

# ON SHED

## The Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 6 Number 3 – September 2016



### Warrington Bank Quay

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 1967 ex-LMS 2-6-0 Ivatt 'MOGAL' locomotive number 46520 waits at Warrington Bank Quay station for the signal that will allow it to depart northwards. At this time the engine was allocated to Northwich shed (8E). It was withdrawn from 8E in May 1967. **Photo by Alan Robinson**

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### Editor



It has been another interesting summer for the 8D Association despite the disappointment of the two Merseyrail depot visits being cancelled at the last minute by Merseyrail Electrics. A visit to Birkenhead North depot has been re-arranged and that will now take place on Saturday 5th November 2016 and I have no doubt it will be a very interesting experience for those who are going. As will the visits to Edge Hill depot for which there are still a few places so don't delay put your name down (see back page).

One of the undoubted highlights of the summer was the Blackpool tram trip. The Association had booked a vintage 'Balloon' tram for its exclusive use and we were able to tour the entire Blackpool Tramways network with our invited guests from the Branch Line Society.

The tour provided some excellent photo opportunities and the chance to travel over lines not usually used by trams in public service.

Events such as the tram trip and the depot visits take quite a bit of organising and thanks must go to Terry Callaghan for the Blackpool Trip and to Richard Mercer for the depot visits. If members have any ideas for future trips or events, or they would like to organise something, then please let us know.

There are a couple more outdoor events and then we move onto our winter indoor programme which is always well received. We will be having a Christmas social once again which will include a railway quiz so do try to get along to that. **Paul Wright**

## **Society News**

### **The 8D Exhibition Stand**

We are still looking for someone to take on the job of co-ordinating the exhibition stand. If you would be interested in taking on this important job please contact Lee Woods on 0151 423 4555. Thank you to those members who have volunteered to assist with the exhibition your names have been noted and one we have a co-ordinator we will contact you.

### **New Members**

At the 8D Association membership is currently 71. Welcome to our latest members **Dale Davies** from St Helens and **Alan Fairweather** from Woolton.

## **News Round Up - by Chris Hollins**

### **Aggregate deliveries to Dallam**

A new aggregate terminal has been opened at Dallam Freight Terminal in Warrington. It has been opened to assist the construction industry in the north west, and is served by a twice weekly DB Cargo UK service departing Peak Forest CEMEX Sidings at 14.18, arriving Dallam at 17.21. The empty wagons return back to Peak Forest overnight departing at 01.27.

### **Alstom Halebank Factory**

Planning consent has now been given for a new railway factory at Halebank. The works will be located to the west of Ditton sidings on the south side of the main line. Railway lines will run directly into the facility that is being built by Alstom. There will also be sidings with run-a-round facilities that will benefit Stobart Ports and possibly other users.

Alstom who hope to open their new facility at Halebank in May 2017, have been awarded a £23.8 million contract by Angel Trains to repaint and complete a major facelift of the Virgin Trains Pendolino fleet. The work will commence immediately upon the opening of the facility and should be finished by December 2019, each train taking two weeks to complete.

Alstom will give a presentation to 8D members about the Halebank facility during the Edge Hill visits in September.

### **Ghost Train Extension**

On Saturday 16th of July, 2F80 the Summer Saturdays only 07.53 Chester to Runcorn service was extended to run on to Liverpool South Parkway, and call additionally at Helsby and Frodsham. Members of the North Cheshire Rail users

group travelled on the train and explained the plans for the forthcoming restoration of the Halton Curve to bi-directional traffic.

### **Ellesmere Port – Manchester Services**

It is proposed, as part of the new Northern franchise to introduce a through service from Ellesmere Port to Manchester. At present the plan is for one train a day which would start running in 2017/18. The service would be delivered by converting either of the two empty stock workings that currently operate to get DMUs into place for the limited Helsby – Ellesmere Port service. Local councillors have asked Northern to look into the possibility of the service starting from the bay platform at Hooton rather than Ellesmere Port.

### **Royal Train Visit**

On Wednesday 22nd of June, DB Cargo UK locos 67 005 and 67 006 top and tailed the Royal Train through Runcorn en-route to Liverpool Lime Street. The train was carrying the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to several engagements in Liverpool including the opening of the new Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

### **Knowsley Freight Terminal Waste Trains Begin**



*Right – One of the Knowsley – Tees Yard bin-liner trains seen near Rainford on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016.  
Photo by Bevan Price*

Movements of household waste have now begun from Knowsley Freight Terminal. The terminal is now the point to which all non-recyclable waste from the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) area (*Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St*

*Helens and Wirral*) is taken for onward transport by rail to an energy from waste power station on Teesside.

The trains are operated by DBS who have a 30 year contract to move the waste.

### **Ditton Foundry Lane Services**

The Nievenheim to Ditton Junction Foundry Lane freight service was altered during the summer. DB Cargo UK had started a second service for Novells formerly Alcan between Neuss and Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal. This working has now been combined with the Ditton service which now runs from Neuss to Ditton Junction via a stop at Daventry on its northbound journey. At Daventry curtain sided container wagons are detached and Neuss bound wagons reattached. They are then taken to Ditton for inclusion onto a southbound service. As a result of these changes the Ditton service is now running up to 6 days a week.

## The Class 502 Electric Multiple Units



***Ex-LMS Electric Multiple Unit Motor Open Brake Second number M28339M seen at Kirkdale station in the summer of 1977. Photo by Paul Wright***

On Saturday 13th August 2016 the 8D Association had a private visit to the Merseyside Transport Trust base in Burscough to see the former London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) Electric Multiple Unit which had been designed as a class 502. The unit is currently being restored by the Friends of the Class 502 group. In my younger days I spent many happy hours riding in class 502's on the what had become the Merseyrail Northern Line and it was a joy to be re-acquainted with one once again.

The 502's were an innovative design and many of their features can be found in modern rolling stock today.

The 502's were built by the LMS to run on the former Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (LYR) electrified lines that radiated out from Liverpool Exchange. By 1914 the electrified system included the Liverpool and Southport line, the Liverpool and Preston line as far as Ormskirk, the Southport and Preston line as far as Crossens and a section of the North Mersey Branch. The electric trains that ran on the LYR were a significant improvement over the steam-hauled carriages they replaced, and passengers were quick to take advantage of the higher speeds and increased frequency of the electric service.

By the late 1930s the original electric trains were looking dated. Passengers grew increasingly dissatisfied with the ageing rolling stock, leading to calls in local newspapers for new trains. The LMS set about designing a new type of train which became the class 502. In August 1939 the first batch of the new trains was delivered



to Meols Cop works for commissioning. Despite the disruption caused by the outbreak of war, all units were in service by 1941 with most of the ex-L&Y cars being withdrawn. The new units consisted of 39 3-car sets, with additional 2-car units (with a driving cab at one end only) used to strengthen the busiest workings.



***During the last weeks of Liverpool Exchange a 3-car class 502 is seen heading towards the former L&Y terminus close to the site of Great Howard Street goods station. Photo by Tony Graham.***

The new trains were built using the most advanced standards of the time. Notably, they were equipped with automatic sliding doors, controlled by the guard, instead of the manually-operated slamdoors which were still the norm elsewhere on Britain's railways. Each motor car had four 230hp motors supplied by the English Electric Company. The units had a top speed of 70mph, which was easily achieved on the gentle gradients of the Southport and Ormskirk lines. The comfortable interiors and modern interior design were in stark contrast to the elderly L&Y units they replaced. Externally the units were turned out in LMS maroon.

After nationalisation in 1948 the units were painted in a green livery of a lighter shade than was later applied to multiple unit rolling stock. The darker green was applied from the late 1950s and in the early 1960s yellow warning panels were painted onto the lower half of the cabs.

The 'Reshaping of British Railways' report (the Beeching Report) of 1963 recommended the closure of the Liverpool & Southport and the Southport and Preston lines and the de-electrification of the line up to Ormskirk (The North Mersey Branch having closed to regular electric passenger services in 1951). Local opposition meant that the Liverpool and Southport line was reprieved and the line up to Ormskirk remained electric. The Southport and Preston line was closed which resulted in the loss of the electric service to Crossens. Frequencies were reduced

and some of the off-peak Ormskirk services were often worked with just 2-car units. Some 502s were rebuilt and reformed as 2-car sets to permit this.



**Preserved class 502 number 28361 seen at Hooton station in August 1988. The unit was operating a shuttle service in conjunction with the centenary celebrations of the Lever Brothers Port Sunlight Works. Photo by Paul Wright**

From 1968 the new rail blue livery was applied to the 502's, along with the now familiar double-arrow symbol. This was followed in 1971 by the appearance of a new brand name — “Merseyrail”. This was the name used by the newly-formed Merseyside PTE for the services they jointly administered in partnership with BR. It was also the first step towards the creation of the integrated rail network that exists on Merseyside today.

Throughout the 1970s much work took place below Liverpool city centre. New tunnels were excavated to connect the ex-L&Y routes with the former Mersey Railway terminus at Liverpool Central. This new route (The “Link”) opened on 2nd May 1977. The former terminus at Exchange was closed, trains from Southport and Ormskirk now running into the new underground station built nearby at Moorfields, before continuing on to Liverpool Central.



**A route map that had been on display inside a class502. The route map dates from before 1951 and shows the North Mersey and Crossens lines.**

The final years of the 502s' careers saw them appearing on new parts of the network. From 1977 they appeared at Kirkby, working over a newly-electrified part of the Liverpool to Bolton line, while in 1978 they commenced operation on another extension to the network: the former Cheshire Lines Committee route from Liverpool Central to Garston. These routes were grouped together as Merseyrail's Northern Line. The new routes took their toll on the 502s with the 1 in 30 gradients on the Link being much steeper than anything these units had previously encountered. A test on Leeds Street Bank (where the line climbs from Moorfields to join the original route, just south of Sandhills) was carried out with a 502 accelerating from a standing start on the gradient. The motors reportedly gave off enough heat to fry an egg, and consequently an order was given that all trains must have a clear run from Moorfields.

An increased frequency of service meant that the trains were being used more intensively, with inevitable consequences for maintenance and reliability. The units were also suffering from corrosion, with some of the worst victims being scrapped early, leaving the rest of the fleet to soldier on. The beginning of the end for the 502s came in 1978, when the first class 507 unit was delivered from BREL's York works. Over the next two years the 502s were progressively withdrawn, the final examples surviving until the end of September 1980. The last run of all was a farewell tour on 4th October 1980. The 502s had notched up nearly forty years of service, and in recognition of this, a 2-car set was claimed for preservation.

A 2-car set, formed of motor car 28361 and driving trailer 29896, was earmarked for preservation by the National Railway Museum. As there was a chance that the unit could run again, it was placed on extended loan to the Steamport railway centre at Southport. The museum's own volunteers, supported by The Northwest Friends of



*Class 502 M28356 at Liverpool Exchange in the early 1950s. Photo by Keith Long*





**2222 Class 502 Driving Trailer Open Composite number M29876M is seen at the head of a Liverpool Exchange to Southport Chapel Street service in the summer of 1976. The train is seen at Liverpool Exchange during the period when only four platforms were in use. Photo by Robin Lush**

the NRM, began work on restoring the unit. Progress was slow, but by the end of 1983 the unit had been overhauled and rewired, using spare parts acquired from scrapped sets. In November 1983 the unit was taken out onto Southport carriage sidings for a trial run. With team members and NRM management looking on, a sigh of relief was breathed by all concerned when the driver applied power and the unit moved away smoothly.

In 1986, British Rail began formulating plans for the 100th anniversary of the Mersey Railway. The Steamport team was approached with a view to using the 502 as part of the celebrations. With the help of the workshops at Birkenhead North, who repainted the unit into LMS colours, the unit was ready just in time for the anniversary commemoration on 6th April 1986. The unit entered service on a special shuttle between Birkenhead North and Hoylake, making the 502 the first privately-restored EMU to work a revenue-earning train on the BR network.

The unit subsequently returned to Southport, where it remained available for enthusiast specials for several years. During this time the LMS livery was modified by the addition of yellow safety panels.

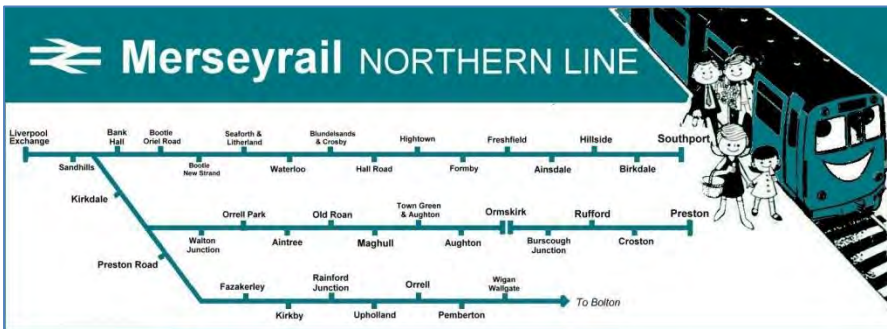
In 1989 the unit was due for an overhaul. There were no resources available at the time for this, and so the unit was retired from the main line. It remained on display to Steamport visitors until 1997, when the museum closed. Most of Steamport's exhibits moved to their new site at the Ribble Steam Railway, Preston. However there was no role there for the 502, so Steamport's loan of the unit was ended and it was returned to the National Railway Museum. There was no space at the NRM's York site for the 502, which was placed into storage at MoD Kineton.

Although Kineton was secure from vandals, there was no covered accommodation available and the 502 was open to the elements. Within a short time, the bodywork began to rust. Corrosion had been a problem throughout the life of the 502s, and only regular preventative maintenance kept the problem at bay. In open storage, with no maintenance for many years, the bodywork deteriorated severely. This situation continued for the next 11 years. The NRM, with its limited resources, had to focus on rolling stock of more general interest than the 502, and the unit continued to deteriorate.

From time to time preservation groups expressed an interest in taking on the unit, however all these proposals came to nothing. In 2008, matters came to a head, as the management at MoD Kineton gave notice to the museum to remove the 502 from the site. There was a very real possibility that the unit could be scrapped.

In 2007 a group of railway enthusiasts came together and following a meeting at the East Lancashire Railway on 24th November 2007 the Friends of the 502 Group was assembled. This proved to be fortuitous timing, as the management at Kineton gave the NRM notice to quit the site, and a new home for the unit was needed as a matter of urgency. Following a meeting with the NRM in July 2008, it was agreed that the two 502 vehicles would be placed on loan to the group.

The next task was to find a new home for the unit. This proved more difficult than anticipated. The group approached Network Rail with a plan to use the former Merseyrail depot at Hall Road. However, a visit to the disused building quickly revealed that the building was in too poor a condition to be used (indeed, it was subsequently condemned and demolished).



***A rather stylised class 502 shown on a route map of the Merseyrail Northern Lines as they were in 1976. The map was displayed inside class 502s and makes for an interesting comparison with the present day system which has expanded considerably. Perhaps if the 502 in this view knew that it was living out its last days it may not have been so happy.***

On 28 and 29 May 2009, the unit was moved by low-loader to Tebay, with the NRM paying the costs of the move. At Tebay, the unit attracted a great deal of interest, both from local residents (prompting the Westmorland Gazette to run an article) and rail enthusiasts who could see the two carriages from trains passing on the adjacent West Coast Main Line.

An initial inspection of the unit revealed the scale of the task ahead of us. The bodysides were affected by severe corrosion, in particular around all window frames,

and the cab end of trailer car 29896, in particular, was in extremely poor condition. Work on the unit took place on average once per month, with work parties travelling to Tebay. Progress was slow, as a sizeable portion of each work day was spent removing tarpaulins and gaining access to the unit, then making everything secure again at the end of the day. We were also hampered by poor weather and occasional acts of vandalism.

In October 2011, the National Railway Museum officially handed the unit over to the Friends of the 502 Group. The unit remained at Tebay until March 2012, when the land on which the unit stood was let to a commercial organisation. The unit therefore found itself homeless once again. It was at that point that a home was found for it at the Merseyside Transport Trust and it moved there over the weekend of 3rd-4th March 2012.

At Burscough, the 502 is now in secure, undercover storage for the first time in nearly two decades and it close to the network on which it once worked. It will be many years before the unit is restored to its former glory but at the time of the 8D visit the progress that has been made in the last few years was clear for all to see.

**Paul Wright**



*The inside of driving trailer M29896M seen during a visit of the 8D Association to the Merseyside Transport Trust headquarters at Burscough on 13 August 2016. The coach is now safe and protected from the weather which has allowed the Friends of the Class 502 Group to make good progress on its restoration. The NRM chose M29896M and M28361M for preservation after staff at Kirkdale depot suggested it was the best of the final units to come out of service. It was also one of the last units to go through a full overhaul at Horwich works. Photo by Paul Wright*

## Memories of Birkenhead Mollington Street – Part 3



**Left: A Bidston to Shotton iron ore train is seen rounding the west curve of the Bidston triangle on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 1964. Bidston station can be seen in the distance. Photo by alan Robinson**

I will start this article where I left off in Part 2 with a few more comments about driver Jan Quartermaine who sadly passed away in October 2015. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the Liverpool Divisional Civil Engineer was short of permanent way staff and, as a result, he asked for volunteers for able bodied staff from any department to work Saturday night/Sunday shifts on the permanent way.

This work was effectively shovelling ballast and the rate of pay from 00.01 until 23.59 on a Sunday was paid at the standard `time

and three quarters` rate. There were a number of Birkenhead Mollington Street drivers who volunteered for this work and continued doing it for many years until it ceased in the late 1970s. They would be paid twelve hours at a railman`s rate of pay – earning about as much as they would do for a `standard` eight hour Sunday driving turn.

Jan Quartermaine was one such driver who volunteered for permanent way work when he was not driving trains on a Sunday. He was nicknamed `Time and Three Quartermaine`!

Jan lived in Ainsdale and a lot of the permanent way maintenance and renewal work took place in the Halton/Frodsham and Wirral areas – with the former Great Central line between Bidston and Shotwick/Dee Marsh being a location which required a great deal of maintenance and renewal. This was as a result of the constant `wear and tear` of the permanent way by the Bidston Dock (North Side) to Shotwick iron ore services using this route. These services had a gross laden weight of some 1000 tonnes and were all loose-coupled.

Jan would be given his instructions on a Friday, along with any other driver who volunteered to work, for the coming Sunday.





**On 19<sup>th</sup> July 1967 class 9F locomotive 92046 is seen heading north through Upton station en-route to Bidston Dock with iron ore empties. Photo by George Dufton**

Whilst a few drivers had motor cars, Jan did not drive and would often ride his bicycle from Ainsdale to the site of work, which could be anywhere from West Kirby to Halton Tunnel – and most places in between! As I said in Part Two, he rode his bicycle on one occasion from Ainsdale to Halton Tunnel only to find that the job he had volunteered to work on was cancelled.

He then rode back to Ainsdale – *a round trip distance of some 60 miles.....*

Fortunately for Jan the *`Assistant Permanent Way Inspector`* of the volunteer drivers, Alan Corfield, would ensure he was paid eight hours for making the effort. Quite right too!

The furthest he rode his bike, to the best of my knowledge, was from Ainsdale to Guilden Sutton, just outside Chester, on the Chester to Mickle Trafford and Helsby line. Jan was a *`gentle giant`* who was as strong as the proverbial Ox – hardly surprising given all that mileage he rode on his bike! He was a real character and news of his sudden passing at the age of 66 in October 2015 was a shock to all who knew him.

The *`Assistant Permanent Way Inspector`* Alan Corfield was a remarkable individual and a great friend of over 40 years. Alan was one of the first driver volunteers to work on the permanent way from Birkenhead Mollington Street and worked almost every Sunday for nearly ten years. As a result of this, he became indispensable to the Hooton Permanent Way Inspector, Jimmy Davies, who gave him the honorary title of *`Assistant Permanent Way Inspector`*.



Alan would arrange the number of volunteer drivers required for the various permanent way jobs on a Friday prior to the Sunday required – and then make all the arrangements with Jimmy Davies. He was a truly superb organiser.

Alan Corfield's pedigree as a footplater was second to none. He started his railway career in 1944 at Edge Hill, as a labourer and engine cleaner at the Shed but volunteering as a labourer working on the foundations of the current Lime Street Signal Box for a few weeks – because a labourer earned 6d more than an engine cleaner, which is two and a half pence in today's money – he was always frugal!

He worked his way through the links at Edge Hill and was firing in the Top Link on all the *'double trip'* jobs at the Shed. He would work to London from Lime Street with a Stanier *'Duchess'* or *'Princess Royal'* Pacific, *'Royal Scot'* or *'Jubilee'* on the top named expresses of the day from Lime Street, such as The Red Rose, The Merseyside Express, The Manxman, The Shamrock and the Empress Voyager.

Empress Voyager would depart from Liverpool Riverside Station and the *'big engine'* would attach at Edge Hill for the journey to London Euston.

Upon arrival at Camden *'barracks'*, where he would lodge with his driver until working back to Liverpool the following day, he would wash and clean up –and then go train spotting. The two *'local'* depots he would visit were Willesden and Old Oak Common – all this after shovelling seven tons of coal on a three and a half hour journey from Liverpool!

Both of these depots were effectively connected by a short walk along the Grand Union Canal.

Alan came to Birkenhead Mollington Street for his job as a driver in 1964. It was there that I met him and he became a life-long friend and the finest railwayman I have ever had to pleasure to work with.

He gave me one piece of advice which I never forgot...

He told me to always try and make an hour's overtime a day and this would pay the full tax on the weekly earnings – and thus be able to pick up the full basic rate of pay – I always did my best with that advice!!

He became a Footplate Inspector in 1982 and continued in that role until retirement in 1994, after fifty years of sterling railway service.

There is a book, now long out of print, by Model and Allied Publications Limited, published in 1973 entitled *'The LMS Duchesses'*. A run is tabulated in that publication of a 07:55 London Euston to Liverpool Lime Street service in 1957 with Stanier *'Duchess'* Pacific No.46229 *'Duchess of Hamilton'* with Edge Hill driver Bert Aitchison and Fireman Alan Corfield in charge. This was an astonishing run and when I first read about this I asked Alan what he remembered about it. His reply was quite typical of him "A truly magnificent locomotive, a magnificent driver...a magnificent fireman – oh, and the coal wasn't too bad either?"

Alan Corfield was indeed a remarkable character – and a great railwayman. It was a privilege for me to have known him and to have worked with him.



**Birkenhead Mollington Street depot seen in the 1970s. Photo by Ted Baxendale**

There were several other 'Top Link' Edge Hill men who transferred to Birkenhead Mollington Street for their jobs as drivers in 1964, as well. There was John Kay, Tommy Roberts, Syd Lomax, Ken Davies and Don Buckley. All of these men were top class railwaymen and brought a wealth of route knowledge to Birkenhead which included Carlisle, Leeds and London.

There was one job, in particular, at Birkenhead which became a good job because of these men. It was the Hooton to Bathgate car train from the nearby Vauxhall car plant. Birkenhead men only normally worked this train from Hooton to Warrington and were then relieved and travelled back.

However, the arrival of the ex-Edge Hill men changed all that and this train was then worked to Carlisle – when this train ran, the depot Roster Clerk would inevitably roster an ex-Edge Hill driver so it could be worked forward to Carlisle. A big increase in productivity...

There was a code used by Control Offices in the 1960s and 1970s to indicate that relief was required by both driver and guard at a specific location and this was known as '*Eager and Alert*'. '*Eager*' for the driver as he was just that for his relief (*but only if he didn't want to work any overtime!*) and '*Alert*' for the Guard, because he certainly wasn't!!

The Train Crew Supervisor at Mollington Street took great delight in advising the Lime Street Control Office that both driver and guard on the Hooton to Bathgate car train were NOT '*Eager and Alert*' at Warrington but were '*Eager and Alert*' at Carlisle!

\*I was with driver Ken Davies one Saturday morning in 1971 and we had to take a locomotive '*light engine*' to Crewe and await the arrival of an empty tank train from Salfords (near Gatwick Airport) for Stanlow. We stood in the loop at Crewe South for



**One of Birkenhead Mollington Street depots 03 shunting locomotives seen at Duke Street in the Birkenhead docks complex on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1983. Photo by Kev Smith**

*the* about an hour, awaiting the arrival of the tank train, when the signalman told us that the train was being left at Willesden as there was no forward locomotive available to work it forward to Crewe.

Driver Davies promptly told the Crewe South Junction signalman that he knew the road to Willesden so off we went, via Crewe station, to Willesden *‘light engine’* and worked the train back to Stanlow. We were on duty for 13 hours – a nice little earner!

I often thought afterwards about the Crewe South Junction signalman...he must have wondered just how a Birkenhead Mollington Street driver knew the route from Crewe to Willesden, particularly since Birkenhead men did not work south of Crewe – only towards Etruria and Stoke on Trent! Ken, of course, was an ex-Edge Hill man...

When drivers were being trained on diesel traction at Mollington Street, the *‘basic’* locomotive was the English Electric Type 4, later known as the Class 40. Basic training on this type of locomotive was undertaken at Wigan Springs Branch diesel training school, which I myself attended. We were trained by maintenance staff at Wigan, which I thought was excellent.

Once this training was completed and a driver was *‘passed as competent’* to drive it by the local Footplate Inspector, further training on traction such as a Brush Sulzer Type 4 (Class 47), Brush Type 2 (Class 24/25) and 350hp shunting locomotive (Class 08) was undertaken.

With the exception of the 350hp shunting locomotive, a *‘conversion’* course was given from the basic traction, the English Electric Type 4 (Class 40) to the other types and it usually involved a week’s training on each type.

A driver was then *`passed as competent`* to drive these types, as well, by the Footplate Inspector

The 350hp shunting locomotive training was given *`on the job`*, which meant that a Mollington Street driver who was training on this type went with a regular Ellesmere Port driver for one week and familiarised himself with the locomotive. I was with one particular driver who was quite useless – when I opened up the side doors on the bodyside to have a look in the engine compartment he was very surprised to see it had an engine!

There were three regular shunt drivers at Ellesmere Port during my time at Mollington Street. These drivers were restricted to local shunt working only, normally because of a medical restriction and they only worked within the Ellesmere Port area. They were paid exactly the same rate as a main line driver, which I always thought was fair because the biggest fear of any driver, at that time, was having a yearly medical and then being found with an ailment which could lead to a loss of his job, such as failing eyesight or deafness.

These men were known as *`green card`* men, which got the name from placing a green card on a railway wagon when a defect was found that didn't stop it from remaining in service but needed attention as soon as possible!

We had one driver at Mollington Street, Arthur Downes, who was totally deaf – and wore a hearing aid the size of an old transistor radio...long before hearing aids were allowed!

Arthur was confined to shed duties at Mollington Street and had been since 1954, when he came off the main line, until he retired in 1982. How this was never picked up managerially was quite amazing – our depot boss Jack Barford turned a *`blind eye`* to this so Arthur was very lucky to have such a boss as Jack.

Not to mention a sympathetic ASLE&F trade union branch secretary as well, who was also part of the *`cunning arrangements`*!

When I became a deputy Train Crew Supervisor at Mollington Street in 1975 one of the funniest things I did with Arthur was to keep him away from the depot for a day whilst the London Midland Region General Manager paid us a *`royal`* visit. I told him to stay at home and I did any shed shunting that was required. The General Manager never asked me why I was always disappearing from the office when he was there!

Arthur used to play chess against himself very regularly in what was known as the *`Bank Head`* cabin, opposite Number 5 road, at Mollington Street – and regularly lost to himself!

He was the depot's watch and clock repairer – he had plenty of time to carry out this work – and was very good indeed. Everybody at Mollington Street brought their watches and clocks to Arthur – he couldn't understand a word that was being spoken so it was easier to write down the problem with the watch or clock...and leave it with him. That was fine until he started to mix up the written repair instructions!

Arthur came from a railway family, his Father being a driver at Knighton, on the Central Wales Line. He himself lived in lodgings near Mollington Street during the



**Looking east from Stanlow & Thornton station on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1976. Standing in the sidings is an oil tank train headed by two class 25 locomotives. Photo by David Rapston**

week and returned home to Knighton at weekends. I used to shout loudly when I spoke to him – until I realised he could lip read.!

As I said in Part 1 of these articles, the work we had at Birkenhead was not spectacular but regular. An interesting job operationally was the Whittington tanks from Stanlow. The booking on time for this job was 13:00 and the departure from Stanlow Oil Refinery Fuel Rack was 14:15.

What made it special was the shunting which had to be done before finally marshalling the train at Whittington Sidings. Whittington is located between Gobowen and Shrewsbury on the former Birkenhead Woodside to Paddington main line. The fuel terminal remains open today but is no longer rail served. The fuel now arrives by pipeline. Upon departure from Stanlow the train would proceed to Hooton where it would `reverse`. It would then then depart for Whittington via Mollington, Chester and Wrexham.

The train would travel over Gresford Bank, near Wrexham, and then make a special stop at Gobowen South to pick up the signalman, who had `switched out` Gobowen South Signal Box prior to the arrival of the train. The signalman would travel in the cab with the driver until arrival of the train at Houghton Sidings, between Gobowen and Shrewsbury.

The train would be brought to a stand by the driver at the Houghton Sidings up home signal and the signalman would alight and `switch in` Haughton Sidings signal box. Special signal box instructions allowed this to take place with a train already `in the section`.

Once this was done, the signal for the up loop at Haughton Sidings was `cleared`



and the train would then proceed into the up loop – and the locomotive was then detached and went forward out onto the up main line.

With the signalman's permission, the locomotive was then driven *wrong line* in the down direction over the up main until it was standing at the up home signal once again. The signalman then authorised the locomotive to move forward back into the up loop – and recouple to the train.

When this was done, a brake continuity test was carried out and the locomotive propelled the train out from the up loop to the up main line and then through a crossover between the up main line and the down main line...and then stop outside Haughton Sidings Signal Box.

The signalman would then *switch out* Haughton Sidings Signal Box, as per his special signal box instructions, and with the down section signal having been cleared as part of this special arrangement the train would then proceed forward to Whittington Sidings.

Upon arrival at Whittington Sidings, the travelling Gobowen South signalman would then alight from the locomotive and operate the small Ground Frame at Whittington to allow the train to set back into the sidings – the *release* for the Whittington Ground Frame being given by the signalman at Whittington Low Level Signal Box.

Once the points were set for the movement by the operation of Whittington Ground Frame the guard would then take over and oversee the shunting movement into the sidings.

The loaded train was then berthed in Whittington Sidings.



**A busy scene at Mollington Street in the 1960s. Photo by H J Parker**

Any discharged tank wagons were then picked up by carrying out another shunting movement and, following a brake continuity test, the empty train then departed for Weston Rhyn, dropping off the Gobowen South signalman at Gobowen South Signal Box, who would then `switch in` again, after departure of the tank train, and continue with his duties!

The train would then be signalled into the down sidings at Weston Rhyn for the driver to have his personal needs break (PNB) for twenty minutes.

Upon completion of this, the driver would then take the train forward to Hooton via Wrexham, Chester and Mollington and following a `reverse` movement at Hooton, then return to Stanlow – some six hours after departure earlier in the day.

I always enjoyed doing this job because of the amount of very interesting train work which was involved in it.

The job itself was subsequently lost at Mollington Street and, for a short time, the train for Whittington came from the BP oil refinery at Llandarcy near Swansea in South Wales, until that itself ceased. Llandarcy oil refinery itself has now been closed and the site cleared.

The service to Whittington Sidings from Stanlow ran three days a week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.



***A line up of English Electric Type 4 (Class 40) locomotives seen at Birkenhead Mollington Street on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1981. Photo by John Mahon***

On a Tuesday and Thursday the train ran to Aberystwyth and Birkenhead Mollington Street men worked it to Shrewsbury.

**To be continued... Denis Flood**

**The 8D Blackpool Tram Trip**



*8D Association and Branch Line Society members line up in front of Blackpool Tramways vintage 'Balloon' tram number 723 at Talbot Road Depot on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016. Photo by Tony Foster*



*'Balloon' car 723 at Fleetwood during one of the photo stops. Photo by Paul Wright*

## From the Archive



*A view looking east away from Northwich station on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1964. Photo by Alan Robinson*



*Widnes Number 6 signal box looking east from the Waterloo Crossing footbridge in the early 1960s. Widnes Number 6 was located on the original course of the Garston and Warrington railway which had opened at this point on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1852. The original Widnes station (opened as Runcorn Gap) was directly behind the photographer. It was replaced on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1870 by a new facility on the Deviation line. The original line through Widnes was then downgraded to a goods route. The section of line seen in this view closed on 10 March 1969.*



# Where is This Competition



'Where is this' competition? (Answers to [pwright964@btinternet.com](mailto:pwright964@btinternet.com))

Photo by Alan Robinson.

The December competition was correctly guessed by Jim Mackenzie. The location was Winwick Quay.

UP TRAINS.		WEEK DAYS.						SUNDAYS.		
Leave	Arrive	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Liverpool, Lime-street...		7 0	8 45	11 35	3 0	5 15	7 15	8 50	2 15	5 30
Mossley Hill .....		7 18	8 0	11 50	3 15	5 28	7 30	9 5	2 30	6 45
Allerton for Garston ...		7 25	8 9	11 55	3 17	5 32	7 35	9 10	2 35	6 50
Speke .....		7 30	8 10	12 0	3 20	5 35	7 40	9 15	2 40	6 55
Runcorn Gap .....		7 45	8 25	12 15	3 35	5 50	7 55	9 30	2 47	7 10
Warrington, Arpley .....		8 5	8 50	12 27	3 46	6 13	8 15	9 50	3 07	7 20
London-road, Manchester		8 10	11 0	1 38	5 8	7 18	9 20	10 54	3 20	8 40

DOWN TRAINS.		WEEK DAYS.						SUNDAYS.		
Leave	Arrive	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
London-road, Manchester		8 0	11 0	1 55	4 25	6 0	8 0	1 25	4 25	6 25
Warrington, Arpley .....		7 25	8 0	11 58	2 59	5 25	6 55	9 5	2 28	7 28
Runcorn Gap .....		7 45	8 25	12 20	3 25	5 50	7 30	9 30	2 50	7 50
Speke .....		8 1	8 40	12 26	3 31	5 56	7 36	9 45	2 53	8 5
Allerton for Garston .....		8 3	8 6	12 28	3 33	5 58	7 38	9 50	3 10	8 10
Mossley Hill .....		8 10	8 36	12 45	3 50	6 15	7 45	9 55	3 15	8 15
Liverpool, Lime-street...		8 25	10 5	1 0	3 6	5 30	8 0	10 10	3 30	8 30

**LIVERPOOL to RUNCORN GAP, WARRINGTON, AND MACHES-TER.**  
All Trains are First, Second, and Third Class.

**MANCHESTER, WARRINGTON, RUNCORN GAP, &c., TO LIVERPOOL.**

**LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.**  
**OPENING OF THE BRANCH LINE FROM EDGE-HILL TO GARSTON.**

The Public is respectfully informed that the NEW BRANCH LINE from EDGE-HILL TO GARSTON will be OPENED for PASSENGER TRAFFIC on MONDAY NEXT, THE 15TH INSTANT, after which time the Trains for WARRINGTON, RUNCORN GAP, &c., will be despatched from LIME-STREET STATION, Liverpool. The Trains will run as follow:—

For Fares, Arrivals, and Departures at the Intermediate Stations see published Time Bill.  
NOTICE.—The Omnibuses now plying between Garston and Liverpool will discontinue to run on and after Sunday, the 14th February, and the Booking Offices at Bramworth-street, Liverpool, and the Old Station at Garston, will be closed for Passenger Traffic.  
February 10, 1884.



## Events Programme

**10:00 – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016 – North Liverpool Goods Stations Walk** – Paul Wright will lead a walk in the north Liverpool docks which will explore the sites of Bankfield, Canada Dock and Sandon & Canada goods stations. Along the way other points of railway interest will be seen including remnants of the MD&HB lines. **Meet outside the entrance to Bank Hall station which is on the Merseyrail Liverpool – Southport line. Direct services from Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool Central.**

**08.30 – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016 – Visit to Ribble Steam Railway** – The Association will be visiting the Ribble Steam Railway and having a trips on the Waggon Maschinenbau rail bus of Donauwoerth, Germany which was built for British Railways in 1958. There will be a cost which will depend on how many members attend. If twenty members go the cost will be £5.00. A bargain for unlimited rides on the railbus. Contact Paul Wright on Email [pwright964@btinternet.com](mailto:pwright964@btinternet.com) or telephone 0151 630 5132.

**13:00 – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 – Visit to Alstom Train Care Depot at Edge Hill.** There are a couple of places left on each tour so if you would like to go **contact Richard Mercer on 0151 378 9908.**

**19:00 – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 – Liverpool Exchange – An Illustrated History** – An illustrated talk by Paul Wright in which he will explain the interesting and complex history of this fascinating Liverpool terminus station. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

**10.00 – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – Visit to Birkenhead North TMD** – A rare opportunity to visit the Merseyrail Electrics depot at Birkenhead North. The numbers are limited to 20 and those that have been booked onto the tour have been informed. **Meet at the entrance to the Birkenhead North station car park. There is plenty of secure parking available at Birkenhead North station as it is a park and ride facility. Alternatively take the train to Birkenhead North station.**

**19:00 – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016 – 8D Association Social Evening and Quiz Night** – Back by popular demand members will once again be given the opportunity to test their railway knowledge in a group quiz. Food will be laid on and there will be a bar. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

**19:00 – Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 - The Four-Masted Full-Rigged Ship Liverpool** - The age of the sailing ship overlapped the introduction of steam ships by approximately a century. The Liverpool was one of the later sailing vessels designed and built to remain competitive with the increasingly-economical steamers well into the 20th century. An illustrated talk by David White. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

**10:00 – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – The 8D Association AGM** – The groups AGM which will be followed by an illustrated talk and a buffet. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

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