

# ON SHED

## The Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 6 Number 4 – December 2016



### Norton Station

Norton station looking north-east around 1910. The station had a reputation for fine floral displays and in this view the Station Master is seen standing proudly before his efforts on the barrow crossing. Norton station was situated on the Birkenhead Joint Railway (GWR/LNWR) and closed completely on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1952.

# The Journal of the 8D Association

## Volume 6 Number 4 December 2016

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### Editor



*Left: Knotty Ash station in 1960 the last year that passenger services operated. Photo by Norman Daley*

Once again, it's time to wish you all Seasons Greetings, and as we prepare to enter into the seventh year of the 8D Association it is a good time to reflect on the year that has just passed.

This year's programme of events has been both varied and interesting. Two depots (*Edge Hill and Birkenhead North*) the Widnes – Runcorn Railway bridge and the world's first main line railway tunnel (*Wapping*) have all been visited by the association. We visited the Winwick Hospital Branch, another section of the St Helens – Rainford line, goods depots of the Liverpool Waterfront and the Hooton – West Kirby line. We even organised a tram trip up at Blackpool, and with the programme of interesting illustrated talks, it is fair to say there was something for everyone.

We want to keep members interested, so if you have any ideas or suggestions for activities that you would like to see in the programme then please do send them in.

Last year we held a quiz night and it proved to be very popular with those who attended. So we have repeated it this year and I would urge you to attend if you can on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The quiz will be held at the Select Security Stadium in Widnes and it should be every bit as good as last years. **Paul Wright**

## Society News

### The 8D Exhibition Stand at the Vintage Rally

A big thank you must go to Richard Mercer and Chris Hollins for the sterling work that they did manning the 8D Association stand at the annual Vintage Rally in Victoria Park, Widnes on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Thanks also to Lee Woods who assisted in setting up the display.

### The 8D Association AGM 2017

The 2017 AGM will take place at the Select Security Stadium on Saturday 28th January 2017 at 10.00. The AGM will follow the usual format with the associations business being conducted first followed by a guest speaker and then a buffet.

If there are any members who would like to stand for any of the committee posts please send your nomination to the Secretary at [the\\_8d\\_association@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:the_8d_association@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone Paul Wright on 0151 630 5132.



*8D Association members at the Ribble Steam Railway on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Members were treated to a guided tour of the railway and a train ride along the full length of their line. Photo by Tony Foster*

### New Members

At the 8D Association membership is currently 74. Welcome to our latest members **Phil Grahamale** from Knaresborough, **Ed Graham** from Liverpool and **Trevor Powell Fairweather** from Rushden, Northamptonshire.

# Members Photographic Competition

Members are invited to submit their digital photographs (*or their scanned pre-digital images*) as entries in the first

8D photographic competition.

**What to photograph:** Send up to 6 of your digital photographs or scanned images (in colour or b/w) of rail related subjects (see 'Categories' below) and you could win a selection of railway books.

## Categories

- (i) Rolling stock
- (ii) People and places
- (iii) 8D Area
- (iv) Pre-digital photographs (please scan and send as JPEG)

Note: Individual images can be entered in one category only.

## How to enter

Send each photograph separately as a JPEG file (less than 2MB please!) by email to 8D committee member Tony Foster at [tony.r.foster@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.r.foster@btinternet.com)

All emails received will be acknowledged. Tony will not be entering the competition, and has undertaken to ensure that each entry is submitted anonymously to the competition judge - an acknowledged expert in railway photography.

## 'Rules of Engagement'

- (1) The original photograph must have been taken by you
- (2) Each entry must be sent as an attachment to an email incorporating : -
  - (i) *the name of the photographer / entrant*
  - (ii) *title of photograph (e.g. 'Fifteen Guinea Special')*
  - (iii) *location and date taken (where known)*
  - (iv) *the category in which you wish to have the image entered*
- (3) All entries must be received by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 1st March 2017

**Copyright:** Copyright of all images will rest with their respective photographer. The 8D Society reserves the right to publish submitted images in '**On Shed**' - the Society's journal. In addition, it is hoped that there will be sufficient entries to merit a special showing of all images at a separate event.

**Results:** Results will be announced in the June 2017 edition of 'On Shed'.

# Photographic Competition

For further details, contact Tony Foster at



**8D Area** : 'Steam at Newton' : NLW 2013



**Pre-Digital** : 'NW Gas' 1974



**Stock** : 'End of the Road' : Ribble 2016



**8 D Area** : 'Princess at St Helens' 2011



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

### **Alstom Halebank Factory work continues**

Construction work continues apace on the new Alstom technology centre at Halebank, due to be opened in May of next year. Network Rail staff have been seen in Ditton Yard, assessing what modifications need to be made to the layout for the running lines to be connected to the new facility. Alstom representatives will be making a presentation to members about the new facility on 3 December 2016 (see events page).

The planned repainting of the Virgin Trains Pendolino fleet, due to commence in May 2017, will see the initial sets turned out in plain Grey livery with no Virgin branding. This is being done, because repainting will end after the awarding of the next West Coast Franchise which may be to a new operator.

### **Fourth track for Huyton**

Work has started at Huyton preparing the layout for the installation of the fourth line between Roby and Huyton Junction. Part of the land required for the fourth track is within the boundary of the bus interchange which has required it to be temporarily closed until further notice. Passengers transferring from train to bus now have to use temporary stops on an adjacent road.

### **Fiddlers Ferry Latest**



***The 4E10 09:51 Fiddlers Ferry Power Station to Ferrybridge Power Station empty coal train is seen passing through Daresbury. Its point of origin can be seen in the background. Photo by Doug Birmingham***

With Winter approaching and Fiddlers Ferry Power Station being given a two year reprieve, as a supplementary power supplier to the National Grid, coal trains have once again started running on the Low Level line.

Two trains each weekday are operating from the closed Ferrybridge C Power Station to Fiddlers Ferry moving the 1 million tons of coal which was stockpiled at Ferrybridge when it closed. Freightliner Heavy Haul are providing the traction, with trains mostly being routed via the Calder Valley line, Stockport and the CLC route to Hartford Junction before reaching Latchford Sidings to reverse.

West of Fiddlers Ferry at present there is no revenue earning traffic on the Low Level line just a series of light engine movements between Arpley Yard, Ditton

Junction and Halewood. However, on Saturday the 14th of January 2017, the line is due to be traversed once again by a passenger train. This will be the Pathfinder Tours "The Mersey Weaver 2" rail tour which will be starting out from Westbury.

The train will also cover the Halton Curve, Garston Freightliner Terminal Sidings and the new sand siding at Elton.

### **Knowsley Bin liners**



***On 25 October 2016 6E26 the Knowsley to Wilton domestic waste train is seen approaching Maggots Nook Farm bridge Rainford. At the head of the train is class 66 locomotive number 66 092. Photo by Doug Birmingham***

With the new energy from waste power station at Wilton on Teesside now operating at full capacity, the household waste trains from Knowsley Freight Terminal have increased to two each weekday. The services run at 07.20 and 23.10 from Wilton, returning at 10.50 and 18.52 from Knowsley.

This increase in traffic on the Wigan – Kirkby line (*the former L Y R main line between Liverpool Exchange and Bolton*) has required the signal box at Rainford Junction to be opened slightly earlier in the morning and to stay open until later in the evening. For several years before the introduction of the waste trains the line had been frequented only by the DMU's that operate the Kirkby and Wigan service.

One of the waste train services each way is now both the first and the last train of the day on the branch.

The waste comes from the six local Councils that make up the Mersey Waste Disposal Authority (Halton, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

The Liverpool City Region Strategic Authority, through its transport arm Merseytravel, has aspirations to electrify the route so that the Liverpool Central – Kirby service can be extended to run to Wigan. It may well be that this line has a brighter future ahead of it after suffering a 40 year period of decline.

### **Class 40 hauls rail tour through 8D area**

On Friday the 30th of September 2016 preserved Class 40 diesel electric locomotive number 345 made a visit to the area hauling the stock of the following days Bury to Stratford-Upon-Avon rail tour.

The Carriages which had been brought down from Bo'ness to Carnforth were then hauled by the Class 40 as a passenger train from Carnforth to Bury, via Wigan, Manchester, Buxton, Cheadle Heath, Altrincham and the CLC route to Hartford Junction before a quick thrash to Warrington Bank Quay.

Several 8D members where on the train and got off at Warrington Bank Quay, which was shown as an operational stop only! The Locomotive then took the train on to Bury via Newton-Le-Willows, Manchester Victoria and Castleton. West Coast Railways class 57 number 57 313 was attached on the rear of the train, providing power for the heat and electricity, as well as assisting in the reversing move at Buxton.

### **More class 319 Units**

Several more Class 319 electric multiple units are in the process of being transferred to Northern Rail for use in our area. 319.218 and 319.219 have already arrived at Allerton in Thameslink livery, while 319.004/5, 319.436/42/48/56 are on there way to Wolverton Works for refurbishment before being sent North. All of these units differ from the 319/3 sets that we have at present in that 319/004/5 have 19 extra seats, and the 319/2's and 319/4's include differing amounts of first class seating. The 319/2's have low density seating layouts accommodating only 230 seats in the 4 car sets, whereas the 319/3's can seat 300 in each unit. The additional sets are required to take over from the Class 323 units in Manchester on the Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent and Hadfield services, as these will be transferred to the West Midlands from 2017.

### **Northern Developments**

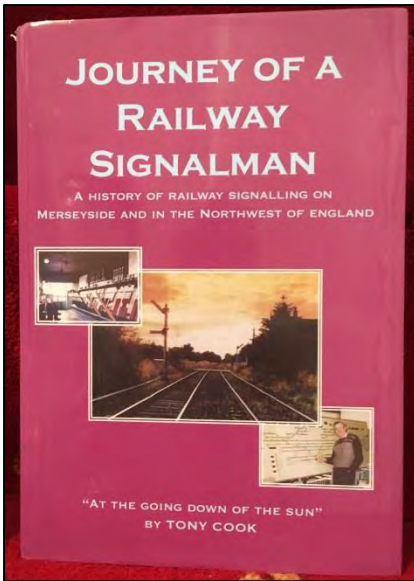
The first units to appear in the new Northern Rail livery of Blue and White have been released. Class 158, 158.752 was refurbished and repainted in the new livery at Brodies in Kilmarnock. Also there undergoing the same treatment is Class 155, 155.346, while at the adjoining Wabtec Facility also in Kilmarnock, Class 150, 150.275 is being refurbished and repainted.

All of the Northern Class 156's will undergo a refurbishment and be repainted into the new livery at the Knorr Bremse works at Glasgow Springburn.

Only units with a medium to long term future will be repainted in the new livery, so none of the Class 142/143/144 railbus fleet will be treated.



## Journey of a Railway Signaller by Tony Cook



Tony Cook is a member of the 8D Association and he worked on the railway from 1947 to 1994. Tony started with the LMS as a 16 year old box lad and went on to become a signaller.

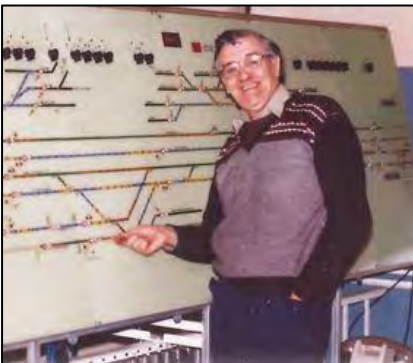
During his time on the railway Tony worked throughout the 8D Association area of interest. He worked at many historic railway locations that go back to the very dawn of the railway age in signal boxes both well-known and obscure.

Having an excellent memory for detail Tony has written and published a book ***Journey of a Railway Signaller*** in which he provides a wealth of detail about his working life, the characters that he worked alongside and the history of our local railways.

The 340 page hard back book is well illustrated with photographs many of which have not been seen in print before. There are also many useful maps and this book is a must for anyone who has an interest in the post-war era of British Railways and the way they worked day to day.

The book costs £29.00 which includes post and packaging. It can be purchased through the <http://ontherails.store/> website or you can email them at 53 West Street, Crewe, CW1 3FH (Telephone 01270 485 212). A free DVD documentary about the signal boxes that existed between Hunts Cross and Southport in the 1980s will be sent out with every book order.

***Journey of a Railway Signaller*** received an excellent review in the October 2016 edition of ***Railway Magazine*** which demonstrates the quality of the publication. It would make for an excellent Christmas present so put it on your list.



***Tony Cook inside Edge Hill power signal box in 1986. Tony started his railway career at Edge Hill aged 16 in 1947.***

***“This beautiful book is an extraordinary record of a period in railway history and superbly illustrated. Congratulations on such an excellent piece of work”***

**Michael Portillo (MP)**

## Slipping Away by Barry Nolan



**A winter scene at Speke Junction in January 1968. Photo by Alan Robinson**

During my time at Widnes Locomotive Depot I experienced many things but one of the most irritating was loss of traction known to locomotive crews as 'slipping'.

The chemical laded environment in Widnes made us particularly prone to the condition. On wet days, the fallout from some Widnes factories seemed to contain an oily substance which even made the progress of a light engine (*i.e.: not hauling a train*) difficult. The slightest opening of the regulator would result in the wheels spinning and little or no forward movement.

The issue had existed since the dawn of the railway age and in my time locomotives were equipped with sanding equipment. Known as 'sanders' they consisted of a hopper of dried sand the contents of which were gravity fed to a pipe which was directed at the point where the driving wheels met the rail. A jet of steam combined with the sand to drive it under the wheels.

However, the design had a fatal flaw because the moisture from the steam combined with condensation on the inside of the sand pipe caused a build-up of wet sand which eventually blocked the outlet.

The maintenance fitters were practically employed full time on clearing the built up

sand when the locomotives were in the shed, but theirs was a thankless task because the sand build up re-occurred very quickly.

Slipping was problematic when starting out with a heavy load and particularly so when climbing a bank. It was also highly embarrassing when heading a passenger train - lots of noise, but little action! The fireman often solved the bank climbing problem by getting off the footplate and placing pieces of ballast on the rail ahead of the locomotive. The success of this measure was a mixed blessing because although the crushed ballast gave the locomotive traction, it also enabled it to speed up which forced the unfortunate fireman to run faster to place more ballast and, eventually, to catch up with the train. I remember a number occasions on the night shift of target 92 when we were stopped at a signal on Ditton Bank and I had to perform this highly dangerous manoeuvre. Health and Safety in those days wasn't a consideration.



*The bank at Chequerbent on the former Bolton & Leigh railway was notorious with locomotive crews and in the winter months fireman had to walk in front of trains shovelling sand and grit under the locomotive wheels as described by Barry Nolan. In this view a short coal train is seen going up the Chequerbent bank.*

Although loss of traction was common when pulling a load, it could also happen when brakes were applied especially when heading a heavy train. I remember an incident when we were descending the Dallam Bank in Warrington at the head of a coal train which became a giant sledge when the wheels locked under braking, and of course the sanders didn't work. Scary stuff as the stop signal at the bottom of the slope was red. My driver threw the locomotive into reverse gear and opened the regulator and blew the whistle to alert the guard to the problem. Luckily, he seemed to realise what was happening and cranked on his brake. As the train slowed, I jumped off and started applying the brakes on the leading wagons. Luckily, the combined effort allowed us to stop short of the signal. **Barry Nolan**

**The LCGB (North West Branch) Liverpool and Warrington Area Rail Tour – 18 February 1967**



**The 'Liverpool & Warrington Area Rail Tour' is seen at Dallam MPD on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1967. The visit to the shed was not scheduled and resulted in a coach becoming derailed. Photo by Roy Dixon**

The front cover of *On Shed Volume 6 Number 3* prompted 8D Association member and ex-BR driver Roy Dixon to dig deep into his photo archives as he recognised the train on the front cover as the LCGB (North West Branch) Liverpool and Warrington Area Rail Tour of 18<sup>th</sup> February 1967. Roy had been on duty at Dallam Shed that day and he took some rather special photos of his own. Special because an incident occurred that day that has been told throughout railway enthusiast circles for nearly 50 years.

The Liverpool and Warrington Area Rail Tour was given the train reporting number 1T50. The starting point for the tour was Warrington Bank Quay station and the train consisted of four ex-LMS steel bodied coaches hauled by 2MT 2-6-0 Ivatt Mogul class locomotive number 46520 of Northwich shed. The driver was Tony Dakin, Jack Bate (number 2) was the fireman and Harold Brougden was the guard. The train departed from Bank Quay on time at 09.00.

The first scheduled stop was *Dallam Up Stabling Sidings* but the signalman considered that it would be safer to route 1T50 onto Dallam Shed. His reasoning was that if the train went onto the up sidings, the passengers would get out and cross the main line so that they could view the locomotive depot. It should be remembered that



**Fireman Jack Bate is seen standing on the footplate of 46520 at Dallam MPD. His train was going nowhere until the derailed coach could be detached. Photo by Roy Dixon**

in those days, rail tour passengers seemed to be able to wander about at will, so the train went onto the depot.

Roy Dixon had booked on that day to work as a fireman on the

10:30 Warrington Arpley to Margam freight. His locomotive was 5MT 4-6-0 'Black 5' locomotive number 45323. Roy had to prepare the engine, which was on shed at Dallam. Once prepared the engine was to be taken to Arpley to work the Margam train.

'I remember seeing the rail tour come on to the shed' Roy explained. 'The engine was propelling the coaches from the main line towards the shed when the rear coach became derailed on a set of points'. The derailment blocked Roy's locomotive in which caused a couple of hours delay to his train.

In 2016 the derailment of a train carrying fare paying passengers would be a very big deal indeed, but back in 1967 the solution was simple. The derailed coach was uncoupled from the train and it was able to continue, the passengers simply had to squeeze into the remaining space.



The enthusiasts were then taken on a run through Earlestown and on to Broad oak Junction via Sutton Oak Junction. The route of the St Helens & Runcorn Gap railway was then followed down to Widnes from where 1T50 took the Warrington and Garston line to Speke Junction.

At Speke another coach was found and the train was made up to four coaches again. Arthur Turner also an 8D Association member was on duty at Speke that day and he remembers seeing the rail tour pass through.

From Speke Junction the train took the route of the original Garston and Warrington railway, via Church Road through to Cressington Junction, where it went onto the former CLC main line. The tour arrived at Liverpool Central at 13:30.

At Liverpool Central an hour and a quarter was given so that enthusiasts could travel to Birkenhead Central on the former Mersey Railway so that they could visit Birkenhead Mollington Street MPD. The original schedule had given over an hour and a half but that had to be cut short. The Dallam crew were relieved at Liverpool



**Locomotive number 46520 waits at Dallam shed while the rear coach of its train is removed. Photo by Roy Dixon**

Central by a crew from Speke Junction.

The tour departed from Liverpool Central at 14:45 and ran along the CLC route to Hunts Cross.

At Hunts Cross a further delay occurred when the locomotive crew had to raise steam. Roy Dixon remembers talking to the Dallam crew who had worked the train earlier in the day. They told him that the locomotive was in very poor condition. 'Steam engines at that time were mostly in very poor condition' Roy explained.

Eventually the train got under way and it ran along the former CLC North Liverpool Extension line via Gateacre, Knotty Ash and Fazakerley North Junction to Aintree Central.

After a photo stop at the closed Aintree Central station, the 1T50 rail tour continued north along the North Liverpool Extension Line to Aintree Cheshire Lines Junction. The junction was the point at which the CLC line had a connection with the former LYR Liverpool – Preston main line. After passing onto the main line a run around move was performed. The tour then headed south through Aintree Sefton Arms station and it then went onto the North Mersey Branch where it made a stop by Aintree Shed so that it could be visited. Aintree was the main freight shed for the north Liverpool area at this time and it also serviced passenger locomotives that ran

on main line services out of Liverpool Exchange.

Departure from Aintree Shed was at 15:55, and the North Mersey Branch was followed past the Aintree Grid Iron and through the sites of Ford and Linacre Lane stations through to North Mersey Junction, from where the Liverpool and Southport line was followed to Bootle Junction. Electric passenger services had operated on the North Mersey Branch between 1906 and 1951, with Liverpool Overhead Railway services continuing to run that way on Aintree Race Days until 1956.

From Bootle Junction, the Bootle Branch was followed through Atlantic Dock Junction, Walton & Anfield, Stanley and Edge Lane Junction to Rathbone Road sidings, where a stop was made for Edge Hill shed.

Some interesting moves were made at Edge Hill, when Black 5 locomotive number 45015 was used to manoeuvre 1T50 (with 46520 on the rear) through Engine Shed Junction, Wavertree Junction and the Edge Hill triangle. As the day had become wet



*Liverpool Central station was visited by the rail tour and it was here that the Dallam crew were relieved by men from Speke Junction. By 1967 Liverpool Central had become a shadow of its former self main line services having been diverted away from it the year before. Photo by Alan Robinson*

some of the passengers had decided to stay on board rather than visit the shed. They were treated to the unexpected and unusual moves.

At 17:40 1T50 departed from Edge Hill behind 46520, and headed back to Warrington Bank Quay via Rainhill and Earlestown. The enthusiasts arrived back at Warrington at 18:39 having enjoyed a day on an interesting variety of local lines, many of which were even by that time in decline and which are now just a memory.

**Paul Wright**

## 8D Association Depot Visits 2016



*Left: Inside Birkenhead North Depot on Saturday 5 November 2016. The 8D Association was treated to a tour of the Merseyrail facility. Photo by Tony Foster*

Thanks to the efforts of 8D member Richard Mercer two visits to local maintenance depots have taken place in 2016. In the present day era it is not as easy as it once was to gain access to depots as safety standards are far higher than they were 40 years ago. Security is also an issue. So the 8D Association have been very privileged to be able to gain access to both the Alstom facility at Edge Hill and the Merseyrail Electrics depot at Birkenhead North.

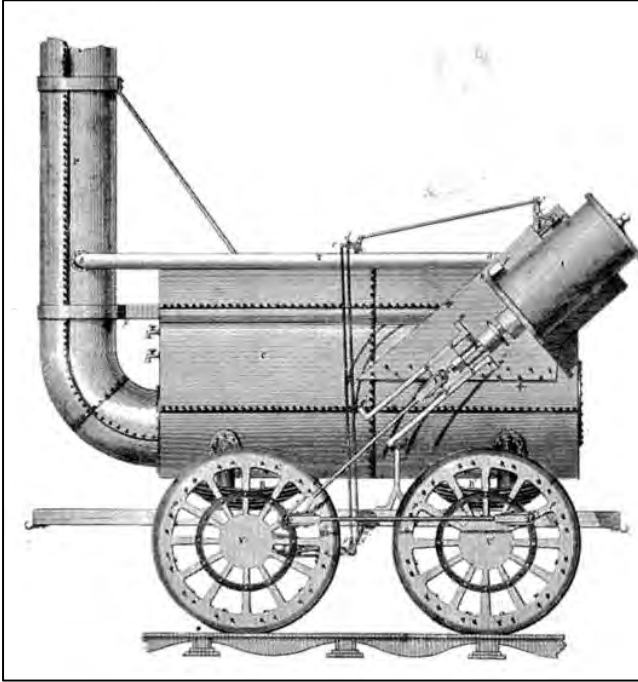
At both depots members were treated to guided tours by managers of the facilities who were very knowledgeable about their subjects. A great deal was learned about the complexities of maintaining train fleets in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when assets are worked much harder than they ever have been. We are very grateful to both Alstom and Merseyrail Electrics for letting us see what goes on out of sight of the everyday passenger.



*Left: The 8D Association visit to the Alstom Edge Hill depot on 22 September 2016. The depot maintains class 390 'Pendolino' trains on behalf of Virgin West Coast Two units were inside the depot at the time of the 8D visit. Photo by Tony Foster*



## The Bolton and Leigh Railway



*Left: The 'Lancashire Witch' the first locomotive of the Bolton & Leigh Railway. The engine was built by the Robert Stephenson Company.*

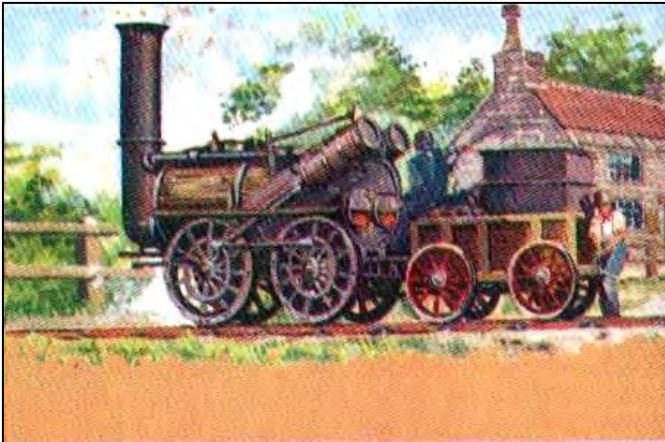
The Bolton & Leigh Railway (B&L) company was formed in 1824 by a group of influential Bolton businessmen who wanted to improve the links between their important manufacturing town, and South-West Lancashire. Access to Liverpool was particularly important to them. At a distance

of 7½ miles to the south-west of Bolton at Leigh, the Bridgewater Canal Leigh branch (opened in 1795) had an end on connection with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Leigh Branch (opened in 1821). The original idea of the B&L was to create a railway that would link Bolton to the canal at Leigh, and it obtained an act to do so on 31 March 1825.

George Stephenson was appointed as the engineer, and he laid out a line that included two inclined planes for an estimated cost of £49,343. The line was actually laid out and constructed by Robert Daglish Senior (1777 – 1865), assisted by George Stephenson's older brother Robert.

George Stephenson inspected the works on 8 January 1827 and he was critical of some aspects of it. In a report to the B&L directors he mentioned the terminus at Leigh, being a deviation from what had been authorised in the 1825 act, and was awkwardly situated for a future extension of the line to link up with the Liverpool & Manchester Railway (L&M), then under construction. This was an interesting comment, as it shows that even before the line had opened an extension was being considered. The L&M had been authorised on 5 May 1826 and its route passed through Kenyon 2½ miles to the south-west of Leigh.

The B&L was complete by July 1828. It was a single track line 7½ miles long. Three kinds of rail were used, fish bellied weighing 35lbs per yard, T-section rail



**Left: 'Lancashire Witch' working on the Bolton & Leigh Railway in the early 1830s.**

weighing 63lbs per yard and bridge-section rail weighing 43lbs per yard. The rails were laid on stone block sleepers ballasted with small coal. Notable

features included the inclines at Chequerbent and at Daubhill. Daubhill was the highest point of the line at 119ft. That height was reached in only 1 mile 600yards from Bolton and the incline had gradients of between 1 in 48 and 1 in 54. Both inclined planes were worked by stationary steam engines.

An opening ceremony was held on 1 August 1828. At 12:15 a new 0-4-0 locomotive supplied to the company by the Robert Stephenson Company, departed from Pendlebury Fold, at the top of the Chequerbent incline, with a train of thirteen wagons and a coach. On board were railway directors, dignitaries and the Bolton Old Band. The train ran to Daubhill where the engine was detached. It went to a nearby colliery and returned with a train of coal. The engine was then named Lancashire Witch by a Mrs Hulton, wife of one of the B&L's major shareholders. Demonstrations of the engines capability were then made, including a run at 12mph. The special train of dignitaries was then lowered down the Daubhill Incline by the stationary engine and it proceeded on to Bolton, where celebrations ended at the Commercial Inn.

After the opening ceremony day to day operations began, and additional locomotives were purchased.

To create the link to the L&M a separate company was formed called the Kenyon & Leigh Junction Railway Company (K&LJR). They obtained an act to build a 2½ mile line from Leigh to Kenyon on 14 May 1829, at which time the L&M was at an advanced stage in its construction. The K&LJR opened to goods services on 1 January 1831 (The L&M having opened on xx September 1830). The opening of the K&LJR created the world's first junction between two separate railway companies.

The L&M had been designed to carry passengers from the start, and it proved to be very successful in that aspect. The B&L saw the value in passenger services and started them on its own line on 13 July 1831. Direct trains were run to Liverpool and passengers could change at Kenyon Junction for services to Manchester. To serve the passengers a basic station, consisting of a booking office and a shed, was opened at Bolton Great Moor Street. Similar primitive facilities were created at

Kenyon Junction and at Leigh. Extensive goods facilities were also laid out at Bolton Crook Street.

On 20 May 1836 an Act was passed which allowed the B&L to take out a 25 year lease on the K&LJR with powers to purchase the line for £44,750. In the same year the B&L arranged for the working of the lines to be taken over by John Hargreaves Junior (1800 – 1874) who was already an established carrier. He made a success of the enterprise and quickly took responsibility for all traffic movements, locomotives and rolling stock. By 1838 there were fourteen locomotives working on the B&L.

On 1 July 1845 the B&L, K&LJR and the L&M were amalgamated into the Grand Junction Railway, and a year later on 16 July 1846 that company became part of the London & North Western Railway (LNWR).

The LNWR ended the contract with John Hargreaves and they purchased his locomotives in order to run the train services themselves.

By the 1850s the inclined planes were no longer being worked by stationary engine



*A sketch view looking south-east towards the Sunnyside cotton mill at Daubhill in the early 1880s. The Bolton & Leigh Railway (by then part of the LNWR) can be seen in front of the mill. To the left is Daubhill station. This section of the line closed as a through route in February 1885 when a deviation was opened. The deviation created an easier gradient between Daubhill and Bolton. A new station was opened on the deviation called Rumworth & Daubhill. The course of the original line at Sunnyside Mill survived as a siding until the early 1960s.*

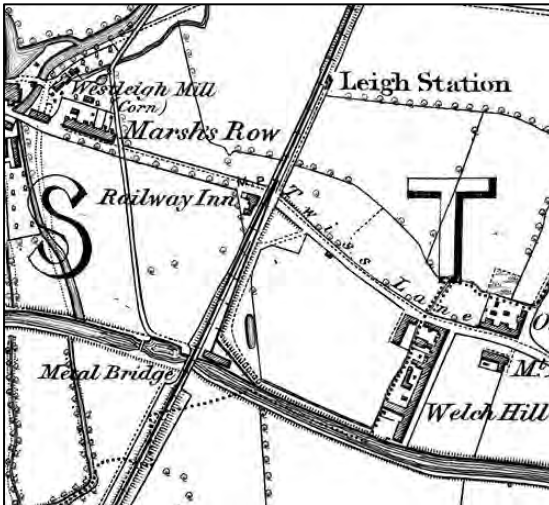


***A rare example of a Bolton & Leigh Railway ticket dating from the early 1840s.***

as locomotives had become powerful enough to tackle them. They remained formidable obstacles though as was demonstrated on 28 January 1858 when a train of 32 wagons ran away on the Daubhill incline. It ran all the way into Bolton Great Moor Street passenger station demolishing waiting rooms and the train shed roof. One man was killed.

During the LNWR years other lines were opened that connected to the B&L route and improvements were made. Big improvements included the doubling of the line between 1880 and 1885, the easing of the inclined planes through the building of deviations in 1885 and a complete rebuild of Bolton Great Moor Street station between 1881 and 1885.

Lancashire's first public railway died in stages under the ownership of British Railways. Regular passenger services ended on 29 March 1954 (excursions and holiday trains continued to run until 1959). The station was demolished in 1966.



***Leigh station and the connections to the Leeds & Liverpool canal shown on a six-inch scale map from 1845.***

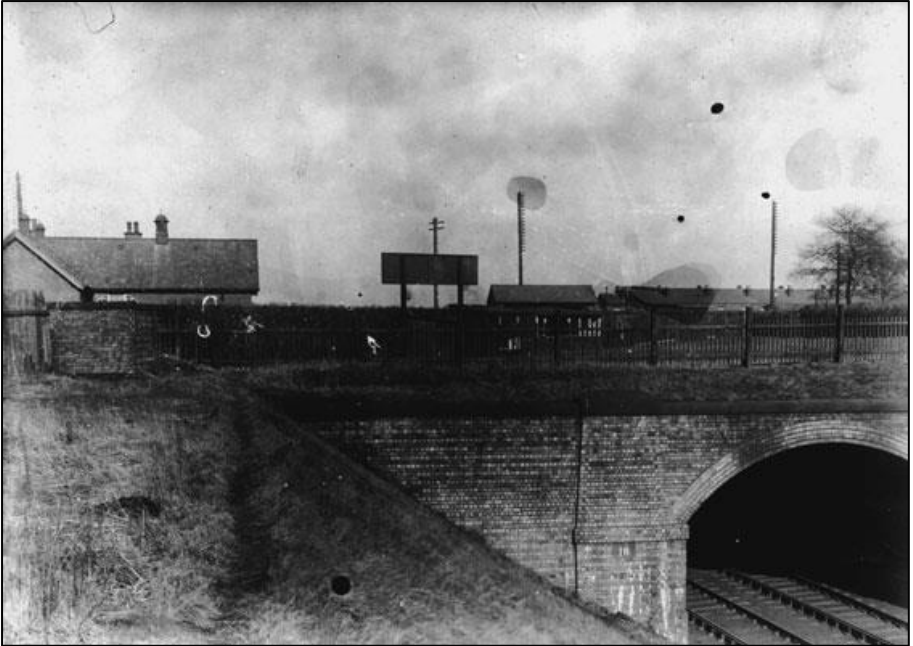
The line closed as a through route on 17 June 1963 when the section between Pennington South Junction and Howe Bridge North Junction closed completely. Bolton Crook Street Goods station closed to public goods services on 25 April 1965 and completely on 16 October 1967. The last section of the B&L to survive was between

Howe Green North Junction and Hultons Sidings and it closed on 6 January 1969.

A section of the K&LJR (between Kenyon Junction and Pennington) survived until Saturday 3 May 1969 (as part of the Tyldersley loop).

After closure many sections of the B&L route were lost under road and building developments. **Paul Wright**

## A Terrible Christmas Tragedy on the GC/MR Joint Line



*The Liverpool Road tunnel on the GC&MR Joint Railway Widnes Branch scene of a terrible accident on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1901.*

On 24 December 1901, there occurred a terrible tragedy on the GC&MR Joint Railway Widnes Branch, when George Frederick Plumpton of Ash Lane Hough Green was killed at the Liverpool Road tunnel. George was a prominent local sportsman and the Widnes Weekly News described him as 'an old time footballer'. He was married to Ann (*nee: Hutchinson*) and had a one month old baby daughter.

George arrived at Widnes Central sometime around 9:35pm on Christmas Eve. He spoke to the station inspector, bade him the compliments of the season, and then he boarded the 9:42pm Southport Lord Street train with the intention of travelling to Hough Green station, which was only a short distance from his home.

The journey time between Widnes Central and Hough Green was only 10 minutes in 1901, but during that short journey something occurred that resulted in George Frederick Plumpton's body being found '*fearfully mutilated*' by a signal man called Antrobus. The body was found 30 yards inside the Liverpool Road tunnel, lying against the tunnel wall on the down side of the line (the Hough green direction), however, George had not been run over.

The next morning the tunnel was examined by Police-constable Hindley. He found the tunnel brickwork to be bespattered with blood.

A Coroner's inquest was held and witnesses were called. The Station Master at Hough Green told the coroner that the doors had all been closed on the train when

it reached his station and he noticed nothing out of the ordinary.

Witnesses suggested that George had been leaning out of the window. It was thought that his head must have struck the tunnel wall as the train entered the tunnel, and that his body must have been dragged out of the window.

The coroner stated that *“there was nothing to show whether deceased had been leaning out of the window or whether he had got on the footboard for the purpose of seeing someone in the next compartment. I do not see that it can be anything but an accident”*. The coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death.

It will never be known exactly what happened on that night but the act of leaning out of the carriage window or stepping out onto the footboard cost George Frederick Plumpton his life which no doubt had consequences for his poor wife and baby daughter.

The incident shows how in 1901, before Widnes had a bus service, people used the railways to make even very short journeys. It is also interesting to see just how late services operated on Christmas Eve in those days. It was seen as very much an ordinary working day at that time although many businesses would close earlier than usual, giving their employees some extra leisure time. **Paul Wright & Les Fifoot**



*Victoria Road in Widnes looking south in 1897. This scene would have been all too familiar to George Frederick Plumpton. He would have passed along this way on his way to Widnes Central station on that fateful Christmas Eve in 1901. Widnes Central was to the right. The line that it served can be seen passing over the road in the foreground. As can be seen the station is advertised on the bridge.*

**From the Archive**



*Looking south along towards Marsh Sidings at Widnes Dock Junction on xxx 1966. The view was taken from the down line of the Widnes – St Helens route the former St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway that had opened through to this location on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1833. Photo by J L Smith*



*The 10.30 Warrington Arpley to Margam train is seen at Weaver Junction on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1967. Photo by Roy Dixon*

## Events Programme

**10.00 – Developments at Alstom Halebank Presentation.** - Mark Coleman and Lindsey Smithson from Alstom UK will be giving a presentation on the developments occurring at the Halebank site. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

**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 2017 - 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 20<sup>th</sup> century. An illustrated talk by David White. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

**10:00 – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017 – The 8D Association AGM –** The groups AGM which will be followed by an illustrated talk and a buffet. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

**19.00 – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – An 8D Area Rail Review for 2016 –** An Illustrated talk by Doug Birmingham in which he will highlight the 2016 rail scene in the 8D area of interest. **Select Security Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

**10.00 – Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017 – Liverpool Exchange Walk –** A guided walk led by Paul Wright looking at the remains of the former LYR Liverpool terminus. **Meet outside the main entrance of the Liverpool Exchange office complex (the former station hotel) on Tithebarn Street. A short walk from Liverpool Moorfields station.**

## Where is This Competition



**'Where is this' competition?**  
(Answers to [pwright964@btinternet.com](mailto:pwright964@btinternet.com))  
Photo by Ben Brooksbank.

**The December competition was correctly guessed by Arthur Turner. The location was to the south of the Wigan Wallgate.**

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