”*

The letter is signed by Fred A Peck and counter signed by Edward Ross Esq of the MS&L Rail Co, Manchester. Edward Ross was the MS&LR Company Secretary and the folly built as part of the new Sea Wall and gardens was named after him – Ross Castle (Figure 25).

\* Note that Urban Sanitary Authorities were established in 1872 and were responsible for various public health matters such as providing clean drinking water, sewers, street cleaning, and clearing slum housing. They were replaced by Urban Districts in 1894.

\*\* The Recreation Ground referred to was the area of high ground along the seafront, where several landowners had various types of amusements.

### **3.2 Approval to build a Sea Wall**

The next document found in the archive records, is the report of a meeting of the Cleethorpes Sanitary Board and a public meeting, published in the Grimsby Observer on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1880, entitled PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS AT CLEETHORPES. However, it is not clear when the meeting took place, but presumably a few days before. Appendix IV refers.

## Cleethorpes Sanitary Board Committee

A special committee meeting was held by the local Sanitary Authority Board, with Messrs. Ayre (Chairman), Chapman, Mackrill, Rowston, Peck, W. Osbourne, Barnaby, A. Osbourne and Smith in attendance, at the Oddfellows Hall, for the purpose of meeting Mr Fisher, the MS&LR resident engineer.

*"Mr Fisher said he believed a deputation from the Board, consisting of Messrs Peck, Moody and Smith, had waited upon **Sir Edward Watkin** to ask if some steps could be taken by the Railway Company to protect the cliff and improve the place generally, and in consequence of what transpired at that meeting he had been directed to prepare a plan at once and submit is to that Board....."* Charles Sacre, Chief Engineer of the MS&LR was also at the meeting.

*".....the deputation asked if any assistance could be rendered by the Railway Company, or any means suggested, by which the cliff at Cleethorpes could be protected, laid out or otherwise improved. Sir Edward asked if the deputation had anything to offer, and they replied that they had nothing to offer except what they were justified in offering. There was the cliff or Pleasure ground, which was parish property and they were pretty sure the parish would be willing to turn over to the Railway Company, on condition that the latter would undertake to make certain improvements....."*

*".....They put it before him that a vestry meeting of the parishioners could be called at which they would be able to pass a resolution authorising the overseers and churchwardens to turn over this piece of land to the Railway Company....."*

*"....Sir Edward then asked what was the feeling of the landowners who had property abutting the foreshore in regard to the matter, as he thought **there should be a promenade made of at least a mile in length....."***

*"...Sir Edward then suggested that this plan should be prepared and submitted to the Board, and that enquiries should be made for the purposes of ascertaining the feeling of the landowners interested, and whether there was likely to be any opposition. Sir Edward said also that if a parish meeting was called he would have a letter written to be laid before it, and he further suggested that a deputation should wait upon such owners as Mr. Thorold, Mr Daubney and Sidney College. He promised to suggest to the directors that £30,000 or £40,000 be spent in these improvements and he said he had no doubt that the Board would give their support and do their best to prevent opposition, the Company would be willing to provide the money and carry out such a scheme as could be agreed upon....."*

*".....the parish should have it in their power to redeem the grounds within a limited number of years at from 3 to 3.5% on the original outlay.....Sir Edward expressed the opinion that it would be better for the parish to hold the property eventually"....."* Sir Edward intimated that no assistance whatever would be required from the rates."

*".....Mr Fisher recommended to the favourable consideration of the Railway Company that if possible, baths and winter recreations be provided, and the garden ground adjoining the cliff*

*be included in the contemplated improvements and that the projected promenade extended to the lifeboat station....” “.....further that a better supply of water be provided...”*

*“...The members of the Board afterwards expressed their thanks to Mr Fisher, and the meeting then terminated”.*

### **MS&LR Board Minutes**

The next interesting document to be found in the archive is an extract of the MS&LR Board minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> September 1880. A copy of this can be found in Appendix V. The meeting was chaired by Sir Edward Watkin.

*“The Chairman reported the result of his interview with the local authorities of Cleethorpes in reference to the preservation of the cliff & grounds at that place, and plans of the proposed scheme which was roughly estimated would cost about £20,000 were laid upon the table.*

*After discussion the question was left in the hands of the sub-committee and the following minute was adopted:-*

***The board of the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Company are prepared to apply to Parliament for powers to construct such works of protection as may preserve the cliff at Cleethorpes and may enable the land saved to be converted into a place for recreation with Baths and Waiting Rooms.....”***

### **Public Meeting**

The next related document in the archives (see 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Appendix IV) refers to a Public Meeting held on a Friday night (Date unknown, but presumably close to 15/09/1880) to “test the feeling of the inhabitants in respect to the improvements to the cliff and to Cleethorpes generally, proposed to be carried out by the MS&LR”. The meeting was convened by Mr Peck, the chair was Rev. W. P. Jones with members of the Board, several landowners plus “...a fairly numerous attendance”.

*“....Mr Peck said that he had called them together...in order to show them what steps the Local Board had taken towards forwarding the proposed scheme with regard to the cliff.”*

*“.....It was afterwards intimated that Sir Edward Watkin would be at Grimsby on a certain day, when he would be glad to confer with a deputation from the Board....”*

*“...now he (Watkin) wanted to impress upon the owners of land abutting on the shore, and also every inhabitant of Cleethorpes, the importance of assisting the Railway company in every way possible. By giving up their frontages the landowners would be doing something for their own pecuniary benefit and also for the benefit of the Parish at large. He might tell them that a telegram had been sent that morning from the Local Board to Sir Edward Watkin giving him to understand that the members of the board would use their influence*

*with the owners along the shore and they had no doubt that the latter would be willing to give up their frontages, (Applause)."*

There was some discussion led by Dr. Keetley about taking the building of the sea wall into the parishioner's hands, but.....

Mr Ayre said *".....If the projected improvements would cost the Railway Company £30,000 - £40,000 they would cost the parish about £70,000, as they would have all the material to buy and the carriage to pay for..."* "... he agreed with Mr Keetley that it was desirable to have the works in in their own hands, but, before they would be wealthy enough for that the cliff would be washed away".

*"...He moved that the inhabitants of Cleethorpes, as far as lay in their power, helped the Railway Company in carrying out the proposed improvements. (Applause)."*

*".....Mr Fisher was called upon to explain the scheme at present put forward by the Railway Company. He said it was proposed to make a promenade or terraced walk starting from the new platform at Cleethorpes station which would be made in the course of the works now proceeding and where all the lines now being laid would converge. Continuing direct from that platform it was proposed to carry a sea wall and terraced walk so that people might go straight away from the station towards the pier for a distance of half a mile if they liked. The first portion of the terraced walk must necessarily end opposite the Dolphin Hotel, because it was necessary that an opening should be there left for access to the sands. Then there was the entrance to the pier, which must be left to the Pier Company; after which the wall and terrace would be again carried forward without a break along the front and top of the cliff to what was known as the Fisherman's Road, a distance of about 600 yds" (Note that Fishermans Road is now called Brighton Street) "where the cliff proper terminated...."*

*".....Really what was necessary was to protect the cliff itself, which was the property of the inhabitants of Cleethorpes and which contained an area of something like 3 acres with the land that would be reclaimed in building the proposed wall.....the terraced walk would be about 15ft wide and at intervals there would be flights of stairs down to the beach.....Mr. A. Osbourne, as one of the small freeholders would be glad to give up his rights in the foreshore if the Railway Company would carry out the proposed works forward to the lifeboat house.....it was stated that there were 25 freeholders who had property abutting on the foreshore between the cliff and the lifeboat house".*

There was also an issue in providing a good supply of water, which needed to be considered *"as the place was badly off for water.....Mr Peck said that water could be obtained from Beaconthorpe in any quantity"*. In addition Sir Edward Watkin had agreed that the supply of water could be included in the scheme if the Parish of Cleethorpes would pay half the cost.

It was said in the meeting that *".....the railway station at Cleethorpes was simply a disgrace to the Company, especially with regard to sanitary conveniences, which were totally inadequate for the large number of visitors which came to the place in the summer- time. Water works were necessary for the station and for other purposes and if the works were to*

*be carried out by the Parish and the Railway Company, jointly through an act of Parliament, it would perhaps be the best step they could take. If the proprietors of the garden grounds adjacent to the cliff, which would be required to complete the scheme, would let the land on lease for 90 or even 999 years, they would only be doing justice to the Parish, and what they ought to do to make Cleethorpes a good watering place and by doing so should enhance the value of their property."*

***"The line from Grimsby to Cleethorpes was paying the Railway Company 80 to 83 per cent, and was one of the best paying little pieces of line which they had"***

**Note that there were some very interesting comments in the meeting re the income for the Railway Company from "trippers" which can be directly related to the number of people coming to Cleethorpes. The Company was making at least 6p per head on visitors. An annual income of £10,000 to £12,000 was being made by trippers alone (£1.4m in 2023 value) which equates to  $(12,000 \times 240 / 6)$  480,000 visitors per year. There are also quotes from other documents claiming that 30,000 visitors came on one day in the 1880's, a figure which may have been inflated over the years, and seems unlikely when one considers the capacity of trains and the station. No information can currently be found to verify if these figures are accurate, however, there is no doubt that Cleethorpes was a very popular "watering place" as demonstrated by the annual figures above.**

There is also reference made to keeping up with investments made by other railway companies;

*".....if the Company were wise in their time they would not throw away revenue like that. The directors of the Great Northern Railway Company had agreed to spend £170k in improvements at Mablethorpe and Skegness, and he thought the MS&LR Company would be neglecting their own interests and their duties to shareholders if they allowed the opportunity of improving Cleethorpes to pass by. It was necessary to preserve the cliff, to provide baths, reading rooms, libraries, pleasure grounds &c, and the question was whether the inhabitants would do it themselves and keep the control of it in their own hands or allow the Railway Company to do it for them. They thought nothing at Scarborough about spending £100,000 or £150,000 because they found the capital returned to them again. **Unless the people of Cleethorpes kept pace with the times and gave the accommodation required, pleasure seekers would go to other places."***

A proposal by Mr Keetley to lease some of the land to the Railway Company and charge rent to retain the pleasure grounds was *not* agreed and Mr Thorold said he was willing to give up a portion of his land to the Railway Company. *"The pleasure grounds at present belonged to the public, but in a few years there would be no pleasure grounds left. They would lose their right in the cliff, because the sea would take it away. The matter had been talked over many times, but it always ended up in wind."*

With *“The amendment proposed by Dr Keetley meeting with no seconder, the motion (to proceed with the MS&LR sea wall plan) was put and carried unanimously amid applause.”*

So at this point we have the local approval for the Railway Company to proceed with the plan to build a sea wall.

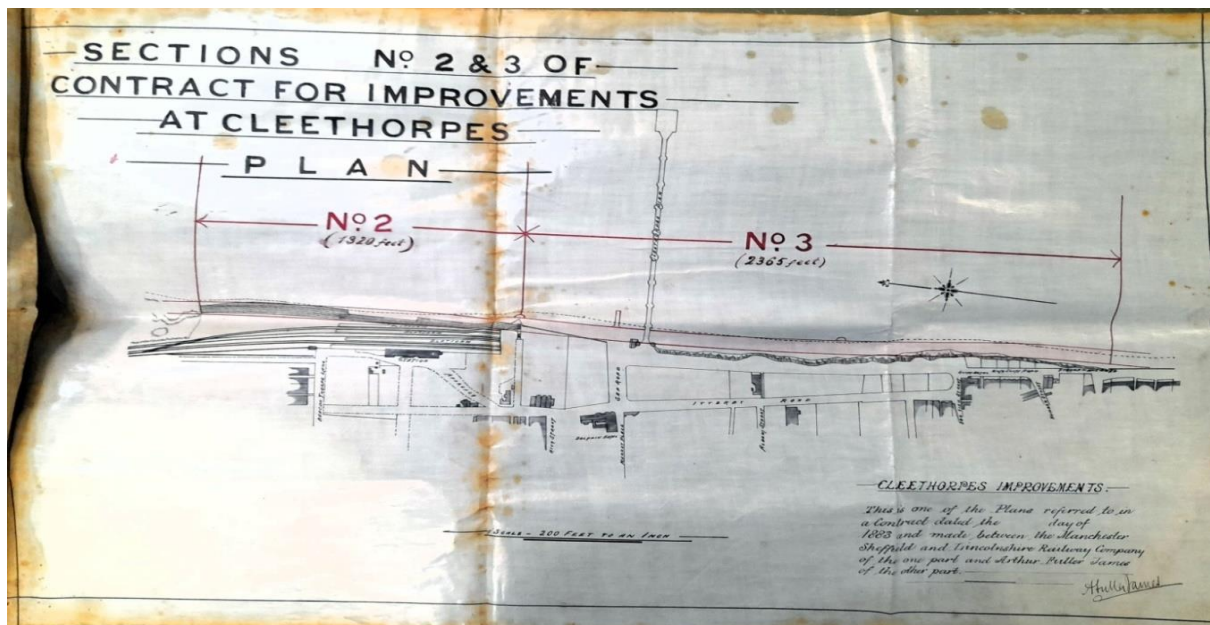
### **3.3 – The contract to build a new Sea Wall**

The proposal to build a sea wall for Cleethorpes by the MS&LR, fully supported by Sir Edward Watkin, was agreed at the above meeting (Section 3.1). Within the national archive is a copy of the contract, categorised as RAIL 463/126, 1883.

This contract is in two parts, **The Indenture** and **The Specification**.

These are both lengthy hand written documents, 14 pages long, see Appendix VI for an example.

For clarity, the following figure shows an overview of the Sea Wall project from the archive, showing the lengths of the wall in two sections shown as No.2 for 1320ft, which is from the end of the station westwards and No.3 for 2365ft, which is from the end of the station eastwards. There is no record of what Section No. 1 is, but may be the section of wall towards Grimsby Docks.

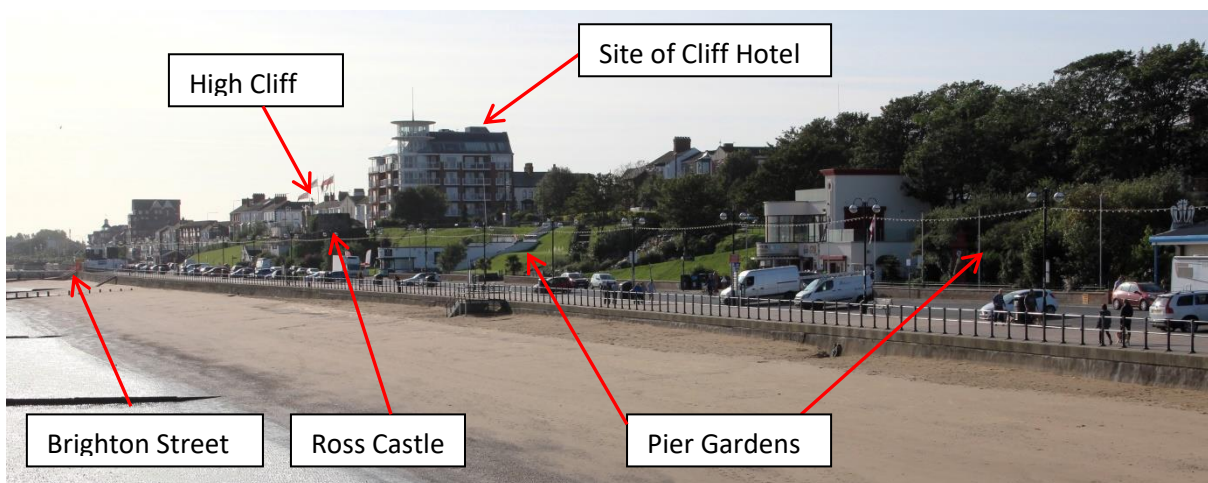


**Figure 17:** Overview of proposed Sea Wall

To appreciate the size of the task, it is also worth including the following photographs, taken in a westerly and easterly direction of the Sea Wall from the pier, in 2023, showing how the original Sea Wall and the gardens to the west are still largely intact.



**Figure 18:** View of Sea wall in a westerly direction, towards Grimsby, taken from the pier, 2023, as in Section No.2 of the Indenture.



**Figure 19:** View of Sea Wall in an easterly direction, taken from the pier, 2023, as in Section No.3 of the Indenture.

### The Indenture;

*“This indenture is made the sixth day of April – one thousand eight hundred and eighty three **Between** the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company hereinafter called the Company of the one part and Arthur Fuller James of 113 Victoria Street Manchester Contractor (hereinafter called the Contractor) of the other part **Whereas** the Company has agreed with the Contractor for the execution of the works hereinafter mentioned for the sum of Twenty one thousand eight hundred and sixty two pounds seventeen shillings and six pence and five shillings and six pence per ton for the carriage of slag from Frodingham (Scunthorpe steel works) to Cleethorpes upon the terms and conditions and subject to the stipulations hereinafter explained.”*



The sum of £21,862 is equivalent to £3,278,066 in 2023. There is nothing recorded in the document about how many tons of slag were required, or the cost.

The Indenture continues for seven hand written pages and is very thorough, with a lot of detail as to how the contract will be executed. It is the type of document one would expect in the present time for any significant project. For example here are just a few of the requirements in the contract;

*“The Contractor shall and will substantially and in the most workmanlike manner with the best materials and to the satisfaction of the Engineer of the Company make execute and complete and deliver up to the Company the several works mentioned described or implied in the specification hereinunder.....”etc*

*“The Contractor shall satisfactorily complete the works mentioned.....before the **thirtieth day of April in one thousand eight hundred and eighty four**.....”*

*“.....any alterations or additions to or enlargements of the said works approved by writing under the hand of the said Engineer are hereby authorised or from any other just cause arising.....”*

*“.....or consequence of any unusual inclemency of the weather storms high tides or general or Social Strikes or combinations of workmen.....it shall be lawful for the said engineer to grant from time to time by writing under his hand such extension of time as to him may seem reasonable.....”*

*“....the Contractor to provide materials and all necessary implements moulds tackle engines temporary timbering planking shores stages and apparatus and a sufficient number of skilled workmen and labourers.....”*

*“.....In case the Engineer for the time being of the contract and during the progress of the said works desire any alterations therein or any alterations.....the Contractor shall and will comply with such desire from time to time.....”*

*“....the Contractor shall keep the whole of the works hereby contracted for during their progress and for a further six calendar months after the same have been completed.....certified by the said Engineer.....and with all necessary reparations and amendments whatsoever including the repair of injuries or accidents arising through the neglect of the Contractor or his servants or arising from frost or bad weather.....and shall provide all the requisite materials and things for those purposes.”*

*“.....the Contractor shall on the first Monday in every month during the continuance of this agreement provide the Engineer with a detailed account of the works actually done and the materials actually used.....”*

*“If the Contractor shall fail in the due performance of this contract.....he shall be liable to pay to the Company as and for liquidated damages the sum of Ten Pounds for each*



*and every week which may elapse between the appointed and actual time of completion.....”*

*“Whenever the term “Engineer” is used in this Contract or in the specification or schedule hereto it shall mean Charles Sacre\* of Manchester aforesaid Civil Engineer”*

**\*Charles Sacre** was a prominent Victorian railway engineer, Wikipedia entry quotes ....

*“In 1858, he was appointed Chief Engineer and Locomotive Engineer of the MS&LR commencing work at their Gorton works on 1 April 1859. His employees found him a friendly and approachable man, and he became popular with the work force. He was responsible for an outstanding series of double framed 0-6-0 goods engines, the largest of which were a class of sixty built in 1880-5. For the fast expresses that were being introduced on the Cheshire Lines Railway, he designed a massive outside cylinder 2-2-2 with 7 ft. 6ins. (2.286 metre) driving wheels. Another successful design was an inside cylinder 4-4-0 with double frames. Several of the 0-6-0 and 4-4-0 locomotives lasted in service until the 1920s. In the realm of civil engineering, he suggested extending the then main line by a tunnel under the Humber to Hull, but this brought him into conflict with Edward Watkin, the Company Chairman.”*

#### **The Specification;**

*“**Specification** of works to be performed by the contractor for constructing a Sea Wall road and promenade and other works in connection therewith on the line of coast immediately in front of the Railway Station at Cleethorpes and the Recreation Grounds to a point in Fishermans Road distant four and a half chains or thereabouts to the south of the point where Humber Street joins High Cliff road in the county of Lincoln.....”*

#### **The First Schedule refers to:**

*“The work comprises the construction and formation of a Sea Wall – 3,685 feet – in length have two return walls 65 feet in length an ashphalted\* parade 75 feet in width for the length of the above named Sea Wall five sets of steps and one approach to the sands and the necessary level channel and under drains and a roadway 45 feet wide also extending for the entire length of the above named Sea Wall”*

Note that the numbers quoted in the document are spelt out not numeric.

\*Also note that we would currently spell “ashphalt” as “asphalt”.

The Schedule defines the construction in detail, mentioning sharp sand, Portland cement, rubble, rough slag, construction of the concrete blocks for the facings in moulds, 4 inches of coarse asphalt and 2 inches of fine asphalt.

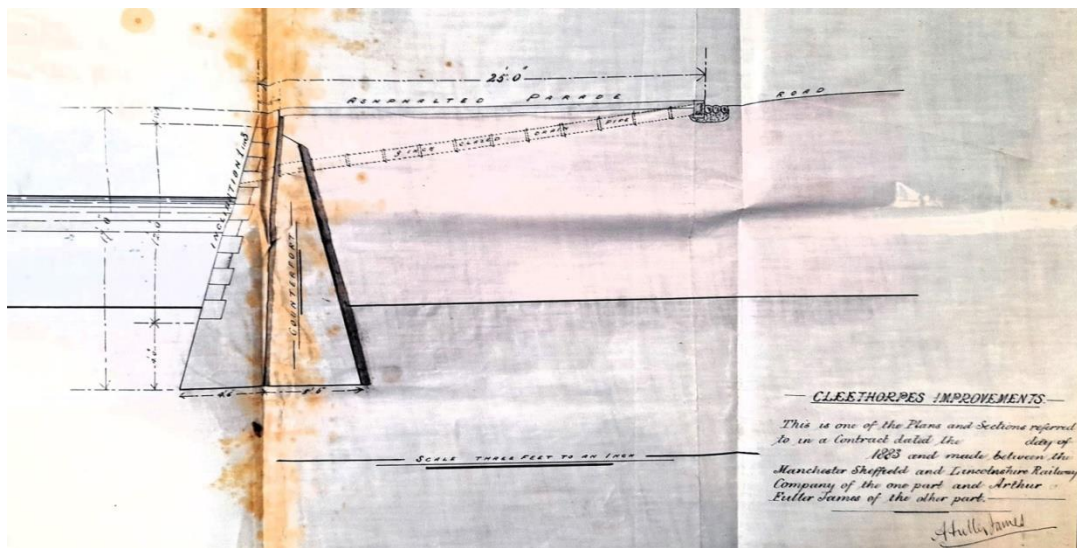
*“The first or lower four feet of the Sea Wall and the whole of the counterfoil to be composed entirely of Portland cement concrete and rough slag and faced with concrete block as hereunder specified.....” “....great care to be observed in making the concrete blocks that*

they may be of such lengths or depths as to form sufficient footing for the rubble concrete".  
 ".....blocks to be cast in moulds not less than 12" x 12" on the face and varying from 12" to 18" in depth....."

"The road is to be composed of a layer of Rough Slag, Brick rubbish, Hard Core, Burnt Clay or other approved material six inches thick and is to be covered with a layer of Broken Slag six inches in thickness.....at a distance of twenty five feet from the surface of the coping and for the entire length a level and channel of concrete or York Stone....."

"After the ground for the promenade has been filled in to the required level and properly consolidated four inches of coarse asphalt is to be carefully laid down and finished off with a finer layer of asphalt two inches thick, the whole to be well rolled with a heavy roller after covering the surface with Hot Gas tar laid on thinly and evenly with a brush and sprinkled while still hot with clean sharp dry sand or gypsum....."

The following cross section shows the main elements which comprise the wall



**Figure 20:** Cross section of Sea Wall



Interestingly the drains shown above still exist although most have been sealed with concrete.

**Figure 21:** Exit of drain

The second schedule refers to;

*“The schedule of prices upon which the Contract is based and by which all extra or deducted work will be added or deducted from the said amount of £21,862 17s 6p.*

A bill of quantities No. 2 for the first 1320 ft of the wall.

A bill of quantities number 3 *“for the Sea Wall, Road and Promenade 236 5feet long with a return wall approach to the sands and one set of stone steps from the east end of the Railway Sea Wall to Fishermans Road”*

Both bills of quantities refer to an “Approach to the sands” and diagrams for stone steps are also included in the specification.

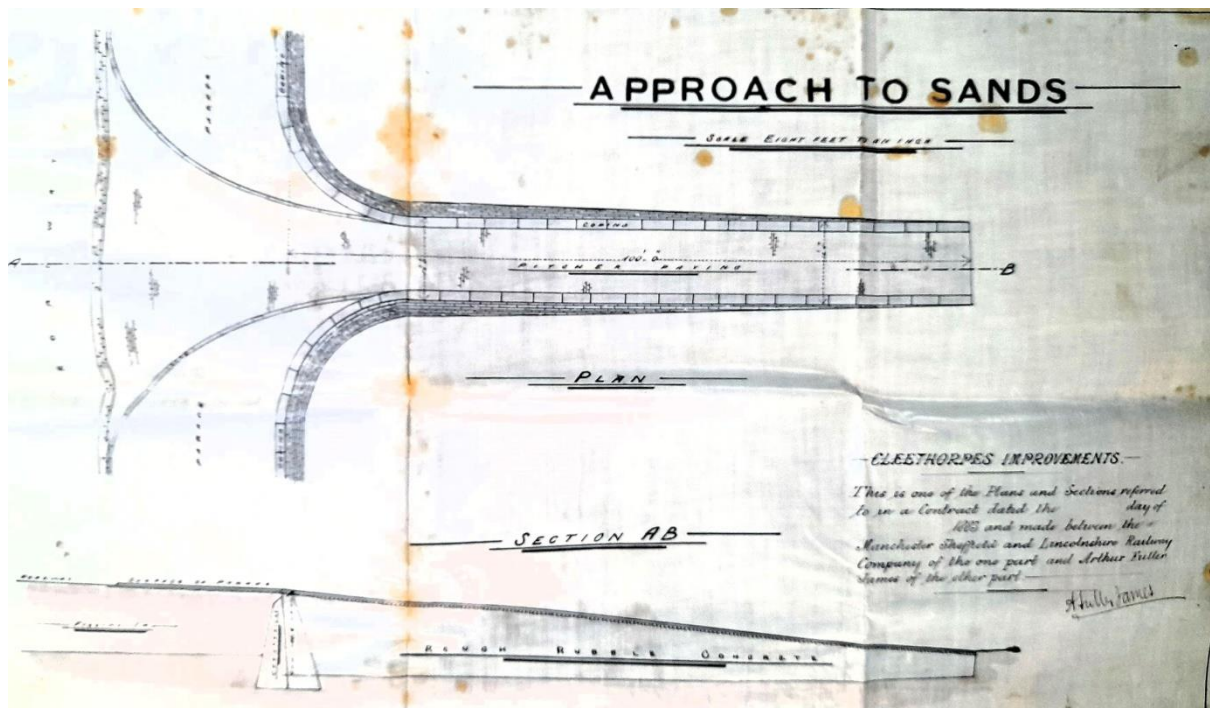


Figure 22: Approach to the sands

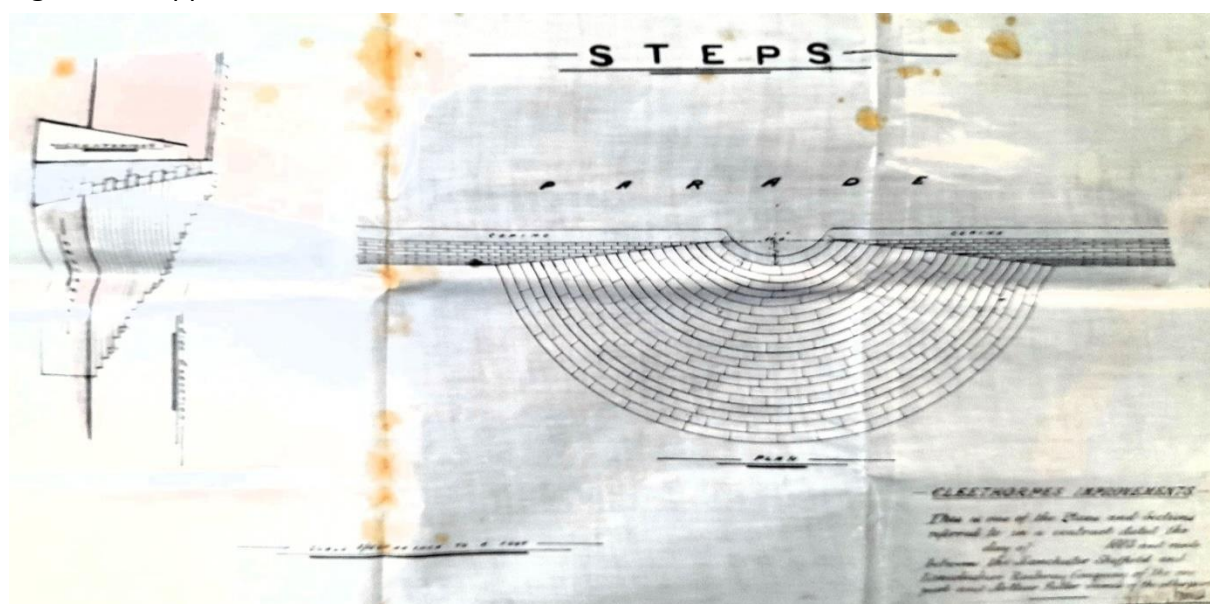


Figure 23: Stone Steps



Note that some residents of the resort may remember these steps, which have now mostly disappeared. However, the remains of one set of steps near between the station and the pier still exist.



**Figure 24:** Remains of stone steps near the station.



**Figure 25:** The folly – Ross Castle, named after Edward Ross, secretary of the MS&LR.

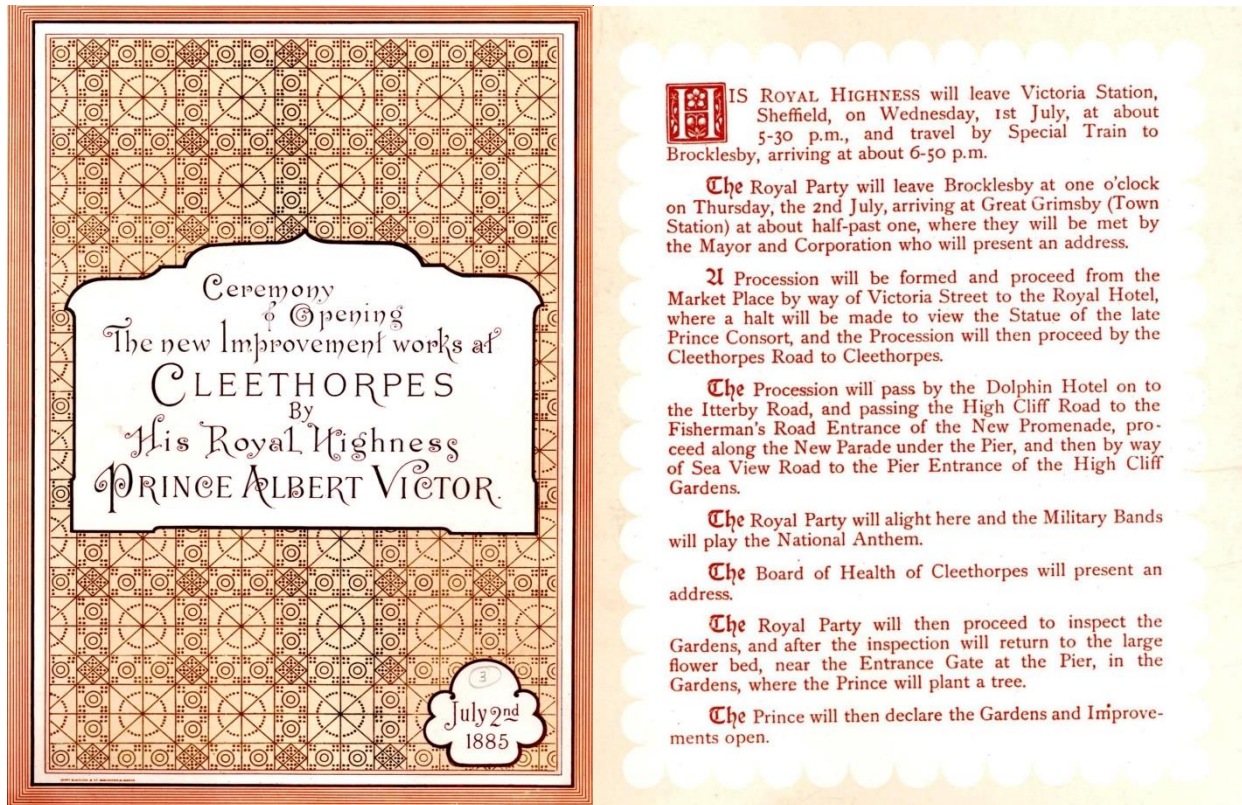


**Figure 26:** The Promenade, Pier Gardens and the Pier from Ross castle, looking towards the station in 2023.



## Part 4. A Grand Opening – July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1885

On this date Prince Albert Victor officially opened the Sea Wall, Promenade and Gardens.



Dianne Roberts described the event in her 2023 paper on Cleethorpes and Edward Watkin "The Cleethorpes Panorama", as follows;

*"The 1880s saw improvements, attractions and events in plenty. Sir Edward was a nationally and internationally renowned figure by this time and he knew how to capitalise on this. He planned a royal visit for the official opening of the Cliff Gardens and invited HRH Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward of Wales KG, the eldest son of the then Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra. The Prince had recently attained the age of 21 and was performing royal duties independently. Prince Albert Victor was the guest of the Earl of Yarborough at Brocklesby overnight and the opening ceremony was planned for July 2nd 1885.*

*Prince Albert Victor arrived in Grimsby from Brocklesby by train. The Royal Hotel was the first stop for the procession to view the statue of the late Prince Consort which had been donated to the town by Sir Edward Watkin. This statue was originally sited in Albert Gardens near the Royal Hotel but is presently in front of the Dock Offices. The second stop in Grimsby was at the corner of Tomline Street for the Prince to receive an address from the Grimsby Fisherlads Institute. The procession then proceeded to the boundary of Grimsby and Cleethorpes where they were met by representatives of Cleethorpes Board and escorted onwards.*

*The Royal Opening of the Cleethorpes Improvements was the culmination of Watkin's vision for the resort. The opening ceremony caused great excitement, and preparations included a splendid display of flags of many countries along the promenade and a pavilion and stage inside the gardens. The procession reached the Dolphin Hotel and proceeded to High Cliff where it passed under an arch constructed from blocks of Norwegian ice. Mr Harry Starling had created the ice arch and the design was that of Temple Bar in London. During the first*

*day it lost about 4 tons due to melting but it was 2 or 3 days before the imaginative entrance to the proceedings had disappeared completely. A band played the National Anthem as the first carriage arrived carrying Prince Albert Victor, Earl and Countess Yarborough and Sir Edward Watkin, and the accompanying procession included representatives of local societies and musical bands. On Ross Castle the Royal Standard fluttered, a gun salute was fired from the fort and the proceedings began with an address given by a representative of Cleethorpes Board of Health. A silver and ebony ceremonial spade had been commissioned for the occasion from Messrs. Elkington and Co., Manchester and with this spade the Prince planted a wellingtonia gigantea tree in the Cliff Gardens close to the Grandstand and pavilion. The band then played God Bless the Prince of Wales.*

*Luncheon for 200 was served in the pavilion and at its conclusion Prince Albert Victor proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Edward Watkin. Watkin responded saying 'The people of Grimsby and Cleethorpes looked on him as a sort of father. There were older men than himself in those places but there were none more anxious to promote the prosperity of the district. He hoped that just as the prophesies of the late Prince Consort had been so wonderfully realised in regard to Grimsby, the wishes of Prince Albert Victor for the prosperity of Cleethorpes would also bear abundant fruit'. (Applause)''*

A copy of the above paper can be found in the Edward Watkin web archives.

## Part 5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Sir Edward Watkin and the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway made a major contribution to the growth of Grimsby as a fishing port and Cleethorpes as a seaside resort. The railway brought in thousands of “trippers” to the resort making a significant contribution to the Railway Company profits, which in turn provided the Railway Company with the means to invest even further into the resort. They were able to fund a substantial Sea Wall and promenade, build the Pier Gardens and take the management of the Pier under their control.

Further to the investments described herein, the railway was further enhanced by building additional sidings in 1891 to store visiting trains at Suggitts Lane and provide a large signal box and turntable at Cleethorpes station.

Work to extend the Sea Wall eastwards from Brighton Street was completed by the Cleethorpes Urban District Council by 1905.

It is obvious from the evidence in the archives that Sir Edward Watkin had a keen interest in developing Grimsby and Cleethorpes for the benefit of the Railway Company and the inhabitants, so much so, that at the time he became known as “Mr. Grimsby” and “Mr. Cleethorpes”.

After his death, the Great Central Railway (formed in 1897 when the MS&LR changed its name when it was extended towards London) continued to develop the area by creating Immingham Docks in 1912 and further developed Grimsby Docks.

**The Grimsby and Cleethorpes area owes its growth and success to the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway and in particular to the vision of Sir Edward Watkin.**



**Stephen Richards**

November 2023



## References:

**National Archives at Kew;**

**RAIL 226/341** Preservation of Cliff at Cleethorpes

**CRES 58/311, CRES 58/312. CRES 58/313** Manchester and Lincolnshire railway (New Works)  
Bill 1881 - 1889

**CRES 58/301** Cleethorpes: Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway 1880-1889

**MR 1/1664** Lincolnshire: Cleethorpes. Proposed new sea wall, promenade and Pier 1889-1892

**RAIL 463/126** Construction of a sea wall, promenade and road at Cleethorpes: Arthur F. James 1883

**Rail 1014/12/1** Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway – visit of H.R.H Prince Albert Victor to Sheffield, Brocklesby, Grimsby and Cleethorpes. 1885 June 30-July 2

### **Lincolnshire Archives - Lincoln**

**LDP1/73** Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Branch from Grimsby to Cleethorpes 1856

**LDP1/77** Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Branch from Grimsby to Cleethorpes. Plans and Sections 1860

**LDP/1/120** Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway; further powers, Cleethorpes, Grimsby 1873

**LDP/1/139** Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, new works. Grimsby to, Cleethorpes 1880

**Paul King** – “What the railways did for us” Eastern Times vol.1 – ISBN: 978-1-913251-47-5

**Diane Roberts** – The Cleethorpes Panorama – Watkin archive

**John Trevitt** – For help in confirming details of the coming of the railway to Cleethorpes

## Appendices:

### Appendix I

Board of Trade approval to open the Cleethorpes branch

Board of Trade. Railway Department.

M16/27/35

Minute Paper.

---

No. 671 Registered the 27 day of March 1863.

Referred to Mr. Booth Mr. Macgregor

---

Minutes.  
(With initials and date at foot of each Minute.)

Capt Tyler reports that the Cleethorpes Branch of the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway may be opened with safety. He recommends improvements in respect to works. and encloses the usual Undertaking as to the mode of working the traffic.

Committee copy and state that upon the condition that the traffic is to be worked in accordance with the Undertaking (My Lords do not object to the opening. Offt herewith

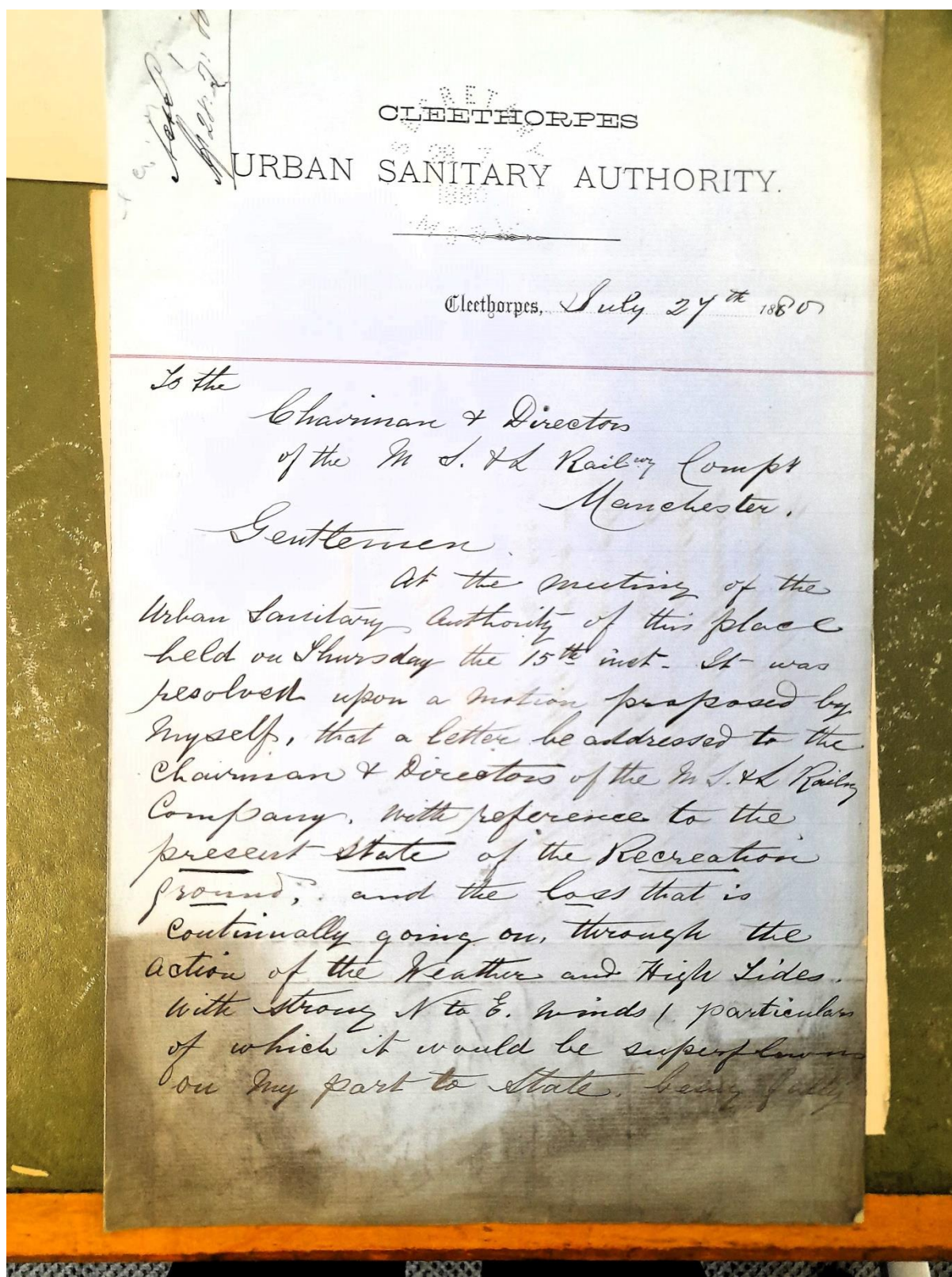
Done  
27 March/63

Monch 27/63

JN

Appendix II

Letter from Cleethorpes Urban Sanitary Authority to MS&LR July 27<sup>th</sup> 1880 Part 1





fully satisfied, that such are well known, to your Chairman and some of the Directors, if not to all, and the remedy to prevent this waste, or loss of the only piece of naturally high ground along the coast, being entirely beyond the means of the Parishioners to cope with, I most respectfully make application (on behalf of the Board and the Committee appointed, namely, Mr. Agre Secy. Chairman. Mr. Walter Moody & Mr. George Smith.) to your Board, as being considerably interested in the wellbeing of Cleethorpes, as an outlet for visitors and excursionists carried by your line of rails, particularly in the summer time - & I doubt not would be in the winter time, if attractive indoor amusements were started on or near the said ground. holding this view, pardon me in asking the favor of your kindly informing me if your Board propose taking any steps, to make the much needed improvements, so greatly to be desired, in which case, I have the Boards Authority, to state that the best services of the Board would be tendered to the Company, to assist in carrying out such improvements and



and the Board would take it as a  
favor, your pointing the Committee  
appointed by the Board - an interview  
with the Chairman & Directors of your  
Company, when convenient -  
to take into consideration this subject  
and to ascertain of what assistance  
(if any) the Board could be to your  
Company - trusting to have the  
favor of a reply.

I am Gentlemen  
Your Obedient Servant  
Thos. A. Peck.

Ross Bay Sea View Street  
M & L Rail Co  
Manchester



### Appendix III

Request for addition of indoor recreation for the winter months and thanks to Edward Watkin

CLEETHORPES-WITH-THRUNSCOE

## Urban Sanitary Authority.

9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1880

### Copy of Resolution

That the Local Board having examined the Plans as submitted and explained by Mr. J. E. Fisher, recommend to the favourable Consideration of the Railway Company, that if possible baths and any other indoor recreation for the winter months be inserted in the plan, And that the Garden ground adjoining the Cliff be included for that purpose in the Improvements contemplated. And also it would be advisable to continue the promenade to the Life Boat Station the Local Board believing that the owners on the Sea bank

would be agreeable.

Also the Board would suggest devising a better supply of water

The Members of the Local Board will individually and Collectively use their best efforts to assist the Railway Company in obtaining an act of Parliament, to carry out any such Improvements

And the Board begs to thank Sir. E. Watkin for his prompt attention and Courtesy in having plans submitted



# PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS AT CLEETHORPES.

A special committee meeting of the Cleethorpes Local Board was held at the Oddfellows' Hall on Wednesday evening for the purpose of meeting Mr. Fisher, the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company's resident engineer at Grimsby, who was to submit a plan of works proposed to be carried out by the Railway Company, for the preservation of the cliff and the improvement of Cleethorpes generally. The attendance comprised Messrs. W. Ayre (chairman), T. T. Chapman, Mackrill, Rowston, Peck, Appleby, W. Osborne, Barnaby, A. Osborne, and Smith.

Mr. FISHER said he believed a deputation from the Board, consisting of Messrs. Peck, Moody and Smith, had waited upon Sir Edward Watkin to ask if some steps could be taken by the Railway Company to protect the cliff and improve the place generally, and in consequence of what transpired at that meeting he had been directed to prepare a plan at once and submit it to that Board, which he had accordingly done, and it now remained for them to make such remarks and suggestions as they thought proper.

Mr. PECK then related for the information of the Board what took place at the interview with Sir Edward Watkin, Mr. Saxe, the head engineer of the company, being also present. The deputation asked if any assistance could be rendered by the Railway Company, or any means suggested, by which the cliff at Cleethorpes could be protected, laid out, and otherwise improved. Sir Edward asked if the deputation had anything to offer, and they replied that they had nothing to offer except what they were justified in offering. There was the cliff or pleasure ground, which was parish property, and which they were pretty sure the parish would be willing to turn over to the Railway Company, on condition that the latter would undertake to make certain improvements. Sir Edward asked what basis the deputation went upon in making such a statement, and they then told him that the control of the land was vested in the overseers of the poor—of which (Mr. Peck) was one—and the churchwardens for the time being as trustees. They put it before him that a vestry meeting of the parishioners could be called, at which they would be able to pass a resolution authorising the overseers and churchwardens to turn over this piece of land to the Railway Company. A copy of this resolution would be presented to the Local Government Board, who on being shown that it would be for the benefit of the parish would undoubtedly consent to the transfer. Sir Edward then asked what was the feeling of the landowners who had property abutting on the foreshore in regard to the matter, as he thought there should be a promenade of at least a mile in length. They informed him that Mr. Thorold was willing to support the object of the deputation, but with regard to the other owners they were not in a position to state what their attitude would be. Sir Edward then suggested that this plan should be prepared and submitted to the Board, and that inquiries should be made for the purpose of ascertaining the feeling of the landholders interested, and whether there was likely to be any opposition. Sir Edward also said if a parish meeting was called he would have a letter written to be laid before it, and he further suggested that a deputation should wait upon such owners as Mr. Thorold, Mr. Danby, and the Sidney College. He promised to suggest to the directors that £30,000 or £40,000 be spent in these improvements, and he said he had no doubt if the Board would give their support, and do their best to prevent opposition, the Company would be willing to provide the money and carry out such a scheme as could be agreed upon.

Mr. J. R. CHAPMAN asked, supposing the cliff was laid out as proposed, was it likely there would be a charge to go upon it.

Mr. PECK said it was not stated so positively. At the same time he thought it was probable there would be a small charge. Sir Edward stated, however, that the Company would be prepared to put a clause in the Act which would have to be obtained providing that the parish should have it in their power to redeem the grounds within a limited number of years, at from 3 to 3½ per cent. on the original outlay.

Mr. SITTU remarked that Sir Edward expressed the opinion that it would be better for the parish to hold the property eventually.

Mr. PECK added that he should like it to be thoroughly understood that Sir Edward intimated to the deputation that no assistance whatever would be required from the rates.

Mr. CHAPMAN thought a considerable amount of income might be realised if swimming baths could be provided in connection with the other works.

Mr. PECK said Mr. Moody had suggested to Sir Edward Watkin that if certain attractions could be provided for the winter months they would draw many people from Grimsby and would be a further benefit to the place.

The CHAIRMAN asked if it was desirable to endeavour to secure a market place.

Mr. CHAPMAN thought it would be for the Board

pany could see their way to include waterworks in their Act it would be a great advantage.

After one or two other remarks, Mr. CHAPMAN proposed "that the Board having examined the plan submitted and explained by Mr. Fisher, recommend to the favourable consideration of the Railway Company that, if possible, baths and winter recreations be provided, and the garden ground adjoining the cliff be included in the contemplated improvements; also that the proposed promenade be extended to the lifeboat station, to which the Local Board believed the freeholders on the sea bank would be agreeable; further, that a better supply of water be provided by the creation of the necessary works; and the Board would individually and collectively use their best efforts to assist the Company in obtaining an Act of Parliament to carry out the improvements."

Mr. BARNABY: You have put in "that this Board individually and collectively" will aid the Company. What does that mean?

Mr. CHAPMAN: It means by moral suasion; not pecuniary aid.

Mr. BARNABY then seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. FISHER said he might mention that the directors of the Railway Company would meet on the Friday following, and it was their desire that this plan and the resolution of the Cleethorpes Local Board in relation to it should be forwarded in time to be laid before them.

It was understood that this would be done; and it was also agreed to add to the resolution just passed the words—"The Board beg to express their thanks for the prompt attention and courtesy of the railway authorities in having the plan submitted."

Mr. MACKRILL afterwards said no doubt the Railway Company knew by experience what it was to deal with a lot of private holders of land. They knew that to obtain any rights over such land they usually had to pay very severely, and that was the reason, in his opinion, why they were indisposed to extend the promenade beyond the end of the cliff.

The members of the Board afterwards expressed their thanks to Mr. Fisher, and the meeting then terminated.

## PUBLIC MEETING.

On Friday night a public meeting of the parishioners of Cleethorpes was held in the Parish School-room for the purpose of testing the feeling of the inhabitants in respect to the improvements to the cliff and to Cleethorpes generally, proposed to be carried out by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company. The meeting was convened by Mr. Peck, a member of the Local Board and one of the overseers of the poor. The chair was taken by the Rev. W. P. Jones, Rector of Clea, and among those present were Dr. Keestley and Mr. Anningson; Messrs. Ayre, Peck, W. Osborne, Rowston, J. O. Chapman, and J. Appleby, members of the Local Board; and several holders of land along the foreshore. There was a fairly numerous attendance.

On the meeting being opened Mr. PECK said he had, as overseer, called them together not for the purpose of passing any legal resolutions, but in order to show them what steps the Local Board had taken towards forwarding the proposed scheme with regard to the cliff. In the first place the Railway Company were communicated with by letter, and a reply was received stating that the letter would be laid before the directors. It was afterwards intimated that Sir Edward Watkin would be at Grimsby on a certain day, when he would be glad to confer with a deputation from the Board with regard to the matter in question. Mr. Peck then recounted what transpired at the interview with Sir Edward Watkin as recorded above. He afterwards informed the meeting that a telegram had been received from Sir Edward Watkin the previous night saying that in the resolution which had been passed by the Local Board and sent to the directors nothing was said about turning any land over to him, or of the freeholders giving up any of their property. New he wanted to impress upon the owners of land abutting on the shore, and also every inhabitant of Cleethorpes, the importance of assisting the Railway Company in every way possible. By giving up their frontages the landowners would be doing something for their own pecuniary benefit and also for the benefit of the parish at large. He might tell them that a telegram had been sent that morning from the Local Board to Sir Edward Watkin giving him to understand that the members of the Board would use their influence with the owners along the shore, and they had no doubt the latter would be willing to give up their frontages.

(Applause.) Mr. ANNINGSON thought it was the best thing that could be done for the place. There was no fear, considering how other watering places were being improved, but that the Railway Company would carry out these improvements thoroughly if the inhabitants of Cleethorpes would only give the slight assistance which was asked.

Dr. KEESTLEY thought it was a very important subject for the inhabitants to consider. He asked entirely with the Local Board, and the inhabitants whether they would transfer their rights in the cliff and the foreshore or do what was necessary themselves. If it was necessary to make these improve-

ments it was to carry a plan of £100,000, which would be paid in instalments of £10,000 a year, but at Grimsby instead of having proper recreation grounds for the public the people were taken away with what he regarded as nothing but a little bit of a strip now and then by having a mile or two of gentlemen's private grounds. He thought the Corporation of Grimsby, with such an amount of money at their disposal, ought to be able to better £100,000 in order to carry out improvements, and it would not be thrown away. The ratepayers of Cleethorpes should do their duty to the place, and it would repay them hereafter. In Birmingham they had borrowed nearly £1,000,000, and the ratepayers did not grumble because they found it paid. Under the present circumstances who could grumble at Cleethorpes? It was a disgrace to grumble at such a small amount. (Laughter.) For the sake of a few paddy pigs they were allowing the place to run to ruin. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. AYRE remarked that at Cleethorpes they had borrowed something like £500,000, and he would like the parishioners if they did not find the rates so heavy as they could bear. Not that he should object to their carrying out the works themselves if they were able. He had more than once offered to repair the cliff by voluntary contributions. But as for Mr. Keestley saying that the Local Board should take it into their own hands, he should like to know who there was in that place would support the plan. If the proposed improvements would cost the Railway Company £100,000 or £150,000 they would have the parish about £70,000, so they would have all the material to buy and the materials to pay for. Besides the Local Board had no authority over the land which the Railway Company sought to get.

He repeated that it was the best policy of the parishioners to assist the Railway Company in every way possible. There was no reason to suppose that the large landowners were all agreeable, and it was only with the small owners that there was any difficulty, and that was only a little. That meeting was proposed in every respect every way as to the improvement of the foreshore of the inhabitants in relation to the proposed scheme. If it was the intention of the parishioners that the Railway Company should carry out the improvements he thought they ought readily to give up the recreation ground, and so grumble at any small charge which the Company might make to them as well as others for assistance when the improvements were effected. He agreed with Dr. Keestley that it was desirable to have the works in their own hands, but before they would be wealthy enough for that the cliff would be washed away.

Mr. J. O. CHAPMAN said the preservation of the cliff had long been talked about, and now that they had a genuine opportunity of having it done he thought that every ratepayer in the parish ought to put his shoulder to the wheel, and help the Railway Company to carry out their proposals. (Applause.) In his opinion it would be a serious loss to the parish if such an undertaking was not carried out. Now if the Railway Company did what they proposed to do it would be for the benefit of every poor man in the parish. It would bring more visitors to the village, and every villager would have to look out for what he could make of them. (Laughter.) His experience of loans was that instead of costing 3 or 3½ per cent. what with law and one thing or another they usually cost 5 or 7 per cent. in the end. He thought if they allowed that opportunity to slip they would do wrong. He was perfectly willing to give up his rights to the pleasure ground. The Company, however, might be asked to let the parishioners have tickets for the season at a small charge. Supposing the consent of the freeholders was obtained, and the promenade was extended from the Holly Hole to the lifeboat station, there was another recreation ground which must not be neglected, namely, that of access to the foreshore. It would be provided in other places than the two ends, but there was not the least doubt but that the Railway Company would make provision if their attention was drawn to the necessity of it. He moved that the inhabitants of Cleethorpes, as far as lay in their power, helped the Railway Company in carrying out the proposed improvements. (Applause.)

Mr. AYRE felt he could not do better than second the proposition.

Mr. FARR remarked that he did not clearly understand a statement made by Mr. Peck as to the ratepayers joining the Railway Company in the expenses of the waterworks.

Mr. PECK explained that it was in respect to the waterworks only.

Mr. FARR thought the waterworks were the most important part of the scheme. As far as the other parts of the scheme was concerned there could be no question that it was a golden opportunity of which the ratepayers should take advantage. When a scheme was carried out in the vicinity it would be a good starting point in the history of Cleethorpes, and he believed that meeting would have an effect in helping passing the resolution which was before them.

Dr. KEESTLEY said if the Local Board thought proper to improve the cliff it would not be a matter of so many thousands of pounds. They could obtain the land which they proposed to lease. It was not



to see about a market themselves. They might get the Railway Company, in case the land was turned over to them, to sell them a piece near the Cliff Hotel for market grounds, or for any other purpose which the Board might require.

After a few other remarks, Mr. Fisher was called upon to explain the scheme at present put forward by the Railway Company. He said it was proposed to make a promenade or terraced walk starting from the new platform at Cleethorpes station which would be made in the course of the works now proceeding, and where all the lines now being laid would converge. Continuing direct from that platform it was proposed to carry a sea wall and terraced walk, so that people might go straight away from the station towards the pier, and beyond for the distance of half a mile if they liked. The first portion of the terraced walk must necessarily end opposite the Dolphin Hotel, because it was necessary that an opening should there be left for access to the sands. Then there was the entrance to the pier, which must be left to the Pier Company; after which the wall and terrace would be again carried forward without break along the front and top of the cliff to what was known as the Fishermen's-road, a distance of about 600 yds., where the cliff proper terminated. Beyond that point down to the lifeboat station the shore was already protected. He believed they were all small freeholders who owned that property, and he thought he might say that the Railway Company did not wish to interfere with those people and their rights, unless the freeholders themselves were desirous that they should do so. Really what was necessary was to protect the cliff itself, which was the property of the inhabitants of Cleethorpes, and which contained an area of something like 3 acres with the land which would be reclaimed in building the proposed wall. The present area of the cliff was about 2a. 1r. 1p. With the back brought out they would gain about an acre. He was not in a position to say whether it was intended, in case the improvements were carried out, to make a small charge for admission to the promenade. The terraced walk would be 15 ft. wide, and at intervals there would be flights of steps down to the beach. If the Company did eventually undertake to carry the promenade further than they now proposed, they would probably ask the freeholders to give them the foreshore.

Mr. SMITH suggested that the freeholders might petition the Railway Company to carry the works forward.

Mr. A. OSBORNE, as one of the small freeholders, would be glad to give up his rights in the foreshore if the Railway Company would carry the proposed works forward to the lifeboat house.

In reply to a question from Mr. BARNABY, Mr. FISHER said the other terraced walk on the plan was intended to be at the top of the cliff, but this and other details were better left until the land question was settled.

It was stated that there were 25 freeholders who had property abutting on the foreshore between the end of the cliff and the lifeboat house.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the obtaining of a good supply of water should be considered in connection with the proposed improvements, as the place was badly off for water.

Mr. SMITH said the matter was referred to at the interview with Sir Edward Watkin, and Mr. Peck then said that water could be obtained from Beacontorpe in any quantity. He (Mr. Smith) also understood that the Grimsby Waterworks Company would undertake to supply them if the improvements were proceeded with.

The CHAIRMAN: They are not able to do so; they have been applied to.

Mr. SMITH: I believe they would be glad to do it.

Mr. PECK said it was put to Sir Edward that the Grimsby Waterworks Company had offered to convey water for their use at 6d. per thousand tons to the foot of the hill, but several experienced persons on the Board said there was plenty of water to be had at Beacontorpe, if the necessary appliances for distributing it were only provided. Sir Edward answered that a supply of water could be obtained in the proposed scheme if the parish of Cleethorpes would undertake to pay half the cost.

Mr. CHAPMAN said he had made a careful estimate of the probable cost to the parish of providing machinery, appliances, &c. for a supply of water from Beacontorpe, and he had come to the conclusion that such works would involve a charge of £120 a year upon the rates. He thought it would be cheaper for the Board if waterworks could be included in the Act which the Railway proposed to obtain.

The CHAIRMAN also thought if the Railway com-

monies no doubt the Government would let them have the money for 3 or 4 per cent., and then they could make their own baths, terraces, reading rooms, &c., as well as waterworks, independent of the Railway Company. At the same time if the Railway Company were ready to meet them he saw no reason why they should not pull together. The inhabitants would no doubt reap a great deal of benefit from these improvements if they were carried out, but it was imperative on the Railway Company that they should do something. He thought that the railway station at Cleethorpes was simply a disgrace to the Company, especially with regard to sanitary conveniences, which were totally inadequate for the large number of visitors which came to the place in the summer time. Waterworks were necessary for that station and for other purposes, and if the works could be carried out by the parish and the Railway Company conjointly through an Act of Parliament, it would be perhaps the best step they could take. If the proprietors of the garden grounds adjacent to the cliff which would be required to complete the scheme would let the land on lease for 99 or even 999 years, they would only be doing justice to the parish, and what they ought to do to make Cleethorpes a good watering place, and by so doing they would enhance the value of their property. The line from Grimsby to Cleethorpes was paying the Railway Company from 80 to 100 per cent., and was one of the best paying little pieces of line which they had. If the Company only made sixpence per head on the visitors that came to Cleethorpes it brought them an income of £10,000 or £12,000 a year by trippers alone, and if the Company were wise in their time they would not throw a revenue like that away. The directors of the Great Northern Railway Company had agreed to spend £170,000 in improvements at Mablethorpe and Skegness, and he thought the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Company would be neglecting their own interests and their duties to the shareholders if they allowed the opportunity of improving Cleethorpes to pass by. It was necessary to preserve the cliff, to provide baths, reading rooms, libraries, pleasure grounds, &c., and the question was whether the inhabitants would do it themselves, or allow the Railway Company to do it for them. They thought nothing at Scarborough about spending £100,000 or £150,000, because they found the capital returned to them again. Unless the people of Cleethorpes kept pace with the times, and gave the accommodation required, pleasure seekers would go to other places. There was a third course open to them. They might join the Railway in carrying out works of improvement. For his part, however, he should be plucky enough to borrow the money required and lay it out on their own parish. The money would be well spent. It could be obtained from the Government at 3 per cent., and then no one would be in authority but themselves. With regard to the waterworks, he thought all sanitary matters should be in the hands of the local authority. Let them keep these works in their own hands, or if not prepared to do that the next best thing was to carry them out as co-partners with the Railway Company. The waterworks must be constructed before long, and they would involve an outlay of some £3000 or so. In conclusion he suggested that about half a dozen persons should be selected to act in concert with the Local Board, and that they should meet the directors of the Railway Company, and have the whole thing harmoniously talked over. As the Local Board was only formed for sanitary purposes he thought, in a matter of this sort, other parishioners should act with them. (Applause.)

Mr. AYRE (chairman of the Local Board) was called upon to address the meeting. He said he only came there as a listener, and had not wished to interfere in any way with the proceedings. He understood that the simple object of that meeting was to ascertain whether the parish were willing for this scheme proposed by the Railway Company to be carried out without opposition. If the Railway Company were going to spend £40,000 or £50,000 as Mr. Peck had stated for the benefit of the parish, of course they would not do it unless they expected a considerable benefit from it. It remained for the parishioners to say whether or not they would give up their rights to this pleasure ground, and submit to pay when they went upon it the same as other people, for the sake of the general benefit of the parish. With reference to the parish borrowing money and making the improvements themselves, he would ask Mr. Keetley what amount of money the Corporation of Grimsby had borrowed altogether?

Mr. KEETLEY replied that Grimsby had only one

feeling of the meeting he would propose as an amendment that the Board lease the garden land, spend £3000 on the cliff, and construct their own waterworks. He did not believe in giving railway companies everything; they always took care of themselves. They were obliged to do something as far as Cleethorpes was concerned, or it would be superseded by other places.

The CHAIRMAN said he had seen Mr. Thorold that day, but did not talk the matter over with him so as to get his full view of the case, but from what was said he understood that Mr. Thorold would be willing to give up to the Railway Company the portion of his land which was required. The pleasure grounds at present belonged to the public, but in a few years there would be no pleasure grounds left. They would lose their right in the cliff, because the sea would take it away. The matter had been talked over many times, but it had always ended in wind. The parish had been able to borrow a little money, and to pay the interest with some difficulty. Of course the Railway Company hoped to reap advantages, or they would not come forward, but they made the offer to have a clause inserted in the Act of Parliament making it possible for the parish to resume their rights some time. He thought they should give their assistance to the Railway Company. As for borrowing £3000 to spend on the cliff, why it was nothing. (Mr. J. O. Chapman: The tide would wash it away in an hour.) As for Scarborough and Brighton, it was idle to compare those places with Cleethorpes. Scarborough was rated at something like £100,000 a year. If the Railway Company constructed a pleasant promenade and provided other attractions he saw no reason why the inhabitants of Cleethorpes should object to a small charge being made. If the trippers who came to that place could not afford to pay why they were better without them. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. AYRE begged leave to withdraw his name as seconder of Mr. J. O. Chapman's motion, explaining that he did so simply because he thought it would be much better if some one unconnected with the Local Board would second it.

Mr. FURTH thereupon seconded the motion.

The amendment proposed by Dr. Keetley meeting with no seconder, the motion was put and carried unanimously amid applause.

Votes of thanks were afterwards accorded to Mr. Peck for the services he had hitherto rendered in the matter, to the chairman, Dr. Keetley, and Mr. Anningson, and the meeting then terminated.



## Appendix V

Extract from MS&LR Board minutes 10<sup>th</sup> September 1880 – part 1

### *Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway.*

*Secretary's Office, London Road Station.*

*Manchester.*

*Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Board, held at Manchester  
on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September 1880*

*Sir Edward Martin Bart. M.P. in the Chair.*

The Chairman reported the result of his interview with the Local Authorities of Cleethorpes in reference to the preservation of the Cliff & grounds at that place, and Plans of the proposed scheme which it was roughly estimated would cost about £50,000 were laid upon the Table. -

After discussion the question was left in the hands of the Sub-Committee and the following minute was adopted:-

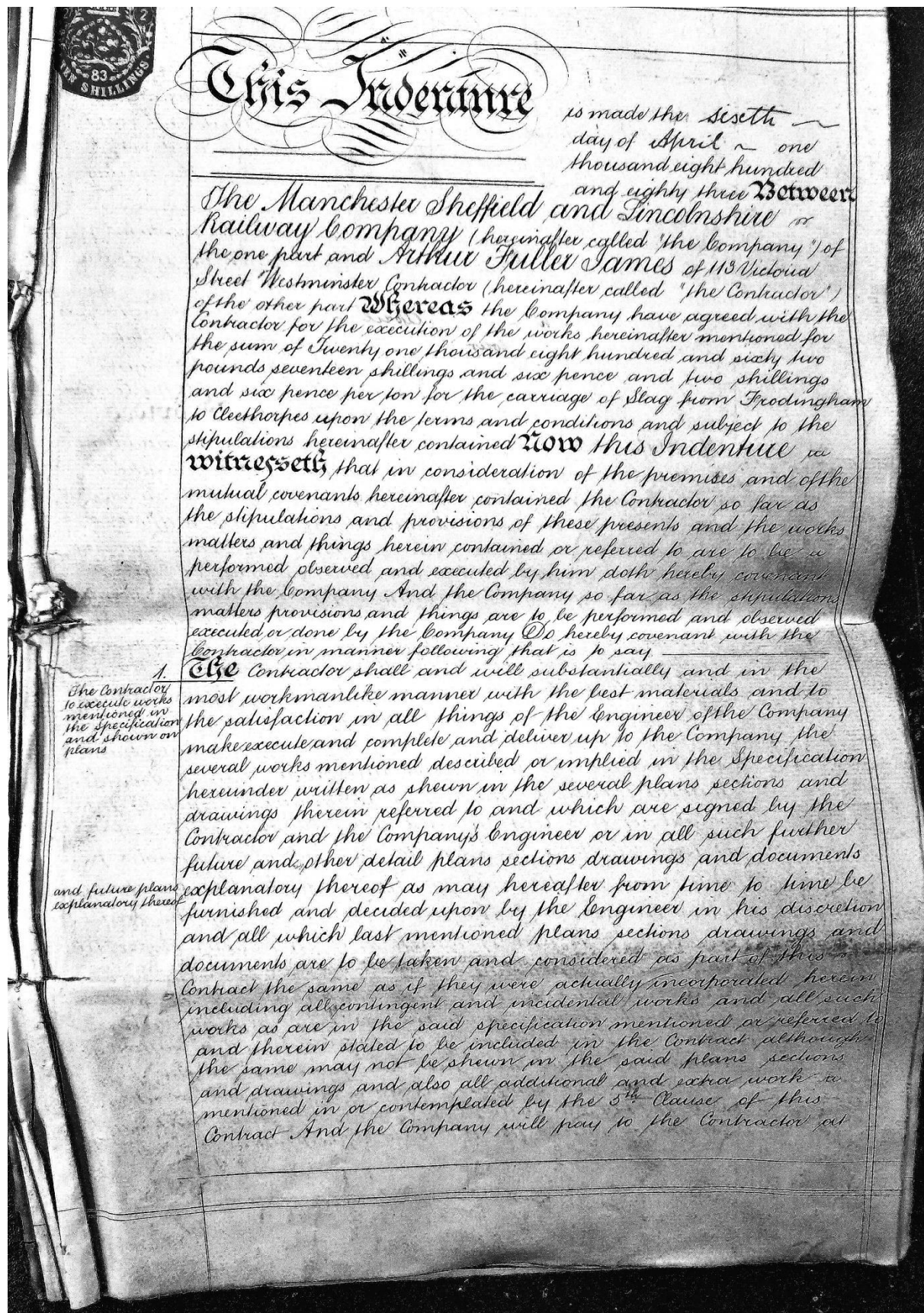
"The Board of the Manchester  
"Sheffield and Lincolnshire Company  
"are prepared to apply to Parliament  
"for powers to construct such works  
"of protection as may preserve the Cliff  
"at Cleethorpes and may enable the  
"land saved to be converted into a  
"place for recreation, with Baths and  
"Washing Rooms, and to extend the  
"present Station to a point near the

"entrance to the Pier. Provided that the  
"land required be given or sold at ~  
"nominal rates for these purposes, and  
"that the Company have power to make  
"a reasonable charge for admission  
"in the usual manner, with power  
"however for the local authorities to  
"become the owner of the improvements  
"within some defined period paying  
"the said Company a moderate interest  
"on their outlay as rental." –



## Appendix VI

Extract from the Sea Wall contract with Arthur Fuller James part 1





## The First Schedule above referred to

Specification of Works to be performed by the Contractor for constructing a Sea Wall road and Promenade and other Works in connection therewith on the line of Road immediately in front of the Railway Station at Cleethorpes and the Recreation Grounds to a point in Prothermans road distant four and a half chains or thereabouts to the south of the point where Humber Street joins the High Bliff road in the County of Lincoln and described and marked on the Drawings as Sections 2 and 3 for the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company

Generally. 1 The work comprises the construction and formation of a Sea Wall Three thousand six hundred and eighty five feet in length two retaining walls sixty five feet in length asphalted Pavement twenty five feet in width for the length of the above named Sea wall two sets of steps and one approach to the sands and the necessary Sewer Channel and under drains and a road way forty feet wide also extending for the entire length of the above named Sea Wall

2 The whole of the work to be executed and constructed in the positions and to the extent shown on the Drawings (in accordance therewith) which accompany this Specification and as otherwise defined and described and subject to the conditions therein specified

3 The Contractor is to set out and keep correct the works in every particular according to these drawings or any others that may be supplied or the directions that he may receive from time to time

Datum. 4 Where specific reference is made to a datum without other terms being used to define its meaning the Datum marked on the drawings is in all cases to be understood and applied in carrying out the several stipulations

Excavation. 5 The ground or sand is to be raised, filled in or excavated as the case may be to the levels shown on the Drawings and to the widths whether or not as shown for the construction of the several works Should the Engineer deem it necessary on account of the nature of the ground or from any cause to carry the foundations to deeper levels the Contractor shall excavate to such lower depths and all such further excavations foundations timbering walls and works as may be necessary or ordered by the Engineer shall be allowed and paid for



Extract from the Sea Wall contract with Arthur Fuller James part 3

Bill No 3 of Quantities for the Sea Wall Road and Promenade 2365 feet long with a return Wall, One approach to Sands and one set of Steps extending from the east end of the Railway Sea Wall to Fishermans Road									
4000	ft	ins	Cube		Rate	£	s	d	
4205				Excavation for Sea Wall	2/-	420	10	0	
1320				" " for Counterforts	2/-	132	0	0	
1576				" Rubble Cement concrete from the base of wall and 4 feet up	15/8	1234	10	8	
2644				" Cement Compo cast on the face of the facing blocks of the wall being 4 parts of Spirit to 1 of Portland cement including moulds	26/-	343	14	0	
1050				" Portland Cement Concrete for the facing blocks to be 6 parts of broken slag to 1 of Portland Cement cast in Moulds with the Compo facing	23/-	1207	0	0	
1577				" Rubble Concrete backing forming the remainder of the wall including timbering/shapung shields &c	15/8	1235	6	11	
1225				" Do Do in No 159 Counterforts including timbering/shapung shields &c	15/8	959	11	8	
2865	run			Gravel	2/3	266	1	3	
6044	cu ft			Asphaltic Tar paving	2/6	753	10	0	
2365	run			York Curbing laid in Curbs & Portland cement concrete jointed with Compo 4 to 1	2/-	236	10	0	
2365 x 3	run			York Stone channeling	2/-	709	10	0	
1752	Cube			Road material as specified herewith first layer 6 inches thick	4/6	394	14	0	
1752	"			" Road metalling 6 inches thick top layer	5/-	438	0	0	
600	run			9 inch glazed earthenware pipes coupling and jointing in Compo	2/-	60	0	0	
	No			24 Cast iron braces and fixing	5/9	11	10	0	
	"			24 Hot galvanized Drain flaps and frames and fixing	58/-	42	0	0	
957	run			One set of Steps					
				Curved steps laid in Portland Cement concrete and jointed with S.C. Compo 4 to 1 The steps to be composed of Concrete blocks rendered with Compo 4 to 1	2/9	131	11	9	
150	Cube			Excavation for steps including timbering	2/-	15	0	0	
132	"			Rubble concrete under steps	15/8	103	8	0	
2365	"			Filling at back of wall	1/9	5980	12	6	