

THE 8D ASSOCIATION

ON SHED

**The Journal of the 8D Association
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Site of Ann Street Halt in 1970

The site of Ann Street Halt looking north in July 1970. An English Electric Type 3 locomotive (D6916) can be seen passing through the site of the halt on its way to the Ford factory at Halewood with car transporter empties.

50p if Sold

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Editor

This is the second 'On Shed' and in only a few short month's our group has both grown in numbers and held two site visits both of which are reported in this edition. The Journal has been expanded to 16 pages so that even more information on our fascinating railway heritage can be included.

Starting in the autumn we will be putting on a programme of informal meetings most of which will include a talk or a slide show on railway related subjects. The programme will be published in Septembers On Shed.

So do enjoy the second edition of 'On Shed' and don't forget members are encouraged to send in material for inclusion in future editions.



An eastbound service emerges from Liverpool Road Tunnel in 1964 (N Conroy)

Membership Report

At the time of going to press the membership of the Association stood at 22 members. There has been steady growth since the Association actively began to recruit members in March 2011.

Site Visit to Halewood Triangle on Saturday 19th March 2011.

Fact File

Skelton Junction to Cressington Junction opened by CLC 1st of March 1873

Hunts Cross East Junction to Halewood North Junction and Halewood West to Halewood North and onwards to Walton-on-the-Hill Opened by CLC 3rd of December 1879. The Triangle established.

Halewood East Junction to Halewood North Junction opened by CLC in 1897. The original east side of the triangle becomes a goods line.

On the 14th of May 1967 the goods lines and sidings at Halewood Triangle close.

On the 5th of August 1968 regular traffic over the east chord ceases and it closes completely on the 28th of October 1968.

The last passenger services run to Gateacre on the 15th of April 1972. The last regular goods trains run to Huskisson in the summer months of 1975. Nothing runs after August 1975. The line is lifted in 1979.

On Saturday 19th March we had the inaugural guided walk of the 8 D Association which was carried out at Halewood Triangle. Our guide for the day was Paul Wright who had very good insight into the history of the site as he had been a Ranger on the site in the early 1990's.

We met on the car park of the visitors centre and the first thing that happened was that Paul gave us a talk about the history of the site from the maps of the day when the Triangle was in full commercial flow.

Paul explained how the origin of the Triangle was due to a need to communicate by rail with the docks to the North of Liverpool with Goods traffic and Passenger traffic.

We then set out to see the site by walking from the visitor's centre (which was closed) along the old main line trackway to see the lay-out of the line and imagine it as it would have been in its heyday as a working transfer point and major goods marshalling yard.

As we approached the convergence of the trackway we were walking and the main-line track we realised that the old main line trackway had now become the trackway for the Trans-Pennine Trail, which goes all the way from Southport to the East coast of England.

After some discussion about an old underground passageway, we turned round and started to walk along the trackway which has now become the Trans-Pennine Trail. The evidence of the trackway was difficult to see at first but we eventually came along to a line of signalling supports which were still in situ, albeit not in the best of conditions, and eventually came to a significant find in the form of an old communication bridge. These bridges were necessary because the land in the centre of the triangle was still being cultivated in spite of the railways cutting them off from normal access.



*Looking west on the 28th of March 1959 as a Manchester Central service passes the sidings that were situated adjacent to the CLC main line within the 'Halewood Triangle'.
Jim Peden*



*Just to the north of Halewood North Junction there was a public footpath that went under the line by means of a tunnel. The tunnel was filled in during the first half of the 1990s. In this view looking east in the late 1950s a 'Jinty' is seen passing over the tunnel. **Jim Peden***

As we investigated what was left of the bridge supports we became aware of a large number of pyramid structures, which Paul explained were Anti-tank devices, a remnant of the Second World War.

As we approached a trackway leading into the undergrowth Paul explained that the history of this trackway was not that ancient, being built by Ford workers who were short of work whilst their factory was being converted by Jaguar. As we continued along the trackway it suddenly rose quite sharply and Paul explained the reason for this due to access being required to a septic tank including provision of a 'ransom strip' to protect the rights of access.

We continued on to spend some time discussing the final part of the triangle and returned back to the visitors centre which was still closed, an all too frequent situation when the resources are not available to support interest in local history.

All in all this was a good visit to a site of great involvement in the commercial history of Liverpool and its place in the history of the railways in this area.

Joe Cowley

The LNWR Widnes Deviation



Looking east at the Widnes Deviation in the early 1980s. The deviation is the line that can be seen climbing up to the left of the picture. The class 08 shunter was pulling out of the Hutchinson Street Yard and onto the original lines of the 1852 Garston route.

The London & North Western Railway's (LNWR) Widnes Deviation had its origins in the take over by the LNWR of the St Helens Canal & Railway Company (SHC&RC) on the 1st of September 1864. The LNWR had been keen to absorb the SHC&RC as it had strategic lines that carried lucrative flows of goods in particular coal. However the LNWR inherited a situation at Widnes that was not ideal with regards to the easy movement of traffic. Effectively two lines crossed on the level and there were connecting spurs leading from one to the other. The lines were the original St Helens & Runcom Gap Railway, which had opened between St Helens and Widnes on the 21st of February 1833, and the line between Garston and Warrington which had opened in two stages, that between Widnes and Garston on the 1st of July 1852 and between Widnes and Warrington on the 1st of February 1853. The St Helens line ran north south and the Garston and Warrington line west to east. They crossed just to the north of Widnes Dock which was the southern terminus for goods of the 1833 line.

There was a connection that ran north from the St Helens line to west on the Garston line and a connection that ran from east on the Warrington line to south on the St Helens line. The connections allowed trains to travel directly between St Helens and Garston and between Warrington and Widnes Dock.

In close proximity to the flat crossing and connecting chords there were by the mid 1850s numerous sidings and branches into factories. By the time that the LNWR took over there was a great deal of congestion.

The solution was to build a new line running west to east that would pass over the St Helens line but at the same time have a connection to it. This would allow through trains to avoid the flat crossing.

As part of its takeover of the SC&RC the LNWR had pledged to spend £100,000 at Widnes carrying out improvements and the money was duly set aside. On the 5th of July 1865 Authorisation was given for the construction of the Widnes Deviation and work started on its construction shortly after.

On Deviation opened to traffic on the 1st of November 1869. On the 1st of March 1870 a new station was opened on the Deviation and from this date all passenger services operated over it. The original lines saw only goods services and the original Widnes Station which had been on the west side of the Waterloo Level Crossing was closed.



Widnes Number 7 Box after closure.

Looking at the Deviation from a west to east perspective it started at Widnes West Deviation Junction which was located to the west of Victoria Road and to the east of De-Sotto Bridge. The line ran for one and a half miles where it rejoined the original route to Warrington at Carterhouse Junction. From Widnes West Deviation Junction the Deviation line climbed steeply until it passed over Victoria Road. On the east side of Victoria Road was the 1870 Widnes Station. Immediately to the east of Widnes Station was the Widnes Junction. Controlled by Widnes Number 7 Signalbox which was located on the south side of the line at the east end of Widnes Stations west bound platform, a spur line turned south at the junction and dropped down at a gradient before turning towards the north where it made a connection with the 1833 St Helens line at Ann Street. The spur allowed passenger services that ran between Ditton Junction and St Helens Shaw Street to use the 1870 Widnes Station.

The Deviation line continued eastwards from Widnes Junction, it crossed over a bridge, continued for a short distance on an embankment after which it ran onto a brick built viaduct. At the eastern end of the viaduct the Deviation crossed over the St Helens line on a bridge. The rest of the line was on an embankment but there were two further bridges before the line dropped down to ground level at Carterhouse Junction. The junction at Carterhouse was controlled by a signalbox, called Carterhouse Junction which was situated on the south side of the line to the east of the actual junction.

In the space between the main line and the spur the LNWR built a Locomotive Shed which was named Widnes Shed (later to become 8D). Access to the shed for locomotives was from the St Helens line via Ann Street. To facilitate the movement of locomotives into and out of the shed from the Deviation there was a crossover line at the eastern end of Widnes Station. The shed itself initially had three roads but it would later be extended to six roads.

In the 1870s the Deviation would have been used by passenger services running between Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester London Road, along with shorter workings along that route and by the Ditton Junction and St Helens service. Through goods trains that would have outnumbered passenger services tenfold would also have used the Deviation at this time. The entire route between Garston and Skelton Junction became a major goods artery for the LNWR for services that ran east and west.

In 1879 the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway and the Midland Railway opened a joint line that became known as the Widnes Loop line that ran parallel with the Deviation for much of its length but to the north of it. The two lines were at their closest to the east of Ann Street but there was no connection between them.

In 1923 the Widnes Deviation became part of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS). The Deviation continued to perform the function for which it was built throughout the LMS years but the locomotive sheds were given a new identification code 8D. Traffic flows of note in the 1930s included Banana trains that ran from Garston Dock eastwards and coal from both the Lancashire and the Yorkshire Coalfields that ran to Garston Dock for export.

On the 1st of January 1948 the Deviation became part of the Nationalised British Railways (London Midland Region). On the 16th of June 1951 the Ditton Junction and St Helens passenger service was withdrawn but the service between Liverpool and Manchester continued to operate although some trains started and ended their journeys at Ditton Junction or at Warrington Bank Quay. An express passenger service, The York Mail which ran from Liverpool Lime Street to York, ran along the Deviation on Sunday Nights. The York Mail did not stop at Widnes Station.

On the 10th of September 1962 regular passenger services, except the York Mail, over the Deviation were withdrawn and Widnes South station was closed. It was used though for Rugby League Specials until 1965. In the early 1960s goods traffic began to decline. Widnes Locomotive Shed closed on the 16th of May 1964. The Widnes Loop which ran parallel to the Deviation closed completely on the 6th of December 1964 except for the goods yard at Tanhouse Lane which was very close to the Deviation at its eastern end. In 1961 a connection had been put in from the St Helens line to Tanhouse Lane which was the first physical link between the former LNWR system and the Widnes Loop. There was still no direct connection from the Deviation to Tanhouse yard at this time but the idea to create one would be revisited two decades later.

On the 4th of November 1968 the line from Ann Street to Widnes Dock, part of the original 1833 line, closed and in March 1969 the original route between Carterhouse Junction and Widnes West Deviation closed as a through route although lines were retained at both ends of the route at Hutchinson Street Yard to the west and between Carterhouse and the flat crossing to the east. These events meant that all traffic now ran over the Deviation and the connecting spur to the St Helens line.



*Looking west at the junction between the deviation and the yard at Tanhouse Lane in July 2005.
P Wright*

Throughout the 1970s the Deviation continued to be used by a variety of goods services. Coal from the Yorkshire pits passed along the line from Carterhouse to West Deviation Junction and from the Lancashire pits it joined the deviation at Widnes Junction having come up from the St Helens line.

Stone products came into Hutchinson Street yard from Hope and were then sent as trip workings to the Everite Works at Farnworth and Bolt and to the Blue Circle Cement works at Tanhouse Lane.

Car trains from Fords at Halewood travelled east along the line to Warrington and north via the St Helens line.

In the early 1980s British Rail decided that it could close the St Helens line as a through route. The last through trains ran in November 1981. So that Cement could still be delivered to the Blue Circle works a new connection was put in from the deviation to the sidings at Tanhouse Lane. The new connection had its junction with the deviation line to the east of the St Helens line. It was controlled by Carterhouse Junction signalbox and opened on the 18th of April 1982. The opening of the new connection allowed the remaining section of the St Helens line from Widnes Number 7 box to Widnes No 1 to close. Widnes Junction was taken out of use and Widnes Number 7 box was closed.

Traffic declined along the deviation in the 1980s especially after 1984 when a great deal of coal traffic was lost. There was an upturn in the 1990s when many coal trains from Gladstone Dock to Fiddlers Ferry Power Station were routed via the deviation. Hutchinson Street Yard closed at the end of the 1980s and with it West Deviation Box. In 2000 the Blue Circle Cement works was closed and traffic ceased. Carterhouse Box was no longer required and in 2001 it was switched out. It stood in a derelict condition until 2008. The removal of the junction into Tanhouse Lane sidings allowed it to be demolished.

Today the deviation is still open and carries a steady flow of goods services. Recent developments such as the Stobart Ports base in Widnes probably guarantee its future. **P Wright**



Carterhouse Junction looking west from the signalbox in April 1968. Les Fifoot

Appleton Station



Appleton Station as seen looking south in January 1962. The last trains had run through the station in November 1961. The line through the station had been singled at the end of 1973.
John Mann

Appleton Station first appeared in the timetable in 1852. It was opened by the St Helens Canal & Railway Company (SHC&RC) which had evolved out of the St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway company who had opened the line from St Helens to Widnes in February 1833. A number of intermediate stations appeared in the timetable of 1852 including Farnworth & Bold (Originally known as simply Farnworth), Clock Face, Sutton Oak and Peasley Cross.

The station was provided with two platforms and a single storey brick built building on the west side of the line. The building was accessed via Saddler Street which originally crossed the line to Page Line by means of a level crossing. The crossing was later removed when the Halton View Bridge was built. On the east side of the line there was a house for the Station Master.

At the time of opening train services ran from Appleton to St Helens and to Garston. There were some workings to Warrington that had to reverse at Widnes. In 1864 the LNWR took over the line and passenger services settled into a pattern which saw trains operating between Ditton Junction and St Helens calling at all stations.

In 1911 the LNWR introduced a 'Railmotor' service onto the Ditton and St Helens service. It became known as the 'Ditton Dodger'. Additional Halts were opened when the Railmotor was introduced at Ann Street and at Union Bank Farm.



Appleton Station in 1965. In the foreground is Appleton Signalbox.

The 'Ditton Dodger' service proved popular and as a result the 'Railmotor' was inadequate. It was replaced with LNWR Webb Tank Locomotives that could operate in 'Push/Pull' mode. Typically two coaches were used on the service which locals continued to call the 'Ditton Dodger'.

On the 1st of January 1923 Appleton Station became part of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway.

Excursion trains were known to run from Appleton station in the 1920s and 1930s. The nearby St Ambrose Church Sunday School made use of the station for its annual summer outing's. In the 1930s Appleton Station had thirteen trains in each direction on weekdays with some extra workings on Saturdays. During the Second World War services were cut back dramatically. Only six trains per day ran in each direction but they were concentrated in the peak hours and from 8:15 am until 4.24pm there was nothing at all to St Helens. On Saturdays a service did run in the middle of the day for shoppers. After the war the service was not improved and it came as little surprise when on the 18th of June 1951 it was withdrawn by British Railways who had taken over the line in January 1948. **Paul Wright**

Passenger Diversions on the Widnes and St Helens Line post 1952

After regular passenger services ceased to operate between Ditton Junction and St Helens Shaw Street the line did still carry passengers' right up until closure. In the 1950s and early 60s many excursions ran along the line. In the 1960s it was a popular route for railtours particularly in the last months of steam. Passenger services diverted due to engineering works also used the line and they operated right through to the 1980s. The following pictures illustrate some of the passenger workings that operated along the line.



On Sunday the 18th of January 1976 a three car Metropolitan Cammell DMU heads north across 'The Bongs' on a diverted Preston Service.

Bevan Price



*A Thomas Boulton & Sons excursion train passes through Farnworth & Bold station in 1958.
Gordon Howarth*



*Looking south towards Union Bank Farm Halt in January 1976 as a class 40 on a diverted Trans Pennine service heads north. **Bevan Price***



*A Liverpool to Newcastle service passes through the site of Clock Face station on its way north towards St Helens in the winter of 1973 hauled by a class 45 locomotive. **Bevan Price***

Widnes South Station on 2nd of January 1968



On the 2nd of January 1968 a train of coal empties heads eastwards through Widnes South Station. Hauled by a British Railways standard class 9F locomotive the train was probably heading for the Yorkshire Coalfield via Warrington Bank Quay, Stockport Tiviot Dale and the Woodhead Tunnel route. Widnes South station had closed to regular services in 1962. The signalbox seen in the picture, Widnes No 7, survived until 1982. (R Mercer)



Where is this competition? (Answers to ptw64@fsmail.net)
(Picture by G Howarth)

March Edition Winner was Colin Wright.

Events Programme

19:00 – Thursday 2nd of June 2011 – Guided walk along St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway from Farnworth and Bold to Clock Face. Meet at the Garden Centre Car Park on Mill Lane.

10:00 – Saturday 9th of July 2011 – Guided walk along the Cronton Colliery Branch. Meet at Halsnead Park.

19:00 – Thursday 18th of August 2011 – Guided walk along the St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway from Peasley Cross to Sutton Oak. Meet TBC.

10:00 – Saturday 17th of September 2011 – Guided walk looking at the Garston and Warrington Railway. Meet at Tan House Lane by Moss Bank Park.



Moore Station in the early 20th Century.