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# BLACKPOOL BRANCHES: PRESTON – BLACKPOOL & ORMSKIRK

#### **Route Guide**

Route expansion for Train Sim World 4

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Blackpool Branches: Preston – Blackpool & Ormskirk gives you a unique opportunity to experience this classic route from Blackpool North in the West to Preston on the West Coast Main Line in the East and down to Ormskirk during what was the line's most interesting period with numerous diverse operations.

You can choose between a wide variety of locomotive diagrams, including Express, Local and Regional Passenger, alongside extensive true-to-life freight workings, in locations ranging from suburban and industrial areas to picturesque countryside. Enjoy stunning views of the holiday destination Blackpool, with its popular Pleasure Beach and the dazzling lights of the Blackpool Tower, during the 1986 summer holiday season, although the year-long timetable includes Summer and Illumination Specials and Railtours for you to experience.

The total track length of the route is 48 miles and also included is the secondary single line to Blackpool South from Kirkham & Wesham and the Burn Naze freight branch (formerly known as the Fleetwood line) which runs from Poulton-le-Fylde to Thornton power station.

Developed with period route maps and accurate elevation data, the route boasts a wide variety of iconic signal box designs and an interesting mix of conventional UK colour light and upper-quadrant semaphore signalling in conjunction with single-line and dual-line operations.

The route includes 19 detailed stations. These include Preston, which features the old Mail Bridge connection, and Blackpool North with its eight platforms and a large array of semaphore signals which provides a stark contrast to the run-down Blackpool South. Due south is Ormskirk station, where the end of the line is marked by a train stop as the track literally comes to an end. To the south of the train stop is the northern end of the electrified third-rail track which originates from Liverpool.

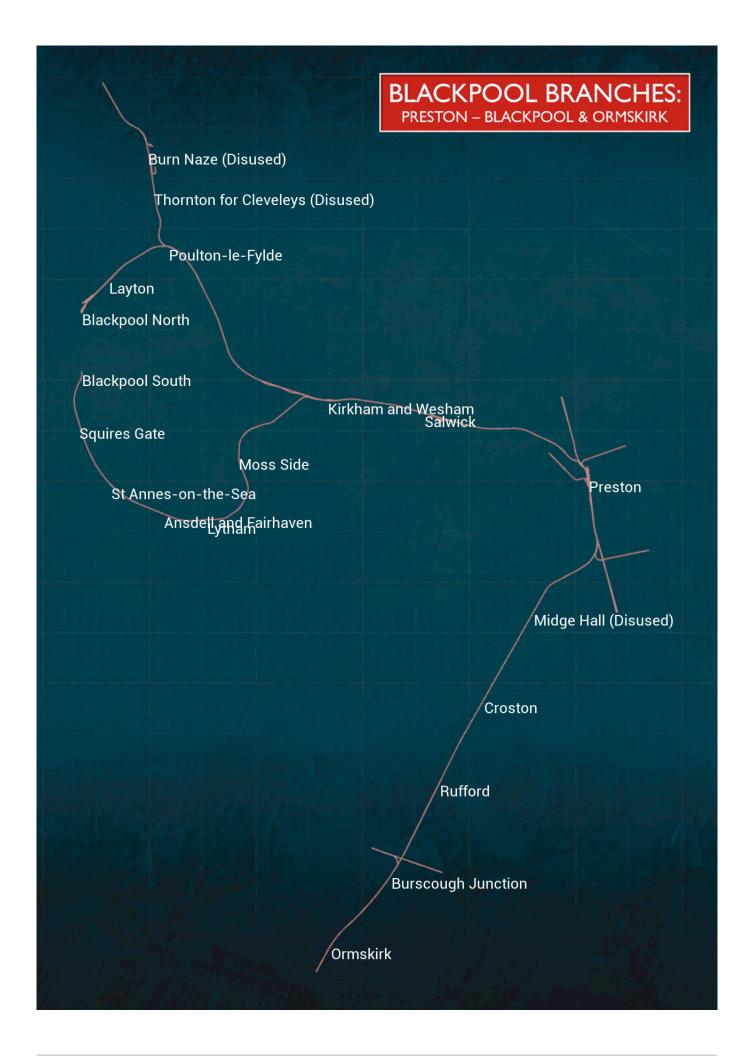
Also featured are the disused stations at Burn Naze and Thornton for Cleveleys which are available for you to explore. All the stations have a plethora of period-correct clutter and signage to provide the correct mid-1980s atmosphere.

A great variety of route-specific custom assets such as bridges, buildings and track-side features provide a highly immersive environment and ensure that the route is fully recognisable to those who are familiar with it.

The included Class 142 DMU, Class 47/4 diesel locomotive, Class 08 diesel shunter, passenger coaches and TEA tank wagons provide a variety of driving experiences via the extensive and complete real-world 24-hour seasonal timetable; this features over 250 authentic drivable services which range from local, express and freight workings to summer extras, shunting operations and numerous AI workings.

The Blackpool North No.2, Salwick and the disused St. Annes signal boxes have accurately modelled interiors from which you can watch the various services drive past.

Also included with the route are tutorials which cover the basic operations of the Class 142, Class 08 and Class 47/4, five scenarios, five types of Collectable in 100 locations for you to find, two Mastery challenges, three Achievements to earn and 24 hours of Journeys to drive. You can also include in the route other compatible addons that you own (see the <u>Layering</u> section), making Blackpool Branches a unique driving experience and a true visual treat.



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# **STATIONS**

# Ansdell and Fairhaven

Before taking its current name in 1906, the station had previously been known as Ansdell, Ansdell's Gate and Ansdell's Halt since it first opened in 1872. The station is only lightly used for most of the time these days but gets extremely busy when the famous Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club hosts the British Open Golf Championship once every ten years.





#### **Blackpool North**

Blackpool's main railway station opened in its present form in 1974, replacing the nearby station on Talbot Road which had first opened in 1846 as Blackpool station; it was renamed Blackpool Talbot Road in 1872 and first rebuilt in 1898.

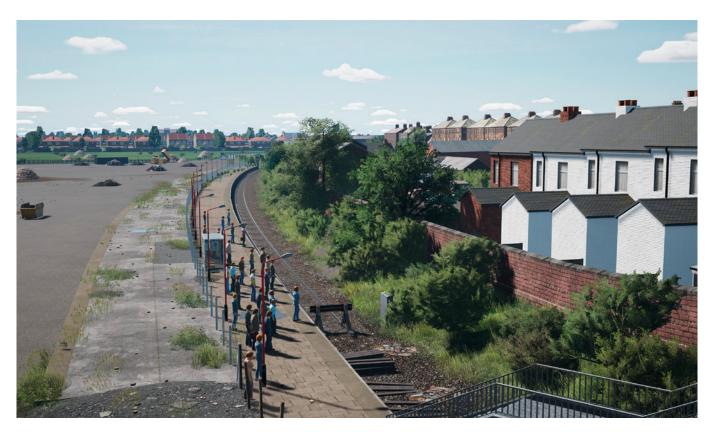
When the station was rebuilt in 1898 there was effectively a separate station at the east end of Queen Street with open 'excursion' platforms for summer use, and the excursion platform canopy building was refurbished to become the new main station when the old main station buildings, train shed and platforms were demolished in 1974.





#### **Blackpool South**

The station was originally named Waterloo Road when it opened in 1903. It handled through trains from Manchester, Liverpool and London until these were all diverted to Blackpool North in 1970. The street-level booking office and waiting rooms were demolished in 1985.





#### **Burscough Junction**

Burscough Junction opened in 1849 and is one of two stations serving the town of Burscough, the other being Burscough Bridge which is a ten-minute walk away. The 'Junction' part of the station name is an anachronism, as the station no longer serves as a junction.

A serious accident occurred near the station in 1880 when the points had not been correctly set for a locomotive to swap tracks and it collided head on with an express from Liverpool down the line.

During the rail restructuring of the 1960s and 1970s the 'Burscough Curves' which formed a link between the Ormskirk-Preston and Southport-Wigan lines were removed, although the formation survives and various schemes have been proposed to reinstate the Curves.





#### **Burn Naze (disused)**

Also known at various times as Burn Naze Halt, the station was built to serve the ICI works in the north of Thornton. The Poulton & Wyre Railway Society is currently working to reopen the station to passengers in the future.





#### Croston

Croston station serves the small village of Croston near Chorley and was built by the Liverpool, Ormskirk and Preston Railway in April 1849. The old stationmaster's house is still intact but was sold off and is now privately occupied.





#### Kirkham and Wesham

The station, originally known just as Kirkham, was opened in 1840. it was rebuilt on the other side of the road in 1890 and later renamed Kirkham and Wesham.





# Layton

Layton, one of two railway stations in the north of Blackpool, serves the Blackpool suburbs of Layton and Bispham. It was opened by the PWJR in 1867 as Bispham and renamed Layton (Lancs) in 1938.





#### Lytham

The original Lytham station (now a fire station) was about 500 yards away from the current one and opened in 1863.

The station building became derelict after the cutbacks of the 1960s but was restored in 1986 and transformed into the Station Tavern public house. At around the same time, the derelict sidings area was turned into a car park. Lytham station is currently unstaffed and only offers basic facilities.





# Midge Hall (disused)

The station at Midge Hall was opened in 1859, replacing an earlier one at Cocker Bar, and closed in 1961. As part of a scheme to give the economy a post-pandemic boost, it is hoped that a new station will be developed at Midge Hall which would provide access to Preston, Ormskirk and Liverpool.





#### **Moss Side**

The station takes its name from the hamlet of Moss Side, where the B5259 (Lytham to Wrea Green) road crosses the railway at a level crossing. It was originally called Kirkham Road when it opened in 1846.

Moss Side station was closed in 1961 (along with Wrea Green in the neighbouring village) but the platforms were not removed after its closure and the station was reopened in 1983. All trains now use the old eastbound platform, with the other still intact but overgrown. The station sees low passenger numbers but has a very good service, which is probably due to trains needing to stop there for the automatic barrier crossing.





# Ormskirk

Ormskirk station opened in 1849 and the station building and three-arch road bridge are Grade II listed structures. The current station consists of a single platform, although before the 1963 Beeching Report and the subsequent restructuring of the rail network there were two main through platforms.





#### Poulton-le-Fylde

The original station was about 400 yards north-east of Poulton-le-Fylde's current location but after a fatal accident in 1893, when a train took a tight curve too fast just north of the station, the tracks were realigned and the new station was built halfway along the new gentler curve. The old station continued to be used as a goods station until 1968.

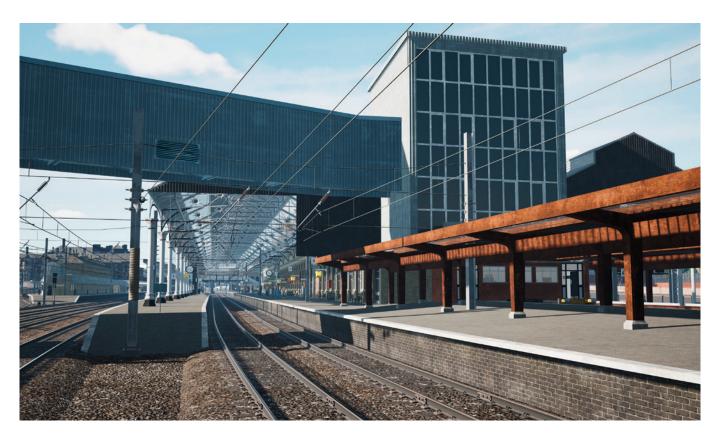
The station serves as a VRP (Visual Reporting Point) for General Aviation aircraft in the local Blackpool airspace.





#### **Preston**

Preston station is approximately halfway between London Euston and Glasgow Central. The current station in the centre of the city was built in 1880 and extended in 1903 and 1913, at which time it had fifteen platforms.





#### Rufford

The station was opened in 1849. From July 1970, Rufford became the only passing point on the Preston-Ormskirk branch line after the Midge Hall to Ormskirk section was singled, and the station was rebuilt with more basic facilities in the same year.





#### Salwick

Salwick station is 5.25 miles west of Preston and is situated between Preston and Kirkham, near the village of Clifton. The station has a very sparse train service – currently only several trains a day each way at the time of writing – and is used by very few passengers. Plans for a new station (provisionally named Cottam Parkway) between Lea and Cottam may well result in the closure of Salwick station.





#### **Squires Gate**

There has been a station at Squires Gate since 1865, when it was called Stony Hill. This closed in 1872 and the current station opened in 1931.

Squires Gate station serves Blackpool's Squires Gate area, although it is located just outside the boundary of the borough, and is the nearest station to Blackpool Airport. It is also only a short walk from Starr Gate, the southern terminus of the Blackpool tramway.





#### St Annes-on-the-Sea

St Annes-on-the-Sea station is located 3.75 miles (5.2 km) south-southeast of Blackpool South. The first station to serve this area was opened in 1863 as Cross Slack and this was resited to the present station which opened in November 1873, taking its current name two years later.





#### **Thornton for Cleveleys (disused)**

The current Thornton for Cleveleys (or Thornton-Cleveleys or, simply, Thornton) station was reportedly the first to be built by the recently formed London Midland & Scottish Railway in 1927. The station closed in 1970, when the Fleetwood line was closed to passengers, and this is another station which the Poulton & Wyre Railway Society is planning to reopen to passengers in the future.





#### **DRIVING THE ROUTE**

Just Trains' Blackpool Branches route provides a wonderful opportunity to explore a varied selection of 1980s railway lines in the North West of England. Preston, located 209 miles from London's Euston station on the West Coast Main Line, forms the hub of the route, with the Ormskirk line heading south from Farington Curve Junction and the two Blackpool branches heading west from Fylde Junction, just outside Preston station.

The route follows the Fylde coast from Kirkham North Junction to reach Blackpool South, with the main line continuing through Poulton-le-Fylde before turning towards Blackpool North, the approach from the east giving great views of the famous Blackpool Tower.

In addition to these main passenger lines we have also included the former line to Fleetwood, which closed to passengers in 1970 but remained open for freight trains to Burn Naze until 1999.

#### **Preston – Blackpool North**

Our journey begins at Preston. Opened in 1838 as part of the key West Coast Main Line route from London to Glasgow, it forms the central pivot of our route and is an important interchange for trains throughout north-west England, providing a connection from places such as Colne and Ormskirk to trunk services for Glasgow and London among other destinations. Trans-Pennine services to York are also a regular feature, with the bulk of services heading for Manchester via Bolton.

The Blackpool Branches route is set in the summer of 1986. At this time Preston featured a total of six through platforms and south-facing bays, providing services to Colne and Ormskirk. Platform seven, as it is known these days, on the easternmost side of the modern-day station, was not in passenger use at the time but was used at regular intervals for freight trains to change crews or for trains awaiting a path on the West Coast Main Line (WCML).

Most Blackpool services depart from platform one, with platforms three and four the key part of the station and serving most of the WCML express services. To the west side of the station are the busy parcel platforms. In 1986 these would be very busy overnight and so it is in our route, with the resident Class 08 regularly shuffling parcel coaches from the sidings onto trunk services heading to various destinations in England and Scotland.

On departing Preston in a northerly direction, the first landmark is the darkness of Fishergate Bridge, a wide structure carrying one of the trunk roads into Preston city centre, which is on the right. To the left the view is dominated by County Hall, the headquarters of Lancashire County Council. We are now beginning a short but noticeable climb up to Fylde Junction, with the 1-in-101 gradient proving a challenge to heavier trains as they leave the station; the oil train to Burn Naze, for instance, can take some time to get up this stretch of line!

While we make our ascent out of Preston it is worth noting Ladywell Sidings to the right; these are complete in their 1980s incarnation, which is very different to how they are today. The sidings at Ladywell were used to stable local trip locos, civil engineers' wagons and shunters in the 1980s and are where some of the locomotives used in our timetable originate from, so keep your eyes peeled for manoeuvres from the small yard. These sidings were considerably remodelled when the A59 trunk road was routed underneath the line.

Continuing towards Fylde Junction, we pass Preston Power Signal Box (opened 1972) on our left, beneath which are the carriage sidings used to hold DMUs as they wait their turn in service. Roughly opposite the PSB is the single-line freight-only branch to Preston Deepdale; this line was used by domestic coal trains and was closed in the 1990s.

We now reach Fylde Junction, where our journey to the Lancashire resort of Blackpool begins, with the 94-metre spire of St Walburge's Church towering above. This iconic building was completed in 1873 and stands out clearly on the skyline.

From Fylde Junction we leave the overhead wires and WCML behind as we turn through an S-bend, passing under Ashton Street and alongside St Mark's Road (and church) before heading across Maudlands Viaduct. This ten-arch structure provides an interesting history of the route. A look underneath it will reveal a core of red brick, with the outer edges formed of blue brick; these blue bricks are the result of the quadrupling of the Blackpool line in 1846, six years after the railway opened in July 1840. The quadruple track once continued all the way to

Kirkham North Junction and this is evidenced by the wide formation on the first few miles of our journey. The outer two lines were removed in 1967 as traffic declined.

The next notable feature is Tom Benson Way, the road which now runs parallel to the railway through Ashton-on-Ribble. This was under construction in 1986 and we have recreated this sight.

Line speed has now reached its maximum on the Fylde – 75 MPH – and most trains will have the chance to reach that speed as they head along this section to Kirkham and Wesham.

The site of Lea Road station is passed. The station closed as long ago as 1938 so it is something of a surprise to still see evidence of the site as we pass over the widened bridges across Lea Road. We are now into the agricultural Fylde landscape proper, but it isn't long before we are met with our first sight of the Springfields nuclear fuel production installation. This 205-acre site was still in full operation in 1986 and the unmistakable chimneys provide a good marker for our location on the route.

Alongside the Springfields site is the associated goods loop and connection to the plant itself, the loop being used by freight trains on busy days to allow express services to overtake. Opposite the goods loop is Salwick signal box; featuring a modelled interior in this route, it provides a relaxing spot to sit and watch the trains go by, although there are only five stopping services each day so you'll be hard pressed to find many trains stopping at the adjacent station.

After Salwick it is a pleasant run to Kirkham and Wesham, our approach signalled by the former workhouse latterly known as Wesham Park Hospital which dominates the hill ahead. Brakes must be applied as we round the corner towards Kirkham and Wesham. The junction here requires that trains slow to 30 MPH to cross onto the former 'fast lines', whilst a speed of 40 MPH is suitable on the slow line through Kirkham and Wesham station, which is located exactly between the two villages. This is the only section of the line which still retains its former four-track formation.

On leaving Kirkham there is a large biscuit factory on the right before a derelict goods shed on the left. A farm track crosses a bridge, beyond which we see Kirkham North Junction, featuring a number of sidings used by civil engineers' trains. More importantly, this is the point where the Blackpool South line diverges and takes a southerly loop through Lytham to reach Blackpool itself.

On the right is Kirkham North Junction signal box, which controls all the track work in this vicinity and is the point at which all access onto the Blackpool South line is managed. Shortly after passing the signal box there is evidence of where the most direct route to Blackpool once diverged: the former line to Central station. The up line crossed our route on a flyover, of which a retaining wall could still be seen in 1986. By the time of our route there is little to show that there was ever a main line junction here, although the formation was still occupied by the Kirkham Tip Sidings, which were used to offload spent ballast and sleepers until the 1990s. In our simulation you'll find the civil engineers' services to Kirkham have a habit of producing a great variety of locomotives and it's well worth keeping an eye out to see what has worked the trip out of Preston.

Once clear of Kirkham, the line speed increases back to 70 MPH for the run to Poulton-le-Fylde. The route now takes us due north past the signal box at Weeton before passing under the M55 trunk road and out across the open fields on a fast run across what is known as Singleton Bank. To the left is our first sighting of the famous Blackpool Tower, four miles to the west, although we will still travel further north to Poulton before we finally turn towards Blackpool. On passing Singleton signal box (and station site, closed 1932) the brakes must be applied as the speed limit initially drops to 50 MPH and then down further to 20 MPH for the sharp curve at Poulton-le-Fylde.

The approach to Poulton-le-Fylde is signalled initially by the site of the former direct junction for Fleetwood. This avoiding line closed as a through line in 1896, remaining as a stub to a goods station on Breck Road until its closure in 1968. The wide 'bowl' here is evidence of the goods yard which also occupied this space until the late 1960s.

After turning to the left we make our final approach into Poulton-le-Fylde station. With its long platforms capable of taking 13-coach holiday trains, the station seems awfully oversized for what was required by 1986!

Immediately beyond the bridge carrying the station entrance, accessed from Breck Road, we find the junction for Burn Naze, a freight-only line which lost its passenger services in 1973. By 1986 this line saw just a handful of trains a week, including the loaded oil train from Stanlow Oil Refinery. Poulton No.3 box is passed before a short, sharp descent through a cutting leads us under Tithebarn Street and onwards towards a sharp 35 MPH bend which will finally point us in the direction of Blackpool North.

Once clear of the 35 MPH limit, the line speed rises once again to 70 MPH and we pass the junction for the Blackpool North – Fleetwood line, which previously formed a triangle, on our right. From here we climb to the Carleton level crossing; with the gradient peaking at 1-in-100, this provides a good opportunity to apply some power for a final thrash towards Blackpool.

Passing over Carleton level crossing leads us around the curve towards Layton station, which is announced by the sight of the council yards on the left and the derelict Crossley Brothers timber yard on the right before we pass under the ornate bridge carrying Plymouth Road overhead. Layton station lies at the foot of a 1-in-100 climb into Blackpool, as bizarre as climbing towards the seaside may seem!

The departure from Layton and the summit of the climb reveal the extent of Blackpool North carriage sidings. If you are travelling in summer, they may well be full of extra holiday trains waiting to take weary holidaymakers back to places such as Castleford and Blythe Bridge.

The approach to Blackpool North is first controlled by No.1 signal box, which oversees action at the eastern end of the carriage sidings and entry from the Lytham direction. As with any terminus, the brakes are in at this point with a 15 MPH blanket speed limit on the final quarter of a mile into the station. The down loop runs alongside as we approach Blackpool North No.2 signal box, with its sign proudly proclaiming our imminent arrival into the terminus.

On arrival, the sidings latterly used for stabling the station pilot and any other locos on site are to the right. The sidings on the left provided the same service in years gone by.

Blackpool North station sits around 500 metres from the seafront and in 1986 featured eight platforms, some of which were capable of holding trains of up to 11 cars in length. Whilst local services to Manchester Victoria formed the backbone of the timetable in 1986, it was still possible to catch trains to such far-flung places as Harwich Parkeston Quay, Stranraer Harbour and Sheffield, as well as for regular services to London Euston via the WCML.

#### Kirkham North Junction - Blackpool South

The Blackpool South line as it was in 1986 was traversed only by local passenger services from Ormskirk, providing a service roughly every 90-120 minutes, making it by far the quieter of the two Blackpool termini by this time.

Leaving the Blackpool North line at Kirkham North Junction, it would be easy to assume that this single-track branch line would provide a steady branch line feel, but this was a former main line which only lost its double-track status in 1985, so you can expect to travel at speeds of up to 70 MPH on this jaunt to the Fylde coast. The gradients are also different to those of the Blackpool North line, with the first mile from Kirkham North Junction climbing at a ruling gradient of 1-in-107 before descending at 1-in-119 through the former station of Wrea Green which closed in 1961.

The 1-in-119 gradient steepens briefly to 1-in-110 on the approach to our first stop, Moss Side, a simple station featuring an ungated level crossing which until 1983 had been controlled by the adjacent signal box.

Departing from Moss Side, the South line continues downhill before turning right to head towards Blackpool on a long sweeping curve which continues over the next few miles.

The next landmark is Lytham station, after we have passed under Ballam Road bridge. As with all the stations on this line, evidence of the second platform is still visible, although it had been devoid of track for less than 12 months at the time our route is set.

We are now running on negligible gradients and the stations come in quick succession, with Ansdell & Fairhaven the first. The former goods yard land here is worth noting as it remained untouched in 1986, together with the goods shed, almost 20 years after it was last in use. The station itself is an interesting prospect; unlike the others on this section of the line it is an island platform, with the former up platform remaining, without any track, on the other side of the island. Beyond the station the line slews across to follow the former down formation, hence the seemingly sudden curve to the left.

Departure from Ansdell provides us with views across the Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club on our right. This famous 18-hole course has hosted The Open Championship on eleven occasions, most recently in 2012. The club was founded in 1886 and provides a scenic break from the sprawling suburbs of Blackpool which will dominate the next few miles.

Immediately after passing the golf course, the brakes are in for the arrival into St Annes-on-the-Sea station, which is approached after passing a number of industrial buildings and then travelling under the Crescent bridge.

St Annes is undoubtedly the most unkempt station on the route; in 1986 major demolition work was under way, with the loss of buildings and the footbridge, and eventually just a bus shelter and small building remained. Unbelievably, photo evidence tells us that the station was left in complete disarray and remained open

throughout the lengthy demolition process. This has been recreated in the Just Trains route. Evidence of the former holiday traffic to St Annes can be found in the length of the platforms – you shouldn't have any problem stopping here with your two-car Pacer!

Shortly after leaving St Annes station we pass Petros House on our left before another iconic railway landmark comes into view. St Annes signal box was closed when the line was rationalised and is now derelict, but it is open for viewing in this route.

Around half a mile beyond St Annes signal box is the site of Gillett's Crossing station. Closed as long ago as 1939, this extremely basic platform was located just north of Highbury Road East overbridge and was adjacent to St Annes Old Links Golf Club, another famous course in north-west England which has hosted the qualifiers for The Open on numerous occasions. This is also the first point on the route at which we can see Blackpool Tower from the south; at this stage it is almost four miles away.

Just beyond the end of the golf course, on our right, is Blackpool Airport, which opened in 1909. The runways are clearly visible from the driver's cab, as is the control tower, whilst the hangars and airport buildings are mostly out of sight on the north side of the site. To our left are the Fylde sand dunes with the Irish Sea directly beyond them; this is as close as our route gets to the sea!

Arrival into Squires Gate station is signalled by Pontins Holiday Park on the left. At the time of our route this was one of six Pontins camps in England and its proximity to Squires Gate station would have produced a lot of holiday traffic on the railway.

The station at Squires Gate continues the theme of access from above, with stairs leading down from a concourse and former booking hall located off Squires Gate Lane.

Once we pass under the bridge as we leave Squires Gate, Blackpool Pleasure Beach looms into view and Blackpool Tower is now more prominent on the horizon. The Pleasure Beach theme park opened in 1896 and whilst the The Big One might not have been present in 1986, many classic attractions were, including The Big Dipper, The Grand National and the Space Invader dome. Alongside the Pleasure Beach is the site of the former Burlington Road Halt; it closed in 1939 but a new station was built on the site in 1987 to serve the theme park.

With the approach to Blackpool South now imminent, it is important not to get distracted by the theme park and forget to brake. Blackpool South is today's terminus of the line from Kirkham North Junction via Lytham and features a single platform in what can only be described as a derelict area. The second platform was taken out of use in 1985, the buildings having been demolished in the preceding years.

The open space to the right and the bridge arches alongside are evidence of the railway history that has been lost around Blackpool South. The area to the right of the existing platform at Blackpool South is where the direct line from Kirkham North Junction joined before entering Blackpool Central; the line beyond Blackpool South closed in 1964. Blackpool South once featured split platforms and the middle portion of the bridge on Waterloo Road shows where the entrance to the platforms on the Kirkham line once stood.

Blackpool Central was located around three quarters of a mile beyond Blackpool South station and featured a staggering 14 platforms. Its large signal box was not destroyed until 1973 and Blackpool South signal box, which stood forlornly on the north side of Waterloo Road, would survive until 1982 before it too was demolished – a sad event, considering this area's glorious railway heritage.

#### **Preston to Ormskirk**

Heading out of Preston in a southerly direction, we can immediately see the loco sidings to our right. These would be used to stable a variety of motive power, including AC electric locos as these were the only electrified loco sidings in the area, with Ladywell not carrying OHLE. Beyond the signal gantries protecting the entry to Preston station we should soon start travelling on the third line from the left, the up slow; this will allow us to gain access to the Ormskirk line at Farington Curve Junction, two miles south of Preston.

Soon after departing Preston we cross the imposing five-arch Ribble Viaduct. It crosses the river of the same name on its widening course towards the Irish Sea, which it meets near Ansdell & Fairhaven on the Blackpool South line. The main viaduct carries the four main WCML lines; from the left they are up fast, down fast, up slow, and down slow and up goods. The down goods line is located on the bridge alongside the main viaduct.

Once clear of the Ribble Viaduct we find ourselves on a long straight, time enough to get the Pacer up to speed on this run to Ormskirk before slowing for Farington Curve Junction. To the right we can see Ribble Sidings. By 1986 these saw little use but today there is no trace of them, although they once formed an important part of the railway infrastructure around Preston.

Speed continues to increase and a gradient change is apparent as we head along the straight past Ribble Sidings, with the line gradually preparing for a climb that actually heads towards Wigan. In our simulation, however, the brakes are in almost immediately as we will be cautioned by signal PN72 ready for the tight, 20 MPH crossover onto the Ormskirk line.

We reach Farington Curve Junction two miles after departing Preston. This is an important location that marks the point at which we diverge to the south-west, and is also where the line towards Blackburn leaves the WCML and heads up alongside the Ormksirk line before turning east and crossing the West Coast, Lostock Hall MPD; this was a major depot in the area until 1968 and was once located just beyond the flyover itself.

Meanwhile we take the also recently singled Ormskirk line. A former through route to Liverpool, this will take us on a scenic drive, once again at speeds in excess of what you might expect on a single line. Following a climb with a peak gradient of 1-in-95, we soon descend gradually across the fields towards Midge Hall, where a token stop must take place at the former station (closed 1961) before we can proceed on the section towards Rufford.

In evidence once again upon leaving Midge Hall is the widened formation. This line, like the Blackpool South branch, was also double track, losing its second track around 1970, from when it was no longer a through route to Liverpool. From 1970 buffer stops were in place where the line meets end to end with the current Merseyrail system at Ormskirk.

Three miles beyond Midge Hall we reach Croston station, which still retains its down platform although it has been out of use for a long time now. The line slews before and after the station, following the down line formation for much of its length.

Another three miles, mostly on the level across farmland, sees us on the approach to Rufford, the only passing point on the line and controlled by a signal box adjacent to the station. Whilst there is a passing loop here, schedules to Ormskirk mean that trains only meet a couple of times a day.

Departing Rufford, we run alongside the Leeds and Liverpool Canal (Rufford Branch) which we will follow most of the way to Burscough. Around half a mile after leaving the station, an interesting bridge is reached where the canal goes under the railway and a farm crossing goes across it – three modes of transport at one meeting point!

Shortly after we cross the canal a gradual climb begins and will take us the remaining five miles to Ormskirk. Peaking at 1-in-150 for much of its length, this climb will provide an entertaining challenge for those who take a heavier train along the route.

After a couple of miles of rural running we approach the site of Burscough North Junction, the point where a curve diverged to the right to connect onto the Wigan-Southport line which passes underneath. A further connection from Southport once converged at Burscough South Junction; this line still remained, although it was disconnected in 1986, whereas the northernmost curve had closed in 1969.

The brakes should be applied before we pass Burscough South Junction and prepare to arrive at Burscough Junction station. Before arriving we cross over the main Leeds and Liverpool Canal (the Rufford branch joins around three quarters of a mile to the east) and then pass alongside Ainscough's Mill, a former steam-powered corn mill which was built in 1855. To the left of the line is the site of Burscough Ordnance Depot, which was once connected by rail. It opened in 1892 and played a role in both World Wars, but by the time of this route is mostly derelict.

Departure from Burscough Junction sees us on the final two-and-three-quarter-mile run to Ormskirk, with the line climbing through the suburbs of Burscough before heading back out across farmland on the final approach to Ormskirk.

Shortly before passing the fixed distant board on the left you will just catch a glimpse of the Ormskirk Bath Lodge; built in 1720 by the Earl of Derby, it is now part of the Lathom Estate and an interesting landmark on the approach to our final stop.

On arriving at Ormskirk we take the left track and enter the platform, pulling right up to the buffer stops which separate the BR main line and the Merseyrail line. In 1986 the second line still remained although it was disconnected at the Liverpool end, meaning that there was no physical connection between the two lines; this had been the case since 1970 when the route was rationalised throughout.

# LOCOMOTIVES

#### Class 142 Pacer

British Rail Class 142 Pacers are Diesel Mechanical Multiple Units (DMMU) built for British Rail from 1985 to 1987. The class is fairly unique in that they were built to try and keep development costs down and so they were built with a high level of commonality with a Leyland-National road bus. For example, they have folding access doors just like a bus.

The Class 142 does not have separate bogies and the axles are attached directly to the train chassis, which can result in some distinctive ride characteristics. The last Class 142 set was withdrawn from UK public service in 2020, but many have been bought by heritage railways and are still in regular use.

#### Class 142 BR Provincial Blue



#### Class 142 Orange



Class 142 Skipper



#### **Boarding the Pacer**

As the driver's cabs are accessed via the passenger doors, there is a specific way to enter the train via a specific cab access door. To get on board, walk up to the end of the train you are going to be driving and face the door control panel next to the folding entry doors.



Use your key to unlock the door panel cover and then, when it is unlocked, use your mouse to open the cover.



Inside the panel you will see three buttons. Press the red OPEN one to open the doors.

Before you enter the train, close the control panel cover and lock it.

You can now enter the train and use the handle to open the driver's door so you can enter the cab.

Don't forget to close the doors before you depart, either via the game HUD or manually as described below!

#### Manual operation of the passenger doors

You can remotely open and close the doors by using the HUD controls when driving from the cab, but if you want to manually operate the doors, use the following method.

With the train fully stopped, insert and twist your key anti-clockwise in the round door key switch on the bulkhead behind the driver's cab. It will show Green/OFF when the doors cannot be operated and Red/ON when the doors can be operated.



Next, look above the passenger door and you will see a hole for your key below the TRAIN CREW DOOR INSTRUCTIONS label. Insert your key and twist it. The rectangular flap to its left will flip open.





To ONLY open the door which you are standing next to, press the red LOCAL OPEN button. All the other doors will stay closed and locked. If you want to open ALL the doors on the platform side, press the two red DOOR RELEASE buttons.

To only close the door you are next to, if that is the only one open, press the blue CLOSE button. Do the same if all the doors are open and you want to close them all.

When you have finished working with the doors, turn the bulkhead door key switch back to green/OFF with your key and close the flap that covers the buttons.

If you are being the train guard, the green SIGNAL button behind this flap sounds the guard's buzzer in the driver's cab. The buzzer will ONLY sound if the bulkhead-mounted door key switch is set to Red/ON, so be sure to press it before you turn the door key switch to Green/OFF. The door control flap can be closed at any time after you have finished with the door controls.





Use the door handle to open/close the driver's cab door.



# Master key and reverser panel



- 1. Master key ON/OFF
- 2. Reverser OFF/FORWARD/NEUTRAL/REVERSE
- 3. CAB HEATER (inoperative in the simulation)

## Engine and coupling panel



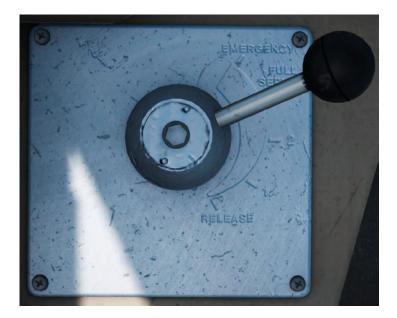
- 1. COUPLE press to couple to another unit.
- 2. UNCOUPLE lift the switch guard and press the button to uncouple.
- 3. ENGINE STOP press to stop the engine.
- 4. ENGINE START press and hold to start the engine.
- 5. COMPRESSOR SPEEDUP switch to ON to quickly build up the air pressure when starting the train from cold. When the pressure has built up, move the switch to OFF.
- 6. PRESS WINDSCREEN WASH windscreen washer (inoperative in the simulation)

### Throttle control



Moving the lever backwards will increase the engine RPM from IDLE to MAX through six intermediate stages.

# Brake control



Moving the lever to the rear will release the brakes from EMERGENCY to RELEASE via FULL SERVICE, STEP 2 and STEP 1. The normal position when stopped is FULL SERVICE.

## Desk area



- 1. AWS alarm acknowledgement button press to acknowledge the AWS alarm.
- 2. Horn lever move the lever backwards and forwards to sound the two-tone horn.

# Lights control panel



- 1. CAB HEATER move the switch as required (SLOW/OFF/FAST).
- 2. HEATED SCREEN rotate to ON (no effect in simulation).
- 3. SIGNAL BUZZER press to sound the guard's buzzer.
- 4. Left windscreen wiper control adjust as required (SLOW/OFF/FAST).
- 5. CAB LIGHT set ON/OFF as required.
- 6. DESTINATION LIGHT illuminates the external destination boards (ON/OFF).
- 7. INST. PANEL LIGHT set as required (ON/OFF).
- 8. External lights switch set as required (OFF/TAIL/MARKER/HEAD).

# RPM and speedometer



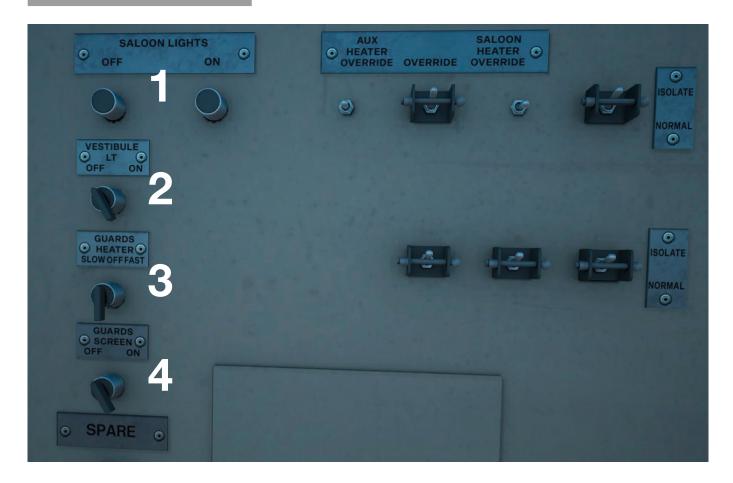
- 1. m.r. and b.c. gauge combined main reservoir and brake cylinder pressure gauge.
- 2. Speedometer
- 3. GEARBOX LOCAL warning light (non-operational in simulation)
- 4. ENGINE STOPPED warning light will illuminate when engine is not running.
- 5. GEARBOX TRAIN warning light (non-operational in simulation)

### **AWS**



- 1. AWS isolation handle open the cover first and then move the handle to operate it.
- 2. AWS 'sunflower' indicator

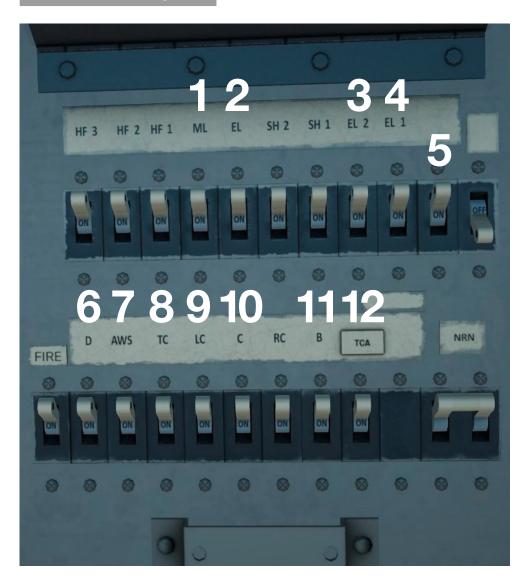
## Rear bulkhead switches



The following switches are operational:

- 1. SALOON LIGHTS (ON/OFF)
- 2. VESTIBULE LIGHT (ON/OFF)
- 3. GUARDS HEATER (SLOW/OFF/FAST)
- 4. GUARDS SCREEN (ON/OFF)

### Circuit breaker panel



The following circuit breakers are operational:

- 1. ML saloon main lighting
- 2. EL emergency lights
- 3. EL 2 end lights 2
- 4. EL 1 end lights 1
- 5. Auxiliary (unlabelled) when tripped, the local door control is inoperative.
- 6.  $\,$  D door control. Doors are not operable.
- 7. AWS AWS is disabled.
- 8. TC train control. When tripped, a brake application occurs, engine RPM goes to idle and no coupling operations are possible.
- 9. LC local control. Local control becomes nonoperational.
- 10. C communications. Announcements are disabled.
- 11. B brakes. Full brake application when tripped.

12. TCA – transmission control. Lose power on that end and no speedometer output.

The following circuit breakers animate but have no effect in the simulation:

- HF 3
- HF 2
- HF 1
- SH 2
- SH 1
- FIRE
- RC
- NRN

The unnamed circuit breaker at the far right on the upper set (set to OFF in the image) is deliberately not animated.

# Right side wiper control



This controls the right-side windscreen wiper (SLOW/OFF/FAST/FAST & WASH).

## **Destination blind control**



Rotate this handle to change the destination names in the exterior panel.

## Windows



The driver's side windows on either side can be opened and closed by dragging on them.

# Window blinds





The window blinds on the front, driver's side and driver's door can be moved up and down by dragging on them at the central bottom area.

## Ventilation fan



Click the toggle switch on the fan to switch it ON/OFF.

### **Class 47/4**

The British Rail Class 47 or Brush Type 4 is a diesel-electric locomotive developed in the 1960s by Brush Traction. 512 units were built at Brush's Falcon Works in Loughborough and British Railways Crewe Works between 1962 and 1968, making the Class 47 the most numerous class of British mainline diesel locomotive.

The Class 47 has been used on both passenger and freight trains on the UK railways for many years and, despite the introduction of more modern types of traction, a significant number are still in use on both main and heritage lines. Some Class 47s were later converted to Class 57s from 1998.



#### Class 47 BR Blue



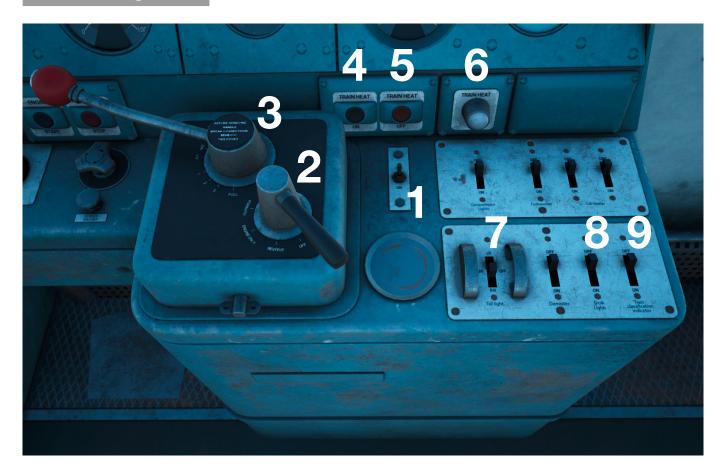
### **Class 47 Intercity Executive**



Class 47 Large Logo

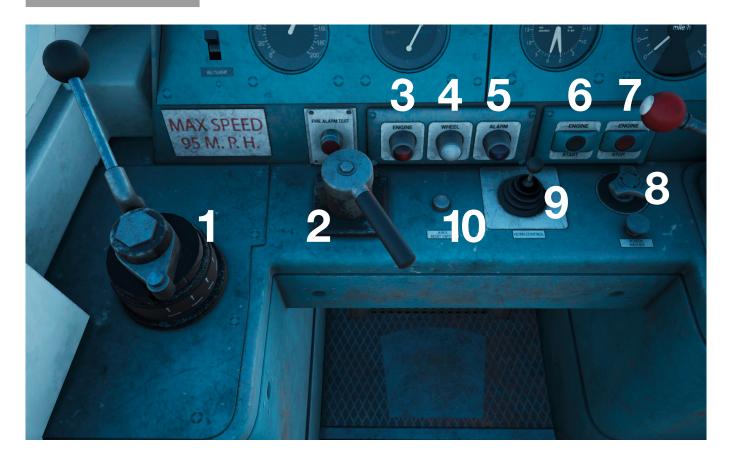


# Console – right side



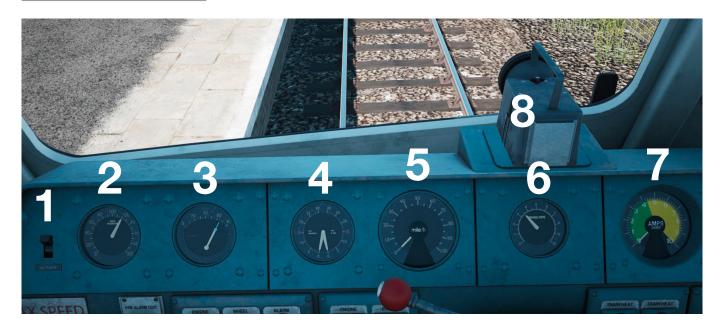
- 1. Master Key ON/OFF
- 2. Reverser OFF / REVERSE / ENGINE ONLY / FORWARD
- 3. Throttle 0% to FULL
- 4. Train heat ON
- 5. Train heat OFF
- 6. Train heat indicator when this is illuminated, the heating is ON.
- 7. Tail light OFF / LEFT SIDE (LH) / RIGHT SIDE (RH)
- 8. Desk light ON/OFF
- 9. Train classification (marker) lights indicator ON/OFF

# Console – left side



- 1. Driver's brake control NEUTRAL/SHUTDOWN / EMERGENCY / FULL SERVICE / SERVICE (%) / INITIAL APPLICATION / RUNNING / OVERCHARGE
- 2. Straight brake (locomotive brake) 0-100%
- 3. Engine off warning light illuminated when the engine is off.
- 4. Wheel slip light illuminates when wheels are slipping.
- 5. Alarm light illuminates when the locomotive is overloaded.
- 6. Engine START button use to start a stopped engine.
- 7. Engine STOP button use to stop a running engine.
- 8. Driver's side wiper control OFF/PARK/RUN
- 9. Two-tone horn control move forward and backward to operate.
- 10. AWS acknowledgement button press to acknowledge the AWS alarm.

# Upper console area



- 1. High intensity lamp switch ON/OFF
- 2. Main reservoir pressure gauge
- 3. Bogie pressure gauge
- 4. Vacuum pressure gauge for brake chamber and brake pipe
- 5. Speedometer
- 6. Brake pipe pressure gauge
- 7. Ammeter
- 8. Bardic lamp click to illuminate.

## Emergency brake control and dead man's pedal



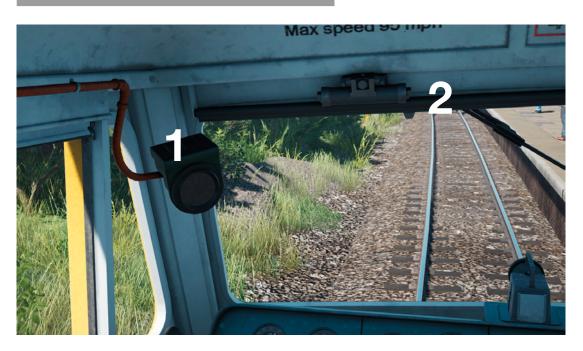
- 1. Emergency brake valve
- 2. Dead man's pedal

# Cab – right side



- 1. Right side window wiper control (OFF/PARK/RUN)
- 2. Two-tone horn control move forward and backward to operate.
- 3. DSD button
- 4. Bardic lamp click to illuminate.

# AWS 'sunflower' and window blind



- 1. AWS 'sunflower' indicator
- 2. Driver's window blind drag up and down to operate.

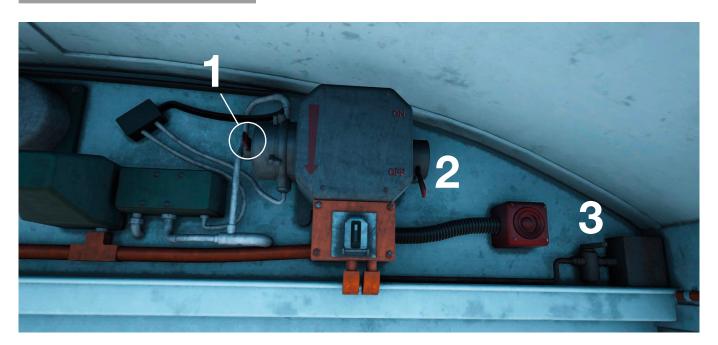
# Cab light switches





Use these switches to operate the cab light.

# Upper rear bulkhead area



- 1. AWS isolation lever
- 2. AWS cab change-over lever
- 3. DSD isolation switch

# Lower rear bulkhead area



- 1. Handbrake
- 2. Brake selector
- 3. Battery isolation switch (BIS)

## Class 08

The British Rail Class 08 is a diesel-electric locomotive used for shunting. They were built for British Railways as their standard general-purpose shunter and the 08s became a common sight all over the UK rail network. They were introduced in 1952 but their use has declined sharply as the type of passenger trains in use now do not require shunting services. Many are still in service for industrial use and on many heritage lines, however, as well as on the main UK network.

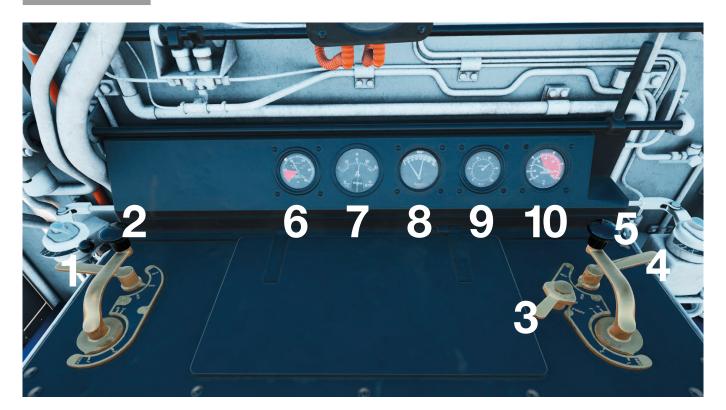
#### Class 08 BR Blue



**Class 08 08744 - Wigan TMD** 

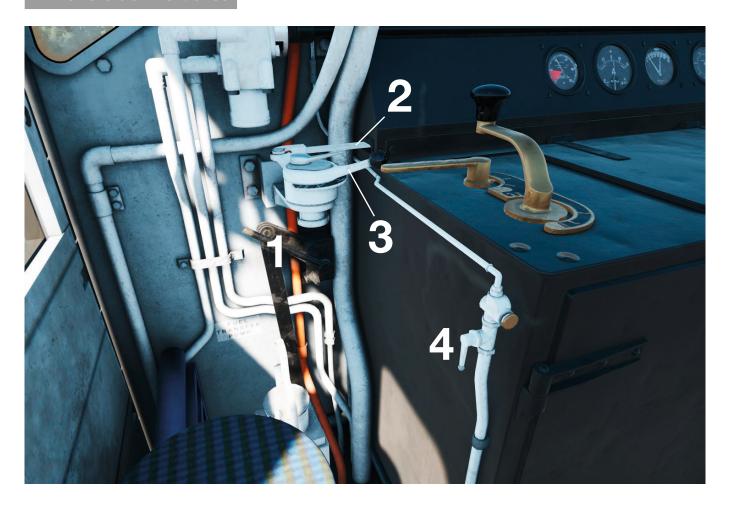


# Console area



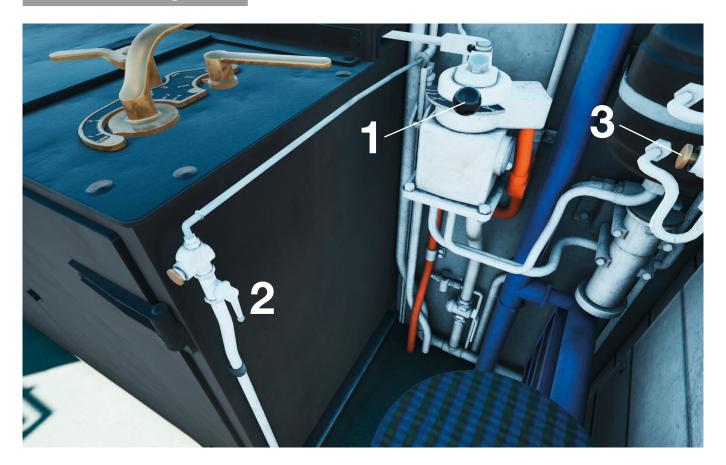
- 1. Left-side reverser lever
- 2. Left-side throttle lever
- 3. Master key switch
- 4. Right-side reverser lever
- 5. Right-side throttle lever
- 6. Engine oil pressure gauge
- 7. Ammeter
- 8. Pressure gauge for the brake cylinder and main reservoir
- 9. Brake pipe pressure gauge
- 10. Water temperature gauge

# Driver's side – left area



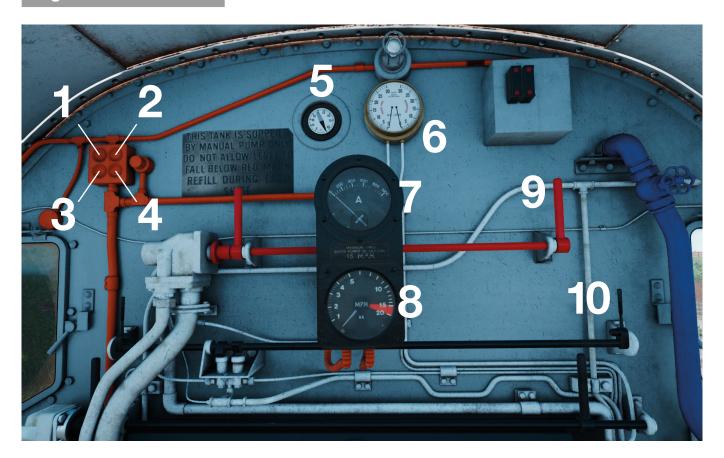
- 1. Fuel transfer pump
- 2. Exhauster speed-up lever
- 3. Train brake
- 4. Whistle isolation valve

# Driver's side – right area



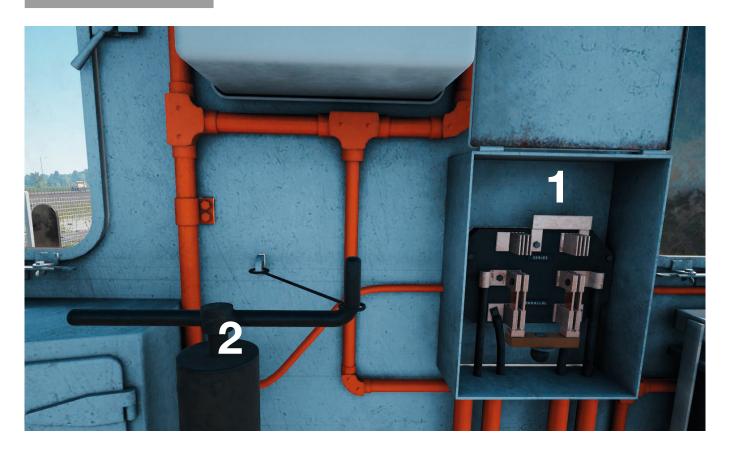
- 1. Train brake
- 2. Whistle isolation valve
- 3. Brake overcharge button

# Engine bulkhead area



- 1. Engine compartment light switch
- 2. Cab light switch
- 3. Instrument lights switch
- 4. Marker lights switch
- 5. Fuel gauge
- 6. Air pressure gauge for train brake pipe and reservoir
- 7. Ammeter
- 8. Speedometer
- 9. Emergency brake valve
- 10. Sander lever

# Front bulkhead area



- 1. Series and parallel switch lift cover to access.
- 2. Handbrake

# Windscreen wiper controls







Use the button on the wiper motors to operate the windscreen wipers. They are variable speed.

# **ROLLING STOCK**

## Mk. 1 BG coaches

The brake gangwayed or BG coach (sometimes also known as a full brake) is a type of British Railways Mark 1 passenger brake van. It is fitted with a guard's compartment in the centre and two large areas either side for storing luggage. They were a very versatile type of coach and could be found all over the British Railways network.

The British Railways Mark 1 BG was built shorter than most other types of Mark 1 coaches, the British Railways BGs being 57 feet (17.37 m) whereas most others were 63 feet (19.2 m). This was so the BG could go everywhere, unlike their other Mark 1 counterparts which were not allowed at some station platforms because of their length.

#### Mk. 1 BG BR Blue and Grey



### Mk. 1 BG BR Blue Express Parcels



Mk. 1 BG BR Blue and Grey Express Parcels



#### Mk. 1 BG BR Blue Newspapers



## Mk. 2a FK and TSO coaches

The Mk. 2 family of railway carriages are British Rail's second design of carriages. These steel carriages were built by British Rail workshops (BREL) between 1964 and 1975.

FK = First Corridor

TSO = Tourist Standard Open

The Mk. 2 has a semi-integral construction, endowing it with more strength than the Mk. 1 design. The design change was to help stop corrosion problems where the body was attached to the chassis and around the windows.

The Mk. 2 coach was a mainstay of the InterCity network, but now most of them have been withdrawn and replaced by newer stock. Since their withdrawal from most main line duties, Mk. 2 coaches have been employed on private railtours, charter trains and heritage lines.

### Mk. 2a FK BR Blue and Grey



Mk. 2a TSO BR Blue and Grey



# TEA 100T bogie tank wagons

The TEA wagon family covers a variety of 100 to 102-ton bogie tank wagons that have been produced over several decades since the 1960s. They are mainly used to carry fuels and can be seen across much of the British rail network, transporting oil to refineries and storage terminals.

#### **TEA Tanker**



# TRAINING MODULES

To help you master the included trains and locomotives, a set of training modules is available to take you through the basics.

To access the training modules:

From the Home screen, select TRAINING CENTER. On that screen select TRAINING and then select the train or locomotive that you wish to learn about. You may wish to use the Search feature to help your find your train. Click on your desired train and on the next screen select the appropriate module and then click GET STARTED.

We have included training modules for the Class 142, Class 08 and Class 47.

# **WAYS TO EXPERIENCE THE ROUTE**

There are lots of ways to experience Blackpool Branches:

- Scenarios
- Timetable
- Journeys
- Free Roam
- Tasks
- Mastery challenges

### **Scenarios**

Five exciting and varied scenarios are included.

To choose a scenario, select TO THE TRAINS from the Home screen and then CHOOSE A ROUTE. When you are on that screen, select 'Blackpool Branches: Preston – Blackpool & Ormskirk', then select SCENARIOS and click on the one you wish to drive.



### **Blackpool Illuminations**

Difficulty: 1

**Duration:** 30 minutes **Train:** Class 47/4 HI BLU

Take control of 1Z09, an illuminated special originating in Bournemouth and hauled by a Class 47 diesel

locomotive. Drive the final leg of the tour with 47555 from Preston to Blackpool North.

### Oiled Up

Difficulty: 3

**Duration:** 50 minutes **Train:** Class 47/4 HI BLU

Severe disruption on the West Coast Main Line has caused heavy delays to all services in the area. One service affected is your trip to Burn Naze, which has been sat stranded near Warrington.

### **DMU Debacle**

Difficulty: 4

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Train:** Class 142 Provincial (1985-1991)

A stranded Pacer needs your assistance. You must rescue this service and help get the South Fylde Branch back up and running as soon as possible.

### **Back and Forth**

Difficulty: 3

Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes

**Train:** Class 142 Provincial (1985-1991)

Engineering works are taking place around the Salwick area, which means no services can reach Blackpool North or South. You will run a shuttle service from Preston to Ormskirk and back again.

### Put a Gronk on it

Difficulty: 2

**Duration: 30 minutes** 

Train: Class 08 BLU Crewe

Having finished your morning break, you're ready to get to work shunting various coaching stock rakes around the Blackpool North area.

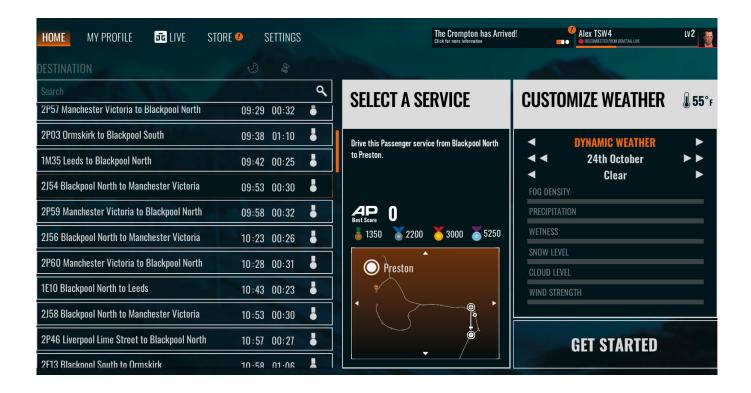
### **Timetable**

Drive and experience an intense 24-hour timetable!

To access the timetable, select TO THE TRAINS from the Home screen and then CHOOSE A ROUTE. When you are on that screen, select 'Blackpool Branches: Preston – Blackpool & Ormskirk' and then select TIMETABLE.

Next, click on the train that you wish to drive and then click on your preferred version on the right side of the screen.

Once you have done this you will see all its available services on the left side of the screen. Click on the one you want to drive, adjust the weather you wish to see and then click GET STARTED to begin.

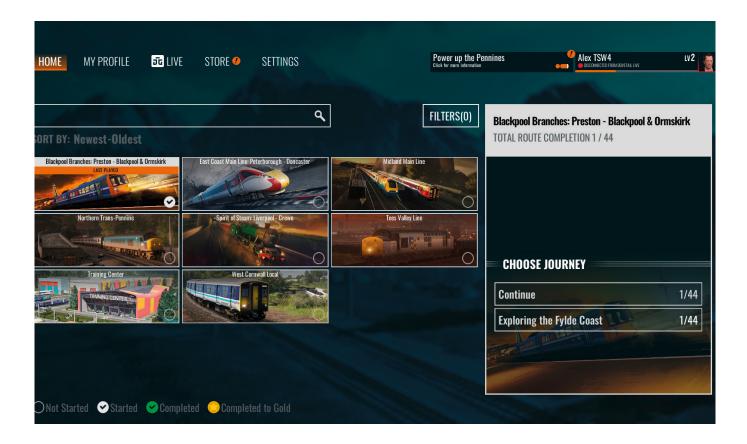


### **Journeys**

Journeys bring together more than 24 hours of ongoing exploration and driving. Start a Journey and enjoy timetabled services, scenarios and tasks to complete around the route.

To access Journeys, select TO THE TRAINS from the Home screen and then RAIL JOURNEYS. When you are on that screen, select 'Blackpool Branches: Preston – Blackpool & Ormskirk' and then click on CHOOSE JOURNEY on the right side of your screen.

Now click on the train you wish to drive, click on one of the available drives on the next screen and then click GET STARTED to begin.

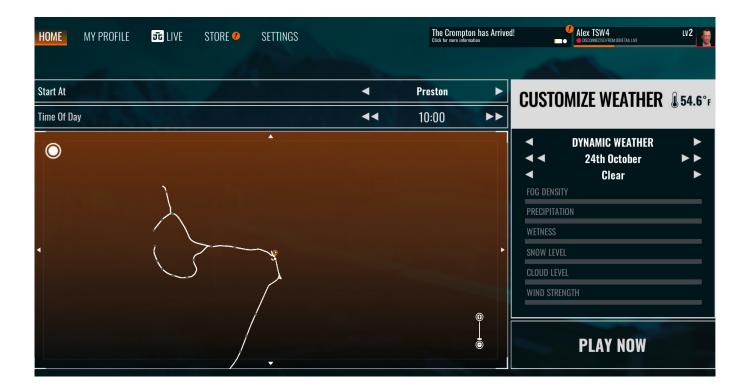


### **Free Roam**

The Free Roam feature allows you to choose a station on the route and drive a train from it, driving as you wish.

To access Free Roam, select TO THE TRAINS from the Home screen and then CHOOSE A ROUTE. When you are on that screen, select 'Blackpool Branches: Preston – Blackpool & Ormskirk' and then FREE ROAM.

On the next screen choose the station you wish to drive from, select the time you want to start and set the weather that you wish to experience.

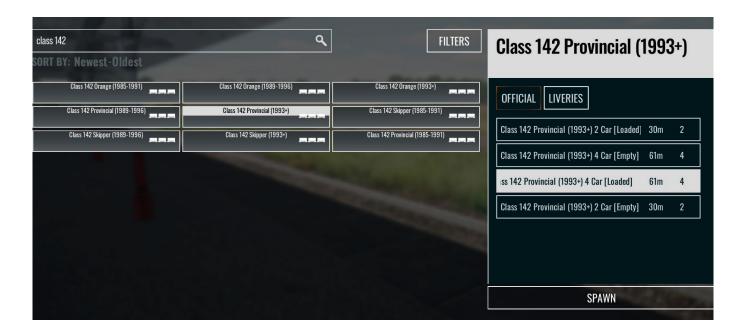


When this is done, click PLAY NOW.

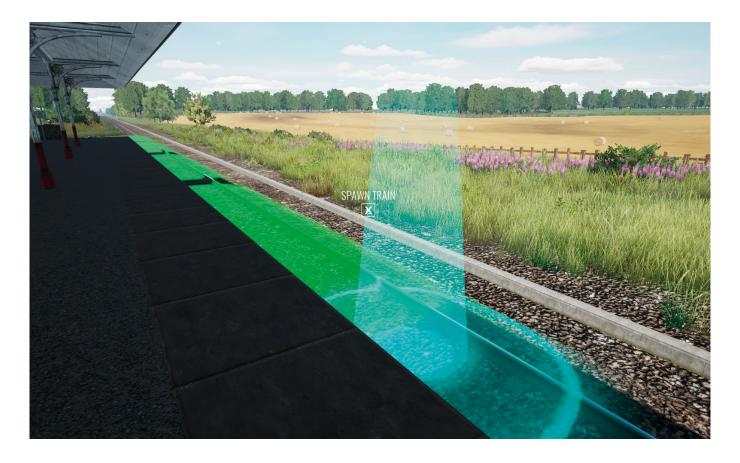
When the station loads, walk to the platform from which you wish to depart and press the [TAB] key on your PC keyboard. This will bring up the TAB / SPAWN NEW TRAIN icon on your screen.



Click on the SPAWN NEW TRAIN icon. This takes you to a screen where you can select your train (you may wish to use the Search box to find it quicker). Select the train, choose the variant on the right side of the screen and then click SPAWN.



This will take you back to the platform, where you will see a SPAWN TRAIN [X] icon. You should see a bright green area on the track, meaning that there is space for the train to fit. If you see a red area on the track, move along the platform until it turns green. When it is green, press the [X] key on your PC keyboard and your train will appear. You are now ready to board it and drive!



### Tasks

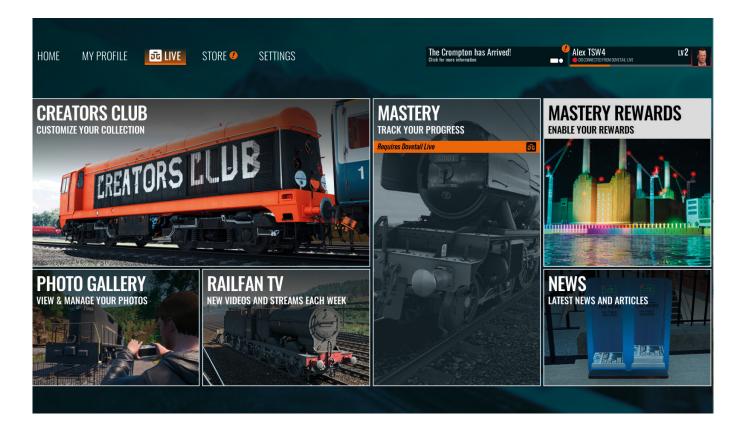
There are five different Tasks for you to complete as you drive around, so look out for and replace missing route maps and fix the worn out signs. Be sure to collect abandoned golf club bags, have fun building sandcastles and keep an eye out for cheeky-looking gingerbread figures. Ormskirk is famous for gingerbread!

Have a good look in and around the stations on the route to try and find all these.

# Mastery challenges

As you drive around and experience more of the route you will be automatically awarded Mastery tiers. There are two of these and they will unlock surprises for you!

You can track how you are doing by going to the DTG LIVE > MASTERY REWARDS menu via the Home screen.



## **ENHANCING YOUR EXPERIENCE**

There are several ways to enhance your experience with Blackpool Branches:

### Layering

'Layering' is using other add-ons that you own to enhance your Blackpool Branches experience.

If you have any of the add-ons listed below in your Steam library, the Blackpool Branches route timetable will call on the appropriate locomotives and rolling stock from them to allow you to enjoy a fuller timetable experience.

**Note:** These additional add-ons are not required for the Blackpool Branches route to operate; they are optional add-ons which, if you own them, will give you a more authentic experience.

#### Compatible add-ons as of November 2023:

- Tees Valley Line: Darlington Saltburn-by-the-Sea Route Add-On (for the Class 101 DMU, Class 37 'Tractor' diesel locomotive and PCA and HEA wagons)
- West Cornwall Local: Penzance St Austell & St Ives Route Add-On (for the Class 37 'Tractor' diesel locomotive and the Seacow and Turbot wagons)
- Northern Trans-Pennine: Manchester Leeds Route Add-On (for the Class 45 'Peak' diesel locomotive)
- Spirit of Steam: Liverpool Lime Street Crewe Route Add-On (for the LMS Stanier 8F steam locomotive, Mk1 coaches, 16t mineral wagon and 20t brake van)
- BR Heavy Freight Pack Loco Add-On (for the Class 40 diesel locomotive)
- BR Class 31 Loco Add-On
- BR Class 20 'Chopper' Loco Add-On

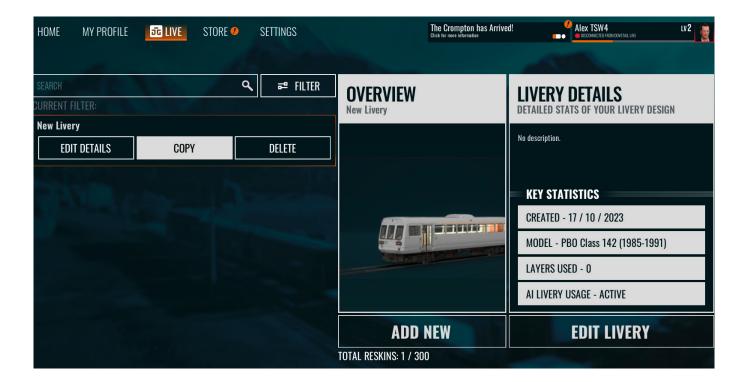
### **Achievements**

You can earn three Achievements, as shown below. These will show in the Steam app when you select Train Sim World 4:

- Pace yourself drive the Class 142 for 142 miles.
- Beside the seaside drive 40 Blackpool Branches services.
- The Big Dipper complete all scenarios on the Blackpool Branches: Preston Blackpool & Ormskirk route.

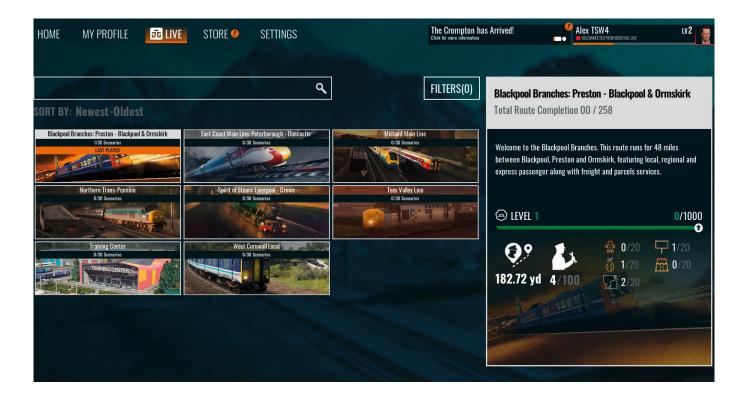
## **Livery Designer**

The Class 142, Class 47 and Class 08 are compatible with Livery Designer so that you can create your own liveries. To access Livery Designer from the Home screen, click CREATORS CLUB and then LIVERY DESIGNER.



### **Scenario Planner**

In the Scenario Planner you can create your own scenarios for use on the Blackpool Branches route. To access the Scenario Planner from the Home screen, click CREATORS CLUB and then SCENARIO PLANNER.



## **CREDITS**

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All the testers

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# Just Trains add-ons for Train Simulator Classic



Midland Main Line: Sheffield-Derby



Metropolitan Line



South Western Expressways - Reading



**U-Bahn Hamburg U1** 



Derby-Nottingham-Leicester



China Railways CR400BF/BF-A High-Speed EMU



S7+1 Advanced -Underground Stock



Nottingham-Lincoln



