

# Low Furness

Benefice of Aldingham and Dendron and Rampside and Urswick  
with the Parishes of Bardsea and Pennington



## Parish Profile

Following Jesus:

Moving forward in Mission, Worship, Discipleship and Ministry:  
We invite you to be part of our future

## Contents

1. Our Vision:.....	3
2. Our Mission: .....	3
Vision and Mission in Action: .....	3
3. The Team.....	4
4. Mission and Outreach: .....	5
5. Worship:.....	6
6. Discipleship: .....	8
7. Ministry:.....	8
8. Communications .....	8
9. The leader we seek..... is this you? .....	10
10. Diocesan Strategy for Mission – <i>God for All</i> .....	11
Follow Daily.....	11
Care Deeply.....	12
Speak Boldly.....	12
Tread Gently .....	13

Mission Communities.....	13
11. Our Churches.....	14
St. Mary & St. Michaels Urswick.....	14
St Cuthberts Church Aldingham .....	16
Holy Trinity Bardsea .....	17
St. Michael and Holy Angels Pennington.....	18
Vicarage .....	19
12. Environment:.....	21
13. History:.....	21
Furness Abbey.....	22
The People .....	23
Schools.....	24
Health .....	24
Shops .....	24
Transport .....	24

## 1. Our Vision:

A vibrant, growing Christian Community in Low Furness, whose mission and outreach include both love shown in social action and sharing the gospel to draw people to faith; inspiring them to worship Christ.

## 2. Our Mission:

Following Jesus - Moving forward in

- \* **Outreach and Mission:** Enabling people to experience God's saving love at work in our community, and building His Kingdom here.
- \* **Worship:** Meeting with Jesus through his Spirit, and developing meaningful variety in our worship
- \* **Discipleship:** Learning and growing in faith, understanding the Scriptures and applying them in our lives
- \* **Ministry:** Discerning God's giftings and callings, and equipping each person to serve God in their church, community and workplace.



### Vision and Mission in Action:

- Prioritising mission and outreach, drawing people of all ages and backgrounds to Christ and seeking to grow them in faith.
- Enabling lay ministry - encouraging, equipping, mentoring and working closely with our existing and future lay ministers/leaders.
- Encouraging the diversity and depth of spiritual life and worship of the churches within the Mission Community.
- Developing and holding the wider Diocesan vision of 'God for All' (see section 10) as well as discerning the local vision, and inspiring people to make the vision happen.

- Teaching and growing people in their understanding of the Christian faith.
- Equipping disciples of Jesus, and inspiring them to serve in ministry and outreach.
- Ecumenical collaboration and teamwork with other denominations, using the insights and abilities of others.
- Continuing to develop our engagement with the local communities, including local organisations and the 2 primary schools.
- Leading us through change, seeking innovative ways forward and using the strengths of the past and present to build the future.



### 3. The Team

You wouldn't be alone!

We have a good strong team of lay ministers here. Past clergy have found it enjoyable and supportive working with them:

- \* A Distinctive Deacon
- \* Eight Local Lay Ministers / Worship Leaders (trained by the diocese and authorised to a variety of ministries such as outreach, leading worship, preaching, pastoral care and Holy Communion by Extension)
- \* Eucharistic ministers and other lay worship leaders
- \* An excellent team of Churchwardens who work together across the churches



Urswick Tarn

#### **4. Mission and Outreach:**

Outreach in the Furness Mission Community (FMC) takes a variety of forms:

- extending Christian love through our villages by social action
- bringing people of all ages to Christ through opportunities to learn about the love of Christ and the Good News of the Gospel

#### **Furness Mission Community**

Across Cumbria Mission Communities are being developed – some more advanced than others. Here in Furness the development of the Mission Community is still at an early stage.

Mission Communities are an ecumenical model of creating Christian Communities to serve the local communities, in our case the rural villages along the north shore of Morecambe Bay

Although the Furness Mission Community is still developing, the recent influx of young stipendiary clergy offers an exciting opportunity to further develop working relationships and effective outreach.

## **Local Church of England Schools**

### **Low Furness CoE Primary School**

All the school attend festival services (Harvest, Christmas and Easter) as well as end of term services

Regular assemblies are held in school led by ecumenical partners

### **Pennington CoE Primary School**

The school holds regular services in church including Easter, Harvest, end of year service and Christmas.

## **Fresh Expressions of Church**

### **Furness Footsteps**

A group of up to 12 who meet monthly to walk through the local countryside in the Celtic tradition of seeking God in creation, followed by refreshments at a local café.

## **Digital Footprint**

### **Website**

The church has a website ([www.churchoflowfurness.org.uk](http://www.churchoflowfurness.org.uk)) that publishes service schedules; events and activities as well as an archive of the newsletters.

### **Facebook**

The church has an active Facebook presence. Morning Prayer is broadcast live 3 days a week along with other content.

## **5. Worship:**

- \* In addition to the weekly Communion services we hold a monthly Healing Service.
- \* Weekday Holy Communion has been established and is led occasionally by clergy, but predominantly by Local Lay Ministers with appropriate authorisation for Holy Communion by extension.
- \* Taking worship into our schools (assemblies) and bringing our schools into our churches; with special services.
- \* Around a half of our services are lay led, with many people committed to putting time and creativity into this.
- \* Holy Communion by extension may also be provided in the homes of the housebound who request it, by the Deacon or authorised Lay Ministers at the direction of the clergy.

\* Following the closure of St Michael's Rampside church building the congregation migrated to the Village Hall and the regular service has evolved into a more informal service with refreshments before and after.

### **Sunday Worship**

Most of our churches hold services on at least 2 of the first 4 Sundays each month, and arrangements exist for worshippers to attend another local church when there is no service in their own parish. On fifth Sundays there is a single Benefice Service with each parish hosting a similar number of Benefice Services in the course of 1-2 years. A third of our Sunday services are lay led and we envisage that is likely to increase in the future. With that in mind we are keen to recruit to the lay ministry team and to use the "*Know How*" of the seasoned lay ministers to help develop that resource, together with external training provision within the diocese. The format of our worship services is wide with both Holy Communion and Morning Prayer, BCP Evensong, and also Family Services, and other service patterns from time to time. Developing our liturgy has been encouraged.

### **Weekday Worship**

Each Wednesday morning in Urswick there is a Holy Communion by Extension in the Parish Room. This service is led by a team of one ordained and three lay ministers, a depth that ensures that absences are covered. It has proved very popular and includes a talk or sermon and coffee and chat afterwards. It attracts a regular congregation which averages 12. It has proved particularly popular with some of our worshippers with health or mobility restrictions.

### **Special Worship Services**

Over the course of the year there are a number of services which reflect Christian Festivals, local traditions and the work done in our own community. Some of those services are listed below, together with any particular features. We think that worship that is visible and outdoor, whether in a school playground or a Remembrance at a war memorial,

reaches out to people who might not be regular worship attenders. The range of special services is in part reflected in the photographs.

## **Christingle and Nativity Services**

### **An annual Service for School Leavers**

**Easter Sunrise Service** on Urswick Common (Birkrigg) - An ecumenical service with Churches in Ulverston

### **Harvest Festivals**

Including in village halls where they are well supported by the farming community. Low Furness School holds a Harvest service in Urswick every year.

### **Mothering Sunday Services**

### **Special Services for Holy Week**

### **Carol Services**

Are held in all the churches and some of the village halls. Low Furness School has a carol service in Urswick church.

## **6. Discipleship:**

\* Advent and Lent groups meet regularly and are frequently ecumenical.

## **7. Ministry:**

- \* Our lay ministers have training and authorisation in pastoral care, mission and youth work.
- \* Many people undertake training in leadership and ministry locally and at diocesan level.
- \* We have a strong committed team and much valued experience of growing lay ministry.

## **8. Communications**

We publish a bi-monthly newsletter that is available in both hard copy in our churches and distributed to over 100 recipients by e-mail.



Our Facebook group has over 160 members. It hosts the thrice weekly on-line broadcast of Morning Prayer usually led by the Deacon.

Our Website {<http://churchoflowfurness.org.uk>} also provides updated information about events and activities.

## 9. The leader we seek..... is this you?

The post is for a Priest-in-Charge, with responsibility for the 4 Anglican parishes within the Low Furness area.

The person appointed must have the potential and willingness to become part of the Furness Mission Community (FMC) team and be keen to engage in mission ecumenically. The FMC is at a crucial stage of its journey but we are building on a very positive history of collaborating together in mission and worship events over several years.

We have already started to deliver some of that in exciting ways, and are very open to new ideas. Are you the right person to lead us on?

We are looking for someone who:

- Has a deep reliance on the empowering love and grace of God, personal prayerfulness and grounding in the Scriptures.
- Is passionate about mission and outreach to people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Is a team worker who values and respects the ideas, insights and abilities of others.
- Shows evidence of ability to draw people closer to God, and to grow disciples.
- Enjoys a variety of styles of worship and church traditions.
- Loves and understands people, and is an excellent communicator, preacher and teacher.
- Listens to the Holy Spirit, and will help us to discern the vision and way forward.
- Will think strategically with us in setting priorities and implementing them.
- Is able to discern gifts and vocations, and has experience of encouraging, equipping and mentoring lay ministers.
- Is committed to engaging with local communities, organisations and schools.
- Works creatively with children and young people.
- Is committed to working ecumenically and has experience of collaborating fruitfully with ecumenical partners.
- Will continue his/her own learning and growth, and participate in ongoing training and support.

**We pray for someone to lead our church and work within our community and the schools to help build on the strong foundation in place.**

## 10. Diocesan Strategy for Mission – *God for All*



**Follow Daily**   **Care Deeply**  
**Speak Boldly**   **Tread Gently**

God for All is the ecumenical vision for our county - four partner denominations and other companion churches are working towards that bold aim.

God for All builds on the prayers, planning and work across churches in Cumbria over the past five years, emphasising mission at the heart of what we do. As part of the vision, new strategies for future ministry, outreach and buildings have been developed.

**Central to our vision are four emerging key themes: follow daily, care deeply, speak boldly, tread gently.**

### **Follow Daily**

Matthew 16.24:

*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

We will help each other to follow Jesus more closely, seeking to grow as his disciples in all aspects of life, both corporately and as individuals

### Outcomes

- To encourage growing Christian faith.

- To embed a culture of ‘whole-life discipleship’ (Monday-Saturday as well as Sunday).
- To enable people to encounter and study the Bible, and to explore its application for everyday life.
- To encourage a culture of prayer in different contexts.

### **Care Deeply**

Jeremiah 29.7

*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

We will listen to our local communities, and respond in loving service, seeking to transform injustice, challenge oppression and pursue peace & reconciliation

#### Outcomes:

- To help churches to listen to their local communities.
- To develop effective partnerships with other groups and organisations.
- To help Christians to be a prophetic voice, challenging unjust structures and systems.
- To equip Christians to be peace-makers and reconcilers in all spheres of life.

### **Speak Boldly**

Acts 4.31

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

We will share our faith in Jesus Christ in everyday ways, seeking to connect with everyone, especially those currently unrepresented in our churches. We’ll do this in both time-honoured & pioneering ways.

#### Outcomes:

- To facilitate giving everyone the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Christ.
- To equip Christians to speak naturally about their faith.
- To help Christians speak about Christian viewpoints on the important issues of today.

- To enable more connections with under-represented groups in our churches, and to plant new churches and worshipping communities.

## **Tread Gently**

Isaiah 11:9

*They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

We will strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth

### Outcomes:

- To develop a biblical understanding of the place of the natural world in God’s plans.
- To enable more sustainable ways of using our resources in our churches (including their buildings).
- To equip Christians with practical, everyday ways of living more sustainably.
- To help Christians in expressing a Christian viewpoint on environmental issues.

More information about ‘God for All’ can be found on the Diocesan website at <https://godforall.org.uk/>

## **Mission Communities**

Mission communities have been and are being created across Cumbria, all developed in support of God for All.

These are groupings of mutually supportive and collaborative churches, pioneers, fresh expressions of faith and community groups which have mission at their heart.

Often these are in ecumenical contexts, drawing on the commitments and partnerships that have flourished since 2015 between God for All’s four partner denominations – Anglican, Methodist, United Reformed and Salvation Army – and its companion denominations.

The modelling for mission communities is intentionally wide: no two are the same with local decision-making moulding how each best works within its own context.

It is for each mission community to decide upon and develop models of ministerial deployment – stipendiary/salaried, non-salaried and self-

supporting – and to hone strategic planning and areas of ministerial and missional focus.

Each has a designated mission community leader(s) with support structures in place with each Anglican Archdeacon acting as a Strategic Development Officer, drawing alongside and encouraging ministry within a mission community context.

We are developing lots of new resources to help support and encourage all of the wonderful work which is going on within our mission community setting.

More information about Mission Communities in Cumbria can found on the Diocesan website at <https://godforall.org.uk/mission-communities/>

## 11. Our Churches

Three of our churches are historic (St. Mary & St. Michaels Urswick; St. Cuthbert's Aldingham and St. Michael and Holy Angels Pennington). Holy Trinity Bardsea is a more modern building.

Two church buildings within the parish of 'Aldingham, Dendron and Rampside' (St Michael's Rampside and St Matthew's Dendron) have recently been closed due to major defects in the buildings. The congregations have migrated, in Rampside's case to village hall, and in Dendron's case to one of the remaining churches. Brief descriptions of our churches are below and more details of our four churches can be found on our website <http://churchoflowfurness.org.uk>

### **St. Mary & St. Michaels Urswick**

The oldest church building in the Benefice is St. Mary & St. Michael's Urswick (Grade 1 listed) dating back to Norman times. It has been extended and modified over the intervening centuries and thankfully remains in good order as reported in the recent Quinquennial Inspection Report. The parish comprises the villages of Urswick and Stainton, with a population of 1200 and an electoral roll of 24. The church foundation goes back more than a thousand years.



Urswick church is equipped with a modern sound system and regularly hosts concerts.

The traditional festival of Rushbearing is held in late September every year.

St. Mary & St. Michael's Urswick



St. Mary & St. Michael's church is home to some very old stained glass in the windows and a very rare three deck pulpit and ancient artefacts such as the Tunwinni Cross.



Urswick Rushbearing 2024



Sunday worship at Urswick where there is a foundation choir leading the singing



Adjacent to the church is the Parish Room (which previously served the community as a school) which is used by a number of community groups and a weekly post office and coffee morning. The parish room is equipped with an audio/visual suite.

### **St Cuthberts Church Aldingham**

The parish serves the villages of; Baycliff, Newbiggin, Leece, Rampside, Gleaston and Scales, in addition to the hamlets of Dendron and Aldingham (which includes a Nursing Home).



The church dates back to 1147, is Grade 2\* listed., and has undergone extensive restoration in the past 10 years (generously

supported by "Friends of Aldingham Church"). The fabric is good order as reported in the recent Quinquennial Inspection Report.





The church also hosts concerts.

### **Holy Trinity Bardsea**

Bardsea is a picturesque village with a population of about 650. Holy Trinity, consecrated in 1853, is in an elevated position overlooking Morecambe Bay, with spectacular views across the bay to the Fylde coast and the Pennine hills. The building is Grade II listed and in good overall condition following major repairs 27 years ago.



Bardsea church has been host to some of the Ulverston International Music Festival concerts.





Holy Trinity Bardsea  
Harvest Festival



Holy Trinity Bardsea  
at Easter

### **St. Michael and Holy Angels Pennington**

The current building (Grade 2 listed) is relatively modern 1826/7 construction but stands on an ancient site of worship with Saxon/ Viking Tympanum origins on a promontory overlooking the Furness Peninsula with far reaching views to Morecambe Bay, and beyond. The parish encompasses scattered dwellings in the farming community and the villages of Pennington, Swarthmoor and Loppergarth. The finances and buildings are in good order at present.



Pennington Church holds two services per month, currently on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month at 3pm, one of which is a Communion service.

We have two visiting ordained Methodist clergy, who help out by taking turns to hold a service. In their occasional absence a service is prepared and led by a PCC member, who is a trained leader. Many baptisms and weddings are held through the year.

We have 8 committed PCC members who meet regularly. We have an average congregation of 10 and we pray that we can regrow the congregation within the community. There is a planned housing development in the Parish, which we hope will present an opportunity for mission and spiritual growth in our church family.

Pennington C of E Primary school is in walking distance with 203 pupils currently on roll. The school holds regular services in church including Easter, Harvest, end of year service and Christmas. The school is extremely welcoming and encourages representatives from the church to visit.

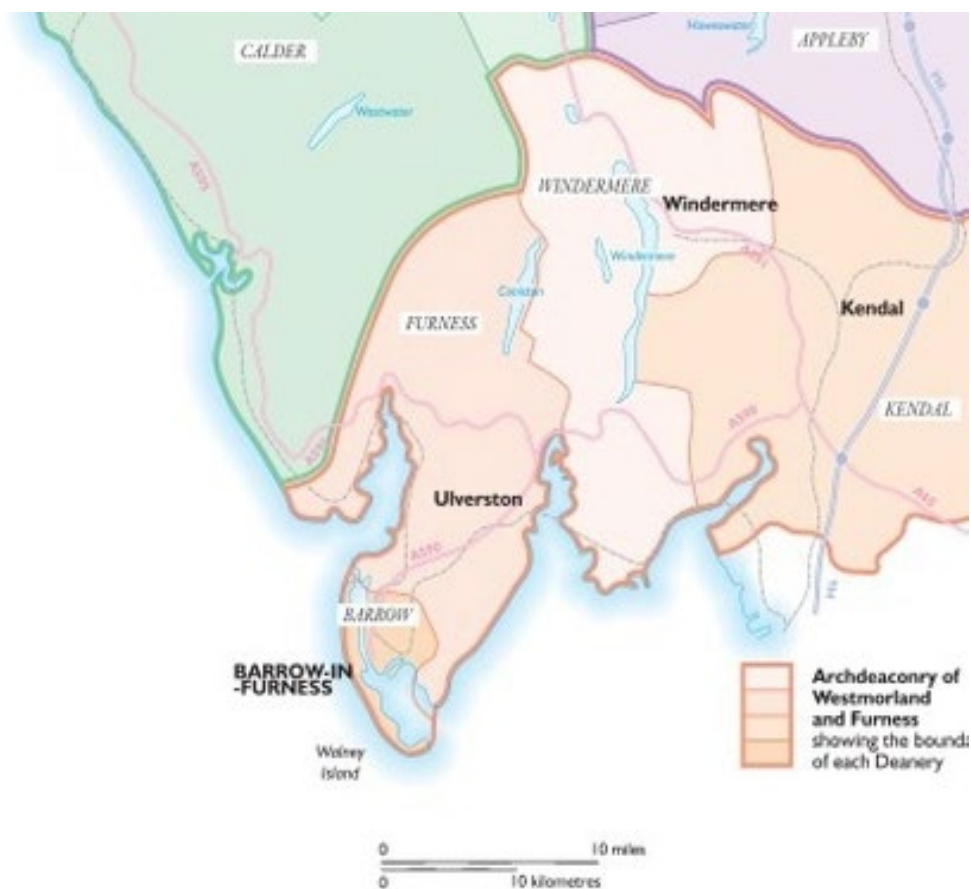
## Vicarage



Urswick Vicarage  
Church Road  
Great Urswick  
Ulverston, LA12 0TA  
Cumbria

This vicarage has most recently served the incumbents of the Benefice of Aldingham, Dendron, Rampside and Urswick and has recently been refurbished. The accommodation comprises, ground floor: 3 large reception rooms, as well as a kitchen/breakfast room, and toilet. First floor: 4 bedrooms and two bathrooms. There is a large garden to the rear and a detached garage. The vicarage is next door to Urswick Church and

the parish room in one direction and a short walk from Low Furness Church of England Primary School in the other.



### Furness Deanery

The Diocese has 3 Archdeaconries, and we are served by the Archdeaconry of Westmorland and Furness, which is subdivided into four Deaneries of which FMC is in the Furness Deanery; the other three being Barrow, Windermere and Kendal. The Diocesan administrative headquarters are situated in Penrith. The Diocese has visible, active and supportive leaders with many opportunities for lay training at various centres including Rydal Hall north of Ambleside as well as in Kendal, Windermere and Barrow.

More information about the Diocese of Carlisle can be found on the Diocesan website at <https://www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/>

## 12. Environment:



Low Furness is a community along the north shore of Morecombe bay between the two major towns of Barrow-in-Furness and Ulverston. The A590 links the peninsula to the M6. It is a scenic, rural, farming area between the two urban centres. It is in the middle of a peninsula with the Irish Sea to the west and Morecombe Bay to the east, and as a consequence its climate is relatively mild reflecting the proximity of the sea. The highest point on the peninsula is Birkrigg on Urswick Common, which is open to the public to walk on year-round and has extensive views eastwards to Ingleborough and the Yorkshire Dales, north to the mountains of the Lake District, south to the Fylde coast and the mountains of North Wales on a clear day, and west to Black Coombe and the Isle of Man. Farming is now mainly sheep and dairy, with a well-maintained upland landscape. The villages of Urswick and Leece have their own Tarns. The area is on the edge of the Lake District National Park, recently recognised as a World Heritage Site. Langdale, Coniston, Windermere and Kendal can all be reached within an hour by car.



## 13. History:

Furness has a long history of development, initially around Furness Abbey as a farming community which then had a strong arable component. The Church foundations at Urswick go back over a 1000 years - and evidence of worship in a pre-Christian era is provided by stone circles on Urswick

Common. Swarthmoor Hall is an important location in the early development of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and as well as being preserved for visitors, has a co-located conference centre. The industrial centre of Barrow-in-Furness was no more than a small hamlet on Walney Channel prior to 1840. It was developed as a new town and industrial centre on the basis of the growing demand for iron and steel consequent to the emergence of the railways. It was not until the end of the 19th century that its focus on shipbuilding began, with a particular expertise in relation to submarines. Ulverston is much older, and for many years was the principal town. In the modern era both towns are home to "Hi-Tech" industries including nuclear submarines at BAE Systems; specialist sub-sea engineering companies in Ulverston; many other light engineering firms and a large Paper Mill in Barrow. There is major investment in the shipyard and proposed marina village in Barrow which is driving investment across the Furness Peninsula.



### **Furness Abbey**

The ruins of Furness Abbey, once the second largest Cistercian abbey in England, are located on the outskirts of Barrow. Founded almost 900 years ago, Furness Abbey was once the largest and wealthiest monastery in north-west England. A place of prayer, piety and pilgrimage, the abbey was also a major landowner, its abbot occupying an important place in the administration of the region.



Today, Furness has some of the finest monastic ruins in England. Its buildings are witnesses to the lives of the monks who worshipped and lived there between the 12th and early 16th centuries.



### **The People**

The area of Low Furness is home to just over 6000 people. Employment is predominantly in the larger towns of Ulverston and Barrow, but there is a factory in Lindal which manufactures and exports candles. A significant but relatively small percentage of the population are employed in

farming, and a much larger percentage are retired (>20%), a proportion which in parts of the community outnumbers those under 18.

### **Schools**

There are two primary schools within Low Furness (both CoE), which feed into secondary schools predominantly in Ulverston (UVHS: Ulverston Victoria High School which has its own sixth form) and Dalton in Furness (Dowdales School). Apart from the sixth form at UVHS, Barrow has a sixth form college, and both have a good reputation with respect to academic attainment.

### **Health**

Both Ulverston and Dalton in Furness have large well equipped General Practices, and the Health Centre in Ulverston also offers Out-Patient facilities to the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Foundation Trust. The Trust has recently received an overall CQC rating of Good, and has facilities at Furness General Hospital in Barrow (emergency and elective), Royal Lancaster Infirmary (emergency and elective), and in Kendal.

### **Shops**

There are food supermarkets of varying size in Ulverston, Dalton and Barrow-in-Furness. Barrow also has furniture stores, hardware and electrical stores as well as some well-known retail clothing names.

### **Transport**

The main road link from the Furness Peninsula is the A590 which connects directly with the M6 and east of Ulverston has undergone significant upgrading recently. Travelling times to Kendal are about 45 minutes, Lancaster 1 hour, Manchester 2 hours, Penrith 90 minutes, Carlisle 2 hours. There is a regular train service from Barrow and Ulverston to Lancaster and Preston, with occasional through trains to Manchester. Changing at Lancaster or Preston for a west coast main line train, the total journey time to London Euston is under 4 hours.