

# ON SHED

---

## The Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 9, Number 4 : December 2019



# 'On Shed' : Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 9, Number 4 : December 2019

Page

3	News Round Up : <i>Chris Hollins</i>
10	Southern Exiles ! : <i>Colin Turton</i>
12	Tickets Galore
13	Mollington Street MPD (Part 8) : <i>Dennis Flood</i>
18	Members' Collections : <i>Les Fifoot</i>
19	L&YR School of Signalling (NRM at York) : <i>Bob Brook, Peter Munthe Webster</i>
24	On the Footplate of No.1000 at 'Rainhill 150' : <i>Rod Dixon</i>
26	CLC North Liverpool Extension Line : <i>Paul Wright</i>
28	Future 8D Association events

---

## From the Editor

I hope that you will excuse the slight delay in getting this edition of 'On Shed' to your door. Whilst hoping that all members and their families have a joyous and peaceful festive season, I count myself amongst those for whom the departure of 2019 cannot come soon enough ! In the Foster household, one medical crisis has given way to another as the year progressed. I look forward to a new start in January of 2020.

In the meantime, contributors to 'On Shed' have again risen to the challenge of producing interesting material for our readers. I'm grateful to those authors who enthusiastically share their recollections of earlier times. Comments that I have received from those members who are, or were, career railwaymen, confirm their appreciation of 'tales from the footplate / box or platform'.

As ever, I remain simply amazed at the depth of knowledge of 8D members generally. I admire their ability to recall the tiniest of rail detail. I am fortunate to have Chris Hollins as the 'On Shed' News Correspondent'. Between editions, Chris meticulously logs movements, improvements, transfers etc, and forwards the information in a way that even I can follow. I am most grateful to him for his assistance.

It would be nice to think that in 2020 there may be more members who would be prepared to pen an article, or perhaps simply suggest a topic. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at :-

**tony.r.foster@btinternet.com**  
**01744 883914**

**Happy Christmas !**

*Tony*

**Cover photograph** : *An old friend to some of our members ! BR Standard No.76077, based at 8G Sutton Oak, is here seen passing Randles Junction (Rainford). Although the date that it was taken, and the name of the photographer, are unknown, I hope you will agree that the photograph is particularly evocative.*

**Photograph** : John Atherton Collection

# News Round Up

Chris Hollins

Given that 'On Shed' is published quarterly, many of the items referred to in this 'News Round Up' can only be of historical interest. Nevertheless, every effort has been made to record also those changes, developments and items of interest that have occurred within the 8D area since the date that the last publication was prepared for the printer.

*Chris Hollins*

## West Coast Franchise

On the 14th of August, it was announced by the Department of Transport that a partnership of the First Group and Trenitalia were to be the new operators of the West Coast Franchise starting from the December 2019 timetable change.

The partnership announced that from the December 2022 timetable change, Liverpool would receive an half hourly service throughout the day, and that the additional services would call at Liverpool South Parkway. Walsall would receive a through service from London Euston and Llandudno would also have a daily summer only service from Euston, while the present Euston to Wrexham General service will be extended to terminate at Gobowen.

The Pendolino sets are to be refurbished internally presumably at the Alstom Widnes plant. The Voyager sets will also be refurbished but are to be withdrawn by 2022, and will be replaced by a new build of 13 bi-modal trains. Also to be ordered will be 10 six car electric trains, some of which will be used on the additional Liverpool services in order to serve Liverpool South Parkway which has short platforms, meaning that Pendolino trains cannot use them.

## Stealth Pendolino

Pendolino set 390.137 was released from the Alstom plant in Widnes at the beginning of September, in basic grey livery without any Virgin Trains decals on it.

Under the present contract there are seven sets still to be repainted, and it is expected that of these five will appear in the same grey livery with the last two being the first ones to appear in a new First/Trenitalia livery.

## Scotrail DMUs

Since August 5th, Scotrail Class 156 units have been seen passing through Warrington Bank Quay on a fortnightly basis. These units are being refurbished but due to the closure of Springburn works in Glasgow, the refurbishment has been taken over by Chrysalis Rail who have reopened the former Landore diesel depot in Swansea to carry out the work.

This now results in a unit running on alternate Saturday mornings at 05.20 from Corkerhill depot in Glasgow via the West Coast main line to Crewe, and then over the North and West route via Shrewsbury and Hereford to Newport, and then the South Wales main line to Swansea. A fortnight later the refurbished unit returns to Glasgow via the same route as outward, although on Saturday the 28th of September, the unit returning from Landore, ran from Newport to Crewe via Gloucester and the Birmingham area, reaching the West Coast main line at Stafford.

## Liverpool to Chester Changes

From the December 2019 timetable change, it is expected that the Liverpool to Chester via Runcorn service will be operated by pairs of class 153 units. The class 150 and 158 units used at present, are to be transferred to operate services in South Wales replacing Class

142 & 143 pacer units. One minor timetable change in December is that the morning Wrexham General to Liverpool Lime Street service, will commence running from Shrewsbury calling at Gobowen, Chirk and Ruabon.

### **Mk 5 Stock Enters Service**

On the 24th of August, the first scheduled passenger train using the new Spanish built CAF Mark 5 stock was operated. 68027 Splendid took charge of the 05.55 from Manchester Victoria to Liverpool Lime Street which then formed the 06.56 to Scarborough. It then worked a further round trip but while operating the 17.41 from Scarborough, it was terminated at Manchester Victoria as the Locomotive was low on fuel.

### **LNWR Service Changes**

From the May 2019 timetable change, the vast majority of the Liverpool Lime Street to Birmingham New Street services were extended to London Euston. Unfortunately late running and trains terminating short of their destination has been rife. London Northwestern have proposed that from the December timetable change, only one of the two half hourly services runs through to London Euston, with the service that attaches a portion from Crewe via Stoke at Birmingham New Street being terminated at New Street.

Further changes are to be made in the May 2020 timetable, as London Northwestern have already announced that the Rugeley Trent Valley to London Euston service will be cut back to operate from Walsall to Euston only from that date due to the late running issues.

### **Acton Grange Engineering Works**

For a two week period from the 20th of July, the West Coast main line was closed due to the renewal of Acton Grange Junction, along with new track and ballast being installed in Sutton tunnel on the Chester line.

The closure required extensive train alterations and a lot of substitute rail replacement bus services, as the only train services serving Warrington Bank Quay were from Liverpool Lime Street and a shuttle operating to Earlestown.

West Coast main line services from Glasgow Central to London Euston where diverted from Wigan North Western, via Astley and Manchester Piccadilly to Crewe. Services from Edinburgh and Glasgow to London Euston via Birmingham only operated between Crewe and London.

The Caledonian sleeping car services operated normally with the Glasgow and Edinburgh service taking the same diversionary route as daylight services, via Manchester Piccadilly from Wigan. The Highland Sleeper took a far more interesting route from Preston via Bolton, Manchester Piccadilly, Stockport and Stoke-on-Trent where a crew change stop was made, rejoining the West Coast main line at Colwich Jct.

There was no service from Manchester Airport to Chester with North Wales trains starting from there. Frodsham and Helsby stations continued to be served by trains from Liverpool Lime Street to Chester.

A variety of routes were used by affected freight train services, although several scheduled services were cancelled for the duration of the work, notably the Carlisle to Chirk log train. One train that did operate was the Middleton Towers to Ince and Elton sand train. This followed its normal route to Weaver Jct but then went to Garston to reverse, before proceeding back to Halton Jct, and then traversing the Halton Curve to Frodsham Jct where it regained its normal route.

Owing to the Sand companies request, on Monday the 29th of July the train was loaded at Tilbury instead of Middleton Towers and reached the North West hours early. As a

result the train was taken from Garston to Arpley Sidings via the Low Level line for overnight stabling. The following day the train returned via the Low Level line to Garston before reversing and setting off to Ince via the Halton Curve.

The work at Acton Grange was completed on time, and the main reopened in the early hours of the 5th of August.

### **Further new Trans-Pennine Express trains in service.**

Following the introduction of the Class 68 powered Mark 5 carriage sets into service on a limited number of Liverpool Lime Street to Scarborough trains, on Saturday the 28th of September the first revenue operated Inter City Express Train by TPE took place. Unit 802.201 was used on 9M04 06.03 Newcastle to Liverpool Lime Street. It then returned to Newcastle on 9E09 09.25 departure from Lime Street. As it's a bi-modal unit, it operated on electric power between Newcastle and York, and Manchester Victoria to Liverpool Lime Street with diesel power between York and Manchester. From the December timetable change, these units are expected to operate between Liverpool and Edinburgh with the extension of most of the Newcastle services to the Scottish capital.

### **Network Rail plan for the Trans-Pennine line.**

Network Rail has announced plans to enable the Trans-Pennine services between Liverpool and Manchester to Yorkshire and beyond, to be speeded up along with increased capacity.

This is to be achieved in the next 4 years by quadrupling and electrifying the line from Huddersfield to Leeds. Four tracks would extend from Huddersfield to Dewsbury with a new flyover or dive under to be constructed along with a bridge across the canal at Ravensthorpe. This means that the present station will be relocated west to enable trains

from Huddersfield to Wakefield to call there as well as the present Leeds stopping service. A Transport and Works order is to be applied for and if approved, construction work will start in 2020.

Prior to 1966, there were four tracks all the way from Huddersfield to Leeds. From Heaton Lodge Jct near Mirfield, a separate double track line was used by nearly all of the Liverpool Lime Street to Newcastle and Hull trains which took them through the Spen Valley to Farnley Jct and into Leeds City Station. It was known as the "new line" and BR decided to close it and re-route the services via the Dewsbury line which is what they use today.

### **New Merseyrail Electric unit makes it's first journey.**

On Monday October 7th, the first of the new Merseyrail Class 777 emu's was observed in Eglisau, being moved by rail from the Stadler works in Bussnang Switzerland to the Siemens test track at Wildenrath Germany. The unit was being hauled to Basel Muttentz marshalling Yard on the first stage of its journey by Rail Adventures locomotive 620.003 which is former SBB Class RE6/6 11603 named Wadenswil.

After testing, the unit will be moved through the Channel tunnel by rail before being delivered to Merseyside before the end of the year.

### **Freight working of the Year.**

On Friday the 18th of October, what amounted to the freight working of the year or even of the decade took place.

Two Class 20 diesels 20132 Barrow Hill Depot and 20118 Saltburn by the Sea were employed on 6Z21 12.19 Ellesmere Port Manisty Wharf to Garston, which consisted of two bogie Ferry wagons. The train was routed via Helsby, Warrington Arpley and the Low Level line to Ditton Jct and Garston Sidings. The

locomotives had arrived earlier from the Pinnox Branch Esso Sidings at Longport in Staffordshire.

After depositing the two wagons at Garston, the Class 20's were scheduled to return light engine as 0Z22 14.51 Garston to Pinnox Branch Esso Sidings but this time via Runcorn, although they did depart back to Staffordshire nearly an hour late.

This is believed to be the first working of Class 20's over the Low Level line for many years. While a common sight on Merry go round coal trains from Parkside and other collieries to Fiddlers Ferry power station in the 1970's & 1980's, these duties were eventually taken over by Class 56 & 60 locomotives. Since then the only duties that brought them to the line were odd freight train workings, network rail railhead treatment trains and railtours.



*20132 & 20118 haul 6Z21 12.19 Ellesmere Port Manisty Wharf to Garston through the site of Widnes South station on Friday the 18th of October.*

### **Aluminium train re-routed.**

The well known Ditton Foundry Lane to Neuss aluminium train has reverted back to using the route through Runcorn. For over a year now, the Channel Tunnel bound service has been using the Low Level line to Warrington Arpley Yard before departing for the South

after a 7 hour stop there. The Monday northbound service continues to traverse the Low Level line on it's journey to Foundry Lane.

### **First trip of Northern Bi-Modals.**

On the evening of Tuesday the 3rd of September, Northern Class 769 bi-mode unit 769.450 made the first run of the Class as the 22.14 Allerton depot to Preston via Warrington Bank Quay. The unit was operated by Rail Operations Group who provided Class 37 37884 as a standby locomotive at Warrington Bank Quay, in case of any problems.

Further test runs have taken place including a trip from Allerton to Ellesmere Port and Chester via Runcorn on Monday the 14th of October.

The following day a further unit was hauled from Leicester Locomotive Inspection Point

to Allerton depot via Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe, by a Rail Operations Group Class 37. The unit should have arrived the previous day but developed a fault outside the Brush works in Loughborough, which was repaired and the unit made the journey the following day.

Once testing has been completed, it is expected that the first units will enter service on the new Southport to Alderley Edge service, due to commence with the December timetable change, running on diesel power from Southport to Bolton and changing to

Electric power from their to Alderley Edge. For this service, the units will be outstationed at the re-opened Wigan Springs Branch depot.

### **Further new Northern trains enter service.**

3 car Class 331 EMU'S have now entered

service on the Liverpool Lime Street to Blackpool North service replacing Class 319 sets. Several 3 & 4 car Class 331 sets remain to be received by Northern. A newly delivered 3 car set was observed in Edge Hill Downhill Sidings on the 17th of October, still to receive it's unit fleet numbers and bearing a "built by



*On Thursday the 24th of October, Northern units 195.007 & 195.001 await departure from Platform 7 at Liverpool Lime Street, forming 1H48 the 13.16 Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Airport service.*

CAF in Zaragoza" banner attached to one of the middle carriage windows.

Also now in service, are two car Class 195/0 DMU'S. Some of these have been used on the Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Airport service in pairs. This means that if the two car sets are used on the 06.13 Liverpool Lime Street to Wilmslow and the 07.48 return service which are diagrammed for two 3 car sets, one of which is detached at Lime Street and stables in Platform 7, until being reattached to the unit working the 15.16 Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Airport and 16.45 return services, the units remain together all day resulting in 2 carriages less on the above services.

## Warrington West Station opening.

The new Warrington West station is due to open on Sunday the 15th of December. Services between Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Oxford Road and Manchester Airport will call.

From the following day, Sankey for Penketh station will see it's service reduced to two weekday trains in each direction only calling there. These are the 07.45 & 17.19 Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Oxford Road, and 07.40 Warrington Central and 17.16 Manchester Oxford Road to Liverpool Lime Street services.

## Manchester Stations

Earlier this year (5th May) marked the 50th anniversary of the closure of two main Manchester stations linked

by passenger train service to Liverpool.

Manchester Exchange was a former London and North Western Railway station, which was served by trains from Liverpool Lime Street to Leeds and the North East, along with services from North Wales and Anglo-Scottish services to both Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as various local services.

The station was unique in that its Platform 5 was connected to Platform 11 at Manchester Victoria, creating the world's longest station platform.

For a number of years Exchange was closed on Sundays and all trains used Victoria. It was therefore an easy matter to transfer all ser-

VICES to Victoria upon closure of Exchange.

The closure of Manchester Central was a much more complicated affair. The services using the station had remained reasonably constant since 1948 when the Cheshire Lines Committee was taken over upon nationalisation of the Railways.

Apart from dieselisation and the transfer of the Harwich boat train service to Piccadilly, and the withdrawal of the service to Wigan Central, it was 1967 when things started going downhill for the station.

On March the 5th of that year, the local train service between Manchester Central and Sheffield via Stockport Tiviot Dale was withdrawn, and replaced by an alternative service from Manchester Piccadilly via Romiley. Also withdrawn on the same day was the local train service between Central and Matlock along the former Midland main line, along with the last remaining through trains to Buxton. All of the intermediate stations were closed.

This left Central with services to Liverpool Lime Street, Chester Northgate and London St Pancras, along with the Monday to Saturday once a day train to Guide Bridge and two Sunday only services to Sheffield and Hull. 1968 however was to be a fatal year for the station. The Minister of Transport had authorised the closure of the Midland main line from Peak Forest Jct to Matlock. This eventually took place on the 29th of June, but on the 1st of January, the remaining trains between Manchester and London St Pancras were rerouted from New Mills South Jct into Piccadilly for the last six months of running over the peak district route.

It was also announced in that year, that Central would close with the Chester trains being diverted into Oxford Road, with the Liverpool service terminating at Piccadilly. For this to be achieved, a new connection had to be built at Cornbrook Jct to enable trains to transfer from the ex CLC route to the former

Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway route from Altrincham to Piccadilly. A connection through Cornbrook carriage Sidings had existed for a number of years, and was used between 1962 & 1964 by a non-stop DMU service between Liverpool Central and Manchester Piccadilly, which operated as a connection to the Harwich boat train after it had been cut back to Manchester and transferred from Central to Piccadilly.

The Cornbrook link was built and on the 5th of May 1969 Manchester Central and Exchange stations closed. Also closed on that day for passenger trains was the line from Chorlton Jct to Fairfield, which was traversed by the Monday to Saturday Liverpool Lime Street to Guide Bridge service and, on Sundays by the Liverpool Lime Street to Sheffield and Hull services. The Guide Bridge service was cut back to Piccadilly while the Sunday Sheffield and Hull services were rerouted from Romiley into Piccadilly via Belle Vue. After the closure of the Stockport Tiviot Dale line in March 1967, these Sunday trains had been rerouted from Romiley to run via Woodley, Guide Bridge, Fairfield and over the South District line past Reddish Depot to Chorlton Jct in order to get to Manchester Central.

Nothing now remains of Exchange Station, but Central still survives as an exhibition and events centre, having previously been used as a car park. The approach line viaducts into Central also still see use, as they are now part of the Manchester Metrolink light rail system as is some of the South District line.

---

### Edge Hill Power Signal Box Closes

Over the weekend of Saturday 2nd and 3rd of November, Edge Hill Power Signal Box closed with control of the track and signals transferring to the Manchester Signalling Centre at Ardwick.

As all trains into Liverpool Lime Street High Level have to pass through Edge Hill, only the Low Level portion remained open, with trains



terminating at St Helens Central, Earlestown, Hunts Cross and Liverpool South Parkway for buses into Liverpool City centre. Trans-Pennine services started from Manchester Victoria, while East Midlands Railway services to Norwich commenced from Manchester Piccadilly. Virgin Trains diverted the London service to terminate at Warrington Bank Quay and, London North Western Railway services from Euston and Birmingham terminated at Crewe.



Edge Hill PSB on Tuesday 22 October 2019.

## Widnes Deviation Line 150th Anniversary

The Deviation line which was built by the London and North Western Railway between West Deviation Jct and Carterhouse Jct, and opened on the 1st of November 1869 celebrated its 150th anniversary.

The line which was once heavily used by freight and passenger trains is now a shadow of its former self. At present it is used for light engine movements between Warrington

Arpley and Ditton, Halewood and Garston, with the only revenue freight train being the Mondays only Aluminum train from Neuss to Ditton Foundry Lane traversing the route.

Although there is very little traffic, the line remains double tracked and is unlikely to close as it is included along with part of the Low Level line in plans for a possible high speed line between Liverpool and Hull.

Photo by Dennis Flood

## ‘On Shed’ journal material

### Articles and photographs invited

The task of gathering in material for the journal is never ending. On that basis, you will not be surprised to learn that before this edition is published, efforts are already under way to secure new feature articles for the next ‘On Shed’ due in just 3 months time. Over the years, a very high standard has been set, and I hope that I’m able to continue producing an interesting mix of news, comment and tales of yesteryear !

I would be very grateful for your assistance if you feel able to contribute material for publication. Alternatively, if you don’t have the time or inclination to put pen to paper, but might like to suggest an appropriate topic, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Many thanks -

Tony Foster

[tony.r.foster@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.r.foster@btinternet.com)

# Southern Exiles !

Colin Turton

## Inter-Regional Transfers

The transfer of individual steam locomotives over long distances between Regions was not common on British Railways although it did occur at certain times. Some notable ones being in September 1955 when USA 0-6-0 tank engine 30066 made the journey from Southampton Docks shed to Bank Hall, for trials working trains on the various Dock lines in Liverpool. The engine was not liked, and was quickly despatched to Fleetwood shed who equally didn't think much of it, with the result by early November it had resumed working in Southampton Docks.

## Scottish Imports

In February 1957, the Scottish Region were looking for replacement locomotives to work the branch line from the Mound to Dornoch as the three ex Highland Railway 0-4-4 tank engines 55051-3 were life expired.

The line had been built as the Dornoch Light Railway and due to the light axle loadings, the only suitable replacement locomotives were the Western Region 16XX Hawksworth designed pannier tanks. Thus 1646 was transferred from Croes Newydd shed to make the long journey north to Helmsdale, its new home. In July 1958, 1649 was sent from Bristol St Philips Marsh Depot to join it and between them, worked the line until its closure in 1960.

Both locomotives remained at Helmsdale for shunting work until August 1962, when they were transferred to Perth shed from which they were withdrawn at the end of that year.

## Celebrity Status for 77014

Even late in the steam era, the odd transfer took place including the rather bizarre move involving Standard Class 3 No.77014. This was a London Midland Region based engine at Northwich shed, but on the 17th of March 1966 it set off on a journey which took it to the Southern Region. After leading a nomadic life for two weeks, the engine was allocated to Guildford shed on the 2nd of April thus becoming the first and only member of the Class to be allocated to that region. It lasted until the final day of steam on the Southern which was the 9th of July 1967, and achieved celebrity status by working the last ever revenue earning steam train on the region, a van train from Bournemouth to Weymouth. Sadly the locomotive wasn't preserved and went for scrap.



*Here seen at Lambley (Alston branch) in c.1957, Standard Class 3 No.77014 has completed the weekday colliery working and can have no concept of the celebrity status that it would one day acquire !*

## Southern Visitors to Widnes

Widnes shed had never had any ex Southern Region Locomotives allocated to it, but that changed in 1962 when two Riddles Standard Class 2 2-6-2 tank engines 84023 & 84024 arrived for a seven months stay. Both Locomotives entered service from Derby Works in April 1957 as part of a Class of 30 locomotives, the first twenty of which had been delivered to the London Midland Region between 1953 & 1956. The final ten went to the Southern Region with the first five allocated to Ashford depot and the final five going to Ramsgate shed. At Ashford the engines were used on local services to Hastings, Maidstone East, New Romney and Tonbridge, as well as hauling portions of mainline services from London Charing Cross to both Dover and Ramsgate. Occasionally, one was used to haul the empty Golden Arrow Pullman cars from Dover Marine to Folkestone Harbour, when at certain times of the year, the inbound working of this famous train ran from Folkestone rather than Dover to London Victoria.

Warrington Dallam shed had also received two of the Class, 84000 & 84001 in 1961 which had been transferred in from Birkenhead Mollington Street. The first of them was normally outstationed at Arpley shed for working the Ditton Junction to Manchester Oxford Road "low level line" push pull service. However on the 9th of January 1962, I was rostered to be the fireman on it, working Target 96 from Widnes delivering wagons to Ditton Sleeper Yard. The engine had worked into Widnes and was borrowed to operate this local trip freight before being sent back to Warrington.

The Widnes pair after the Kent Coast Electrification were transferred away from Ashford in February 1961 to Bricklayers Arms in South London. It appears that they did little work at that depot as within three months they were on the move again, 84023 to Exmouth Junc-

tion depot and 84024 to Brighton reputedly for working the then still steam worked Kemp Town branch and, the Lancing Carriage works workers train, which despite being on a fully electrified line continued to be steam worked until Brighton shed closed in 1964. Again time spent at these sheds was minimal and at the end of September both locomotives were on the way north, 84023 moving to Lancaster Green Ayre depot and 84024 arriving at Dallam. After a few months at these depots, the pair were to be reunited when on the 27th of January 1962 both were sent to Widnes.

During the February, I became acquainted with the pair and was rostered on the 7th to fire 84024 on Target 99 taking Wagons and shunting Ditton Yard before returning with the loco to Widnes Shed. Two weeks later on the 20th, I was rostered on Target 96 to Ditton Sleeper Yard and 84023 was the engine that was provided. A couple of days later on the 22nd, I fired the same engine on Target 86 which required us to take wagons and shunt at Farnworth and Bold, before returning back to Widnes.

The engines were easy to fire and well suited to the duties that they worked As they had not worked vast distances, there mileage was pretty low but British Railways was starting on its mass withdrawal of steam and small classes were vulnerable. It was no surprise that these locomotives fell into that category especially as a lot of the passenger services for which they had been built, had been taken over by multiple units or completely withdrawn.

The Widnes pair were to leave the shed for good on the 4th of August 1962 when they were reallocated to Crewe Works, supposedly for departmental work. Here they stayed for two years being withdrawn on the 8th of September 1964. However, there was a twist in the tail when in 1965, it was suggested that members of the Class already withdrawn

from service including the ex Widnes duo, should be reinstated and sent to the Isle of Wight to replace the Class O2 tank engines on the Island. The Southern Region rejected the idea claiming clearance problems in Ryde Tunnel and, they were also looking at a low cost Electrification scheme which was eventually completed in 1967. As a side line to this, Ivatt Class 2 41312 which is a near identical

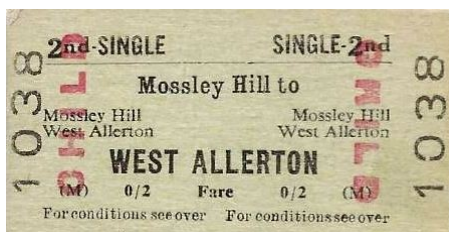
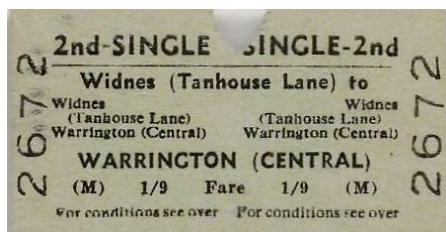
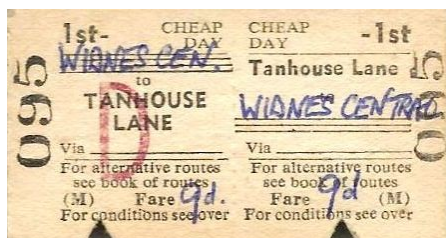
design to the Riddles type, has subsequently worked on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway providing the thought that what might have happened in 1965 if the Southern Region had agreed to take 84023 & 84024 and there class mates, we could have had ex Widnes engines on the Island, thus the Southern Exiles would have returned home !

*Colin Turton*

## Tickets Galore !

### Member Phil Graham's Collection of Rail Memorabilia

Those members of 8D that made the trip to York (Signalling School at the National Rail Museum) were treated to sight of a fantastic personal collection of rail memorabilia - the property of 8D member Phil Graham. In addition to Totems, Posters, Station Boards and other assorted items of rail history, Phil has a collection of hundreds, if not thousands, of rail tickets from lines and stations long gone. Below is a just a sample of tickets local to most 8D members. Love the price of a Child's 2nd Class single from Mossley Hill to West Allerton ! See also pages 17 and 29.



# Memories of Birkenhead Mollington Street

## MPD - The Men and the Area - Part 8

Dennis Flood

I have always said that a depot is a reflection of the men (and women) who work there in whatever capacity and during these articles about Mollington Street I have tried to convey that view. It is people who make a depot function.

At Mollington Street there were so many individuals who were `characters` that I want to do justice to those who deserve it. I have mentioned previously a number of such individuals and here are a few more from that remarkable depot.

We were very fortunate in having first class maintenance staff like Harry Williams, Alan Daniels, Des Moye (he of the DMU door repair in Part 6) and Les Williams. All of these men were dedicated railwaymen, but now is the time to mention another individual who was certainly different from these four but was equally dedicated.

This individual was Hughie Williams, brother of Les. Whereas the others I have mentioned were skilled fitters (Harry Williams being Mechanical Foreman) Hughie was a labourer at the depot – but what a `character` he was. His nickname was ***`Is she low`*** .?

Hughie spent a lot of his time working at the depot's locomotive fuelling point, opposite Hinderton Field at the entrance to the depot. He would meet every locomotive which required fuel upon arrival and greet the driver with his inevitable query *‘is she low ?’* That's all Hughie would ever say. However, he would still check the locomotive fuel gauge even if he was told it was nearly empty, half full, or full.

A locomotive arriving at the depot was secured but the engine was left running by the driver for ease of movement after re-fuelling by the shed driver. It wasn't difficult to confuse Hughie though !

English Electric Type 4 locomotives (later designated Class 40) were sometimes shut down upon arrival at the depot fuel point then secured and scotched if Hughie wasn't present – and the locomotive battery switch would be taken out. This is the correct procedure but it was done by some drivers, not to be seen to be efficient, but to confuse Hughie – he always fell for what this event subsequently led to.

On an EE Type 4 locomotive when the battery switch is taken out the fuel gauge reading falls to ZERO, as the electrical supply to the gauge came from the locomotive battery via the battery switch. On that basis, Hughie would always think that the locomotive fuel tank was empty !

In all the time I knew Hughie, who was a very decent man, he never realised that Mollington Street drivers were having a bit of fun with him by doing this. However, I can think of a number of drivers who were not aware of this either – they were quite surprised when I told them, during my tenure as a Deputy Train Crew Supervisor at Mollington Street (a *‘Deputy Dog’* as I was once described !) to put the locomotive battery switch in and then check the fuel gauge contents prior to starting the engine !

When I was the shed driver on what was called the *‘Bank Head’* at Mollington Street, I

would usually meet a locomotive upon arrival if, for example, I was told by the Train Crew Supervisor that one was on the way from Stanlow. I would sit with Hughie in his small 'office' at the depot fuelling point and he would not say a word – it was not as if he was being ignorant – he was just a man of very few words, except *'is she low'*, of course !

His 'office' reeked of diesel fuel and so did he – it was just as well that diesel fuel had a high flash point otherwise he may well have become the *'Wicker Man'* - long before the real *'Wicker Man'* was even thought of !

Hughie's brother Les was an interesting individual who would always come to work dressed in a tidy jacket and trousers – carrying a briefcase with just his sandwiches in it – he didn't want his neighbours to realise he was a railway fitter !

Driver George Drew was a remarkable character at Mollington Street. He was always jovial, no matter what time of the day it was and a gentle soul as well. He liked his beer and would often be seen at 'Lukes', a local pub near Rock Ferry station where he would consume copious quantities of beer and then make his way home to Hooton whilst stopping off at several pubs along the way for his usual 'chaser'. George could drink about eight pints of beer in a session without any ill effects – we were convinced he had hollow legs !

I was once having a beer with a driver friend of mine at The Merebrook pub in Bromborough when George walked in. We tried to hide from him but too late – he spotted us. I bought George a pint of beer and it was gone as soon as I had placed it upon the beer mat ! He consumed five pints of beer before I had finished the one I had – thankfully, he left shortly afterwards for the Hooton Hotel for his 'chaser'.

It was said that when George passed away there were several local publicans at his funeral who were all very sorrowful and upset

– not at George's passing but the loss of profits at their pubs !

George was a first class railwayman for all that and very keen as well. He gave me several GWR & L&NWR Joint Railway uniform buttons which I still have to this day.

One of the buttons had a Royal Crown above the GWR & L&NWR lettering. It was from a set of buttons which his father previously had when he had once worked a Royal Train when he was a driver. I returned this to George and what did he say to me ? - *'Dad had six of those on his jacket when he worked the Royal Train, Dennis – I've still got five of them – keep it, it's yours my friend'*.

What a lovely man George was not only to work with but also to have had the good fortune to have known. However, there was one occasion where he did *'try my patience'* though. I remember this event very well indeed.

I was Deputy Train Crew Supervisor at Mollington Street on late turn (3pm until 11pm) and George had just booked on at 1919 to take a locomotive off the depot and work the 2025 Stanlow to Torksey tank train. It was cancelled so I told George to *'take rest in the cabin'*. He was not impressed.

*'I've got enough scoff for twelve hours in my bag Dennis, what am I going to do with all this then ?'* said George. *'Make yourself a brew in the cabin and start eating your scoff before it all goes off then George !'*, I replied. George smiled at me and off he went to the cabin. (A depot mess room was nearly always referred to as the 'cabin').

My plan was to let George go home when the next 'spare' driver booked on at 2130 – but I didn't tell him that in case I needed him for a job beforehand.

The next 'spare' driver duly booked on and I called George over to the office window which overlooked the 'cabin' for a quick word

with him, out of earshot from the rest of those in the 'cabin'. 'Make your way home George and don't drink too much beer in 'Lukes' on your way either – the 'Torksey' is running tomorrow.' I said. 'I'm on my way, Dennis. I'll make it look as if you've just given me a job to do and I'll see you tomorrow', said George. Then off he went – to visit 'Lukes' pub in Rock Ferry !

The following day George booked on at the same time of 1919 and I told him the Torksey job was running and that his locomotive was on No.5 road and I had prepared it for him earlier. 'Your guard is sat on the engine waiting for you when you're ready, George' I said. 'I'll just make a brew', he replied. George had a quick look at the Late Notice Case and made a can of tea in the 'cabin'. That's when the 'fun' started...

George came into the office with his can of tea to give me a handwritten 'claim'. 'What's this then', I said. 'It's a claim for a 'spoilt basket' from the Torksey being caped last night', he said.

A 'basket' was how drivers on the L&NWR carried their food and clean overalls for a 'double trip' job and this became a generic term for many years and was still in use within the ASLEF 'Terms & Conditions' book at that time.

I exploded with anger... 'A claim for a spoilt bloody basket ?. I let you go home after a couple of hours so what are you on about ?', I shouted at him.

'Well, I'm entitled to claim for the food which I bought yesterday and didn't eat because my job was 'caped'. (The term 'caped' is a generic railway term still in use to this day meaning 'cancelled'). I was becoming more and more agitated at this. 'Are you telling me that you didn't eat all that scoff you brought with you yesterday ? I bet some of it is still in that bloody bag of yours!'

'Well yes', said George. 'Apart from the pork luncheon meat sandwiches curling up a bit,

the rest of the scoff left over I had for my tea before I came to work'.

'You're claiming for scoff you've already eaten then ?' I said. 'Yes'. I took hold of his handwritten 'claim' and tore it into pieces. 'This is what I think of your 'spoilt basket' claim driver Drew' and threw the pieces into the air in the office like confetti. 'Now get off the shed – your claim is declined – and I've even prepared the bloody engine for you !'. George thought for a moment and then said 'Is that your final word on my claim, Dennis ?'. 'Yes, it bloody well is !', I said. 'Well it was worth a go – I don't think much of pork luncheon meat anyway – and it was worth the laugh just winding you up !', said George. 'Thanks again for the early finish last night'. I replied - 'Get off the shed – now !'.

A lovely man George, with a wicked sense of humour. I was the unwilling victim of it on that day.

Another driver who was a 'character' at the depot was John Wheatland. John could be heard long before he was seen. He was a fanatical Everton supporter who lived in a house almost opposite 'The Kop' at Anfield. He would never walk past 'The Kop' to reach his house as he would take a long detour along one street and then down another to get home – irrespective of the weather. John was a very proud GWR man having been appointed a fireman at Stafford Road depot in Wolverhampton after starting as an engine cleaner at Mollington Street.

John's bark was certainly worse than his bite – providing you were an Evertonian, of course ! His nickname was 'The Wheat Germ'. One driver suggested a 'Hovis' nickname for him but decided against it as John never used his loaf because he was an Evertonian !

Ralph Robinson was another individual who it was impossible not to like. Ralph's nickname was 'The Owl' because of his wide friendly eyes – and what helped his nickname to prominence even more so was that he liked working night turns of duty because of the

enhanced rate of pay. It was payable at *'time and seven twelfths between 2am and 6am'* he would often remind me. I was always impressed with this when booking on at 0245 in the morning to work a Stanlow to Padiham job (but only as far as Wigan Springs Branch – we didn't work it any further).

*'The thought of time and seven twelfths between 2am and 6am always keeps me awake !'*, said Ralph. Thanks for that Ralph – I'll remember that when I'm sat on the 0230 Mersey Tunnel night bus on a Saturday morning travelling to Birkenhead to book on duty in the company of a group of very boisterous night clubbers on their way home after a night out in Liverpool. Time and seven twelfths indeed – that's all I needed !

I have mentioned driver Jan Quartermaine previously but it is worth mentioning Jan again because he was a *'character'* at a depot full of them. He liked working nights just like Ralph Robinson did but unlike Ralph he used to swap for regular night turns. He was given two nicknames as a result, and both of them suited him admirably - *'The Death Watch Beetle'* and *'The Gaslight Ghoul'*. Jan preferred *'The Death Watch Beetle'* !

Jan started his railway career at Bolton as a cleaner and, subsequently, a fireman there. When Bolton closed, he went to London for a short time working at Willesden. He was in lodgings near Old Oak Common depot in West London for a while whilst he was at Willesden because they were the cheapest he could find. Jan was very frugal with his money to say the least !

However, this turned out to be a false economy as he was thrown out of his *'cheap'* lodgings near Old Oak Common after only a few weeks in *'residence'* because he took his mud-splattered bike through the living room ruining the carpet ! He was told to leave immediately and ended up sleeping in empty coaching stock at Old Oak Common depot for some two weeks before he found

*'somewhere a bit more comfortable'*. What pleased him more than anything else was that he had saved two weeks lodging money from his wages !

Jan was a keen model railway collector throughout his entire adult working life and he had amassed an incredible model railway collection. When he sadly passed away a few years ago he left behind a collection of some 3,000 model locomotives, 7,000 wagons and 5,000 coaches – a truly staggering collection !

I attended Jan's funeral in Southport, along with a number of his ex-railway colleagues and then attended his wake at a local pub not far from his former home in Ainsdale. Given that Jan did not like to spend too much money on *'frivolous things'*, I was not in the least surprised to be served a bowl of pea and ham soup with one bread roll at his wake ! That was the Jan Quartermaine I knew and will always remember – Jan was frugal even at the end !

Another driver I have mentioned previously was Jimmy Brookes. Jimmy was known as *'The Worm'* at Mollington Street. This was an unusual nickname but a very fitting one used by all who knew him. If you were working with Jimmy as his mate on the Bidston to Shotwick iron ore trains where two trips were the norm he would always ask you *'worm / getting off ?'*. He usually jumped off the moving locomotive just as the train was approaching Bidston Station with the return empties for Bidston Dock so he could walk home from there. Jimmy would then disappear quickly, reminding you not to forget to book him off !

Driver Jack Husslebury was another of those very interesting *'characters'* who could tell a good story in the cabin. His nickname was *'Youth'*. Originally from Stafford, where the term *'youth'* was used to describe almost everyone despite their age, Jack carried on using that term throughout his railway ca-



reer. He was involved in a head-on collision at Birkenhead Docks during single line working and foggy weather. The collision involved a loaded train of iron ore travelling to Shotwick Sidings from Duke Street and a train of empty wagons travelling from Shotwick Sidings to Duke Street – both trains being on the same line at the same time.

This happened between Wallasey Bridge Road and Duke Street due to a misunderstanding between the Crossing Keeper at Wallasey Bridge Road and the Chargeman at Duke Street. This resulted in both trains being given permission to move at the same time – heading for each other and unbeknown to either of the drivers involved. It should be noted that the Birkenhead Dock lines were worked under Mersey Docks & Harbour Board regulations and not BR Regulations.

Jack was working the train of empty wagons for Duke Street from Shotwick when he saw

the loaded train approaching. Jack reacted *immediately* – he shouted to his mate, Jan Quartermaine, *'Quick youth, bail out sharpish !'*. They both did indeed 'bail out' from the leading Type 2 locomotive, as did the driver and secondman on the leading Type 2 of the loaded iron ore train. The leading locomotives of both trains sustained very considerable collision damage and became derailed, along with several wagons. No one was hurt but Jack said to the driver of the loaded iron ore train who was very shocked *'Christ youth, I've never seen you move that fast in years !'*. At the subsequent Inquiry into the circumstances of the collision Jack was asked by the Area Operations Manager what steps he took when he saw the other train approaching his own *'Bloody big ones, youth !'*, was the reply. That was Jack Husslebury.

To be continued ....

Note : See also page 12

## British Railways Board PUBLIC NOTICE

# Withdrawal of Railway Passenger Services

THE LONDON MIDLAND AREA BOARD HEREBY GIVES NOTICE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 56(7) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 1962, THAT ON AND FROM MONDAY, 9th SEPTEMBER, 1963, THEY PROPOSE TO DISCONTINUE ALL RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICES OPERATING OVER THE SECTION OF THE LINE KNOWN AS THE WIDNES LOOP WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE CLOSURE OF THE FOLLOWING STATIONS

# WIDNES CENTRAL AND TANHOUSE LANE

# Members' Collections

Photographs from the collection of 8D member Les Fifoot



**Top left** - An unidentified 8F, photographed from Carterhouse Junction Box in April 1968, proceeds towards Warrington returning to its home depot of Heaton Mersey. The loco has just rejoined the original line from Garston, after coming off the deviation line. To the left of the loco is ICI Pilkington Sullivan's Paraquat plant, now long gone.

**Top right** - An 8F hauled mineral train approaches the Ethelfleda bridge over the River Mersey in the early months of 1968. The pipe at the side of the footpath was owned by ICI, and carried brine from Mid Cheshire to their Pilkington Sullivan site, for the manufacture of caustic soda and chlorine.

**Bottom right** : Edge Hill 8F 48746 waits for the signal to come of at Widnes West Deviation box, before proceeding east with a mixed freight. The ICI caustic rail tank behind the brake van would suggest that it originated from ICI Castner Kellner site in Runcorn. The loco was reallocated to Newton Heath in May 1968, on closure of Edge hill depot, but only survived in service until 25th of that month.

**Bottom left** : Patricraft Standard Class 4-6-0 73050, drifts down the deviation at Widnes with a mineral train in April 1968. To the right of the photo is Hutchinson Street goods yard. 73050 was lucky to survive the cutting torch, and is now preserved, however, it has been out of traffic since 2014, for a major overhaul.

**MAY WE PUBLISH YOUR RAIL PHOTOGRAPHS ?**

Please contact the Editor (Tony Foster) at [tony.r.foster@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.r.foster@btinternet.com)

# L&YR School of Signalling

## Gauge 1 Model Railway

Bob Brook and Peter R Munthe Webster (NRM)

The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (L&YR) operated an extensive network of 590 route miles and 309 stations or halts between the West and East Coasts of Northern England from 1874 to 1923. In 1913 it employed 39,407 staff. It was a progressive concern which opened a School of Signalling at Victoria Station, Manchester and shortly afterwards commenced construction of a Gauge 1 model railway to be used to train signalling staff, and to demonstrate signalling and safety practices to other railway employees. The apparatus remained at Manchester Victoria until 1995, and is now preserved, and on display, in the Warehouse section of the National Railway Museum at York.

The restoration and operation of the model railway has been achieved by a team of NRM volunteers with the support of the NRM Curatorial team. The volunteers now maintain and demonstrate the Railway to NRM visitors on a regular basis. In addition to the continuing restoration, research has continued into its history, and the Museum would welcome any more information that readers might have.

The new School of Signalling was opened in 1910. By January 1913 the model railway had been constructed and a set of official photographs were taken. It is therefore assumed that most of the work on the model was undertaken during 1912. It is known that many of the track and signalling parts are from the well-known Northampton firm of Bassett-Lowke Ltd. - a leading early 20th century UK model manufacturer.

The baseboard looks similar to others constructed by that firm, as shown under construction in photographs taken in their workshops. It is also known that much work was

put into the construction by apprentices at the L&YR Horwich works. The Museum has correspondence from a lady whose grandfather told her stories during the 1940s of his involvement in building the layout. He was a Mr Heular who was responsible for the apprentices at Horwich in 1912. He was also deeply involved with the electrification of the Liverpool to Southport section of the L&YR before this time, and this may explain why the outside third rail is used on the model. From the Museum's research it would seem that for the few electric models sold by Bassett-Lowke at this time, centre third rail was the normal. So, it would seem that although many items of equipment may have been provided by Bassett-Lowke, most of the construction and almost certainly most of the stock was produced at Horwich.

Why was the Railway required? The School of Signalling was set up to improve knowledge of signalling and safety procedures for all L&YR staff. It was not set up to only to train signalmen. All grades of staff could attend on a voluntary basis in their own time; they were given a free ticket for their travel, and handsome prizes if they gained good passes. Two thousand students of all grades passed exams during the School's first ten years. Of course, it would have been a very useful attribute to have passed the course when it came to promotion. Similar courses continue to the present day, and one is still held for all Railway staff in the York and Leeds area.

The model railway was needed to simulate and demonstrate, in a safe environment, all combinations of circumstances those operating the service might meet. It enabled hands-on experience in a way blackboards and chalk never could. It was only from 1953 that the

school was used specifically to train new signalmen, who had just joined the railway, in full-time courses. This training continued until 1995 when the model was declared surplus by Railtrack, and acquired by the Museum.

How significant is the railway historically? This is more difficult to answer. Many such layouts have been built, and some are still in use around the world. It would seem that this was the first such layout of a significant size in this country, and the first to be operated electrically, but Bassett-Lowke had constructed layouts with one signal box and push along trains for the LNWR and the GWR before this date. It certainly was the longest lasting, being used until 1995. It also has a good documented history including what must be its high point, being taken to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1925 - Palace of Engineering. It must have still been considered to be at the cutting edge of railway learning over ten years after its construction, and considered to be as important as 'Flying Scotsman' or 'Caerphilly Castle', which were also exhibited at the Exhibition. Definitely the L&YR School of Signalling is worth preserving!

The Museum's main knowledge of the layout's early history, comes from sets of official photographs taken in 1913 and again in 1932 when the layout was displayed for a second time at an exhibition in Manchester, in what is now the aircraft hall of the Science Museum. Information has been gained from an extensive description in 'The Engineer' of 9 January 1914, a substantial booklet published by the LMS for the 1925 British Empire Exhibition, and the booklet presented, each year up to 1927, to those who passed the course. From 1932 to 1984 documentation is rather limited. A few articles and notes and examination of the layout itself during restoration have filled in some gaps, but there are still questions to be answered. We have spoken to people who were trained at Manchester from 1954 onwards and from the 1970's several trainers at the School have provided

much detail.

It will be easier to split the layout into areas to explain the detail rather just date the order of changes.

### **The Baseboard**

The baseboard is constructed of pine with solid turned legs, and finished to give a mahogany appearance. The framework is constructed outwards from a small square table at the terminus end, and then different length sections fixed on top. We believe that whoever installed the track on the baseboard put the sections in the wrong order, thus producing a situation where two joins are under the complicated places with points and rodding above them. This must have caused great problems when moving the layout to exhibitions. It certainly did so for us, when moving the layout to York and the eventual reconstruction. In the 1948/52 period the baseboard had a large long box structure attached underneath it, to hold the relays and wiring needed to enhance and update the layout. Other holes were made after 1984, for wiring and for the knitting needles that held up the overhead wire. It has now been restored as far as possible to its 1912 form.

### **The Track**

The model railway is built to Gauge 1 standard - a track gauge of 44.45 mm and scale of 1:32. The track is made up of standard Bassett-Lowke parts, with large section brass bullhead rail, held into cast white metal chairs by wood keys, and spiked to wood sleepers. The points are made of similar materials on a solid wood base. The third rail is held by split pins in turned plastic (bakelite?) chairs, which are screwed to the baseboard. The only early change made was the addition of a siding on the loop in 1938 with slightly different chairs. After 1984 there were increasing difficulties with wear, much of the third rail was renewed with a smaller section rail and new chairs. Several points including

the scissors crossover had become unusable and were replaced by proprietary German LGB track with plastic sleepers, and much bending of existing track took place to make it fit. The siding was also extended to a car shed to hold the stock. Since restoration started the plastic points have been replaced by fully restored old points or by new construction using a similar rail to the original. Sidings have also been returned to their original length.

### **The Signals**

The signals originally were all of a similar design using standard parts. At first all were lower quadrant, but with the addition of the siding controlled by a ground frame in 1938 two upper quadrant signals were used. The signals were moved about the layout and different ones constructed over the years, and after 1984 several rather crude colour light signals were made, and the original signals had lights installed so that night time working could be simulated. A decision has been taken to restore the signals to the 1920s positions on the main part of the layout, and the 1938-1980 position on the return circles.

We have restored all the signals where possible and built some new ones from parts cast by Imp Models, using the originals as patterns. During restoration it has been found that the signals contain a mixture of parts. Most parts are of white metal, but some have similar castings in brass/bronze. Most have the name Bassett-Lowke Ltd Northampton cast into the balance weights, and a many of the spectacle plates have the name of a maker in Hamble, Hants cast in. It is believed that some of the original white metal wore out, or was damaged during movement, and new parts had to be cast. One signal has been left un-restored to demonstrate how many changes the layout has gone through. One decision taken has been the colour of the distant signals, stripping down the paint has shown that they were originally in red, as were full size ones in 1912, but all have been

restored, except one, to yellow which would have been the colour from some time in the 1920s, and is easier to explain to the public.

### **Lever frames and mechanical interlocking**

The miniature lever frames are a work of art, and have stood up to use by thousands of hands very well. They are mainly made of brass parts and castings, with the locking bars in steel. They have been little altered over the years, only changes to the interlocking as the layout changed, and some electrical interlocking added. There were originally three signal-boxes: T with 18 levers; A with 20 levers and B with 24 levers. The small frames at C and D were added later but before 1925, D being changed later in 1938 to a ground frame released from B.

One of the mysteries in the research has been early references to an electric display of train and signal position, and of a full-size lever frame on the layout. From careful reading of the articles and from one photograph, it seems there was a full-size lever frame at the Terminus end of the model, with a similar layout to box B, this had a lit display board. It seems this frame could be used to train signalmen, and the bells from boxes A, C, and D could be switched to it, but it did not actually operate the layout. We do not know when it was taken out of use, certainly before the 1970's but probably about 1950.

### **Train control - the block instruments and bells**

Train control on the railway is based on both Absolute and Permissive Block signalling principles using both Block Instruments and Bells. The Goods line between Box A and Box B is controlled under Permissive Block (up to 6 trains in the block section) and the rest of the layout is operated under Absolute Block – i.e. one train in one section at any one time. Several different types of Block Instruments are used, including (i) L&YR Standard 3 Wire 3 Position, (ii) LNER Rotary Block, (iii) LNWR Fletcher's Standard, and (iv) MR Tyer Rotary

## Permissive Block (6 Train).

Due to the number and close proximity of the bells, each bell has its own tone. Signal Box A has the ability to 'Switch out the Box' - used when the box is unmanned. A Welwyn Release control is also fitted at Signal Box B - a hand operated delay device preventing the signalman resetting a route too quickly. The LNER Rotary Block instruments are interlocked with track mounted treadles and can normally only be released following activation by a train. Interlocking of the Block Instruments with the Mechanical Lever Frames is via electrical solenoids mounted under the locking frames and micro switches attached to relevant levers in the frame. The type of instrument was changed over the years to reflect current railway practice. The layout today is based on 1930s instruments.

## The Rolling Stock

The rolling stock has lasted extremely well. Some of the wagons shown in the 1913 pictures are still on the layout, as are two of the coaches, although they were much altered in 1984 and made into an overhead powered EMU. The old photographs show four coaches and up to thirteen wagons.

The locomotives have not stood up to the course of time so well. The 1913 photographs only showed a 2-4-2 Electric Locomotive in L&YR livery, but it is not seen again. It is presumed that it was built by apprentices and modelled on the L&YR No 1 Electric Locomotive built in 1912. It does not seem to have lasted very long, but the chassis may have been used in on one the later tank engines. By the time the rather poor 1914 photograph, which appears in 'The Engineer' was taken, the three locomotives that lasted until 1984 are shown.

The two 2-4-2 tank engine bodies are still in the NRM possession, but unfortunately only bits of motors and no chassis or wheels. The bodies are made of brass sheet and almost certainly were built at Horwich, and probably

used the Electric Locomotive's chassis, as the wheels look the same in the pictures. This incidentally is the reverse of the full size where a 2-4-2T was converted to the first L&YR electric locomotive. These two locomotives were the mainstay of the model's fleet and used intensively to 1984 when they had become very uncontrollable and often derailed because of the defects in the third rail. They were put into storage and reported to the police as stolen in 1987, but somehow the remaining bits were found with the layout when it was dismantled and brought to York.

The premier locomotive is the 4-4-0 tender locomotive, which again was almost certainly built at Horwich. It is likely to be based on an Aspinall design rebuilt by Hughes with a Belpaire firebox. It is a very substantial and a well thought out piece of work that has lasted in working order. It has a large 40volt AC motor which is mounted in the boiler and drives the wheels by a worm, this acts as a pivot for the driving wheels which can swivel as a bogie. The six-wheel tender is very neatly designed so that the middle wheels move from side to side and the end wheels pivot. The best description we can come up with is that it is a single Fairlie with a Cleminson tender. The tender body is hinged and contains a relay and other electric parts, presumably to reverse the AC motor. It was last overhauled at Crewe in 1961. It would have had little use for regular running as there is no turntable, but it was used to set particular scenarios as part of training.

When the museum inherited the layout in 1995, only two Electric Multiple Units (EMU's) were workable. These were the overhead pantograph version, constructed from the old coaches, and a green Southern Region (SR) type third rail EMU that was constructed in 1986.

At present the layout can be demonstrated using several battery-powered locomotives: a battery-powered, radio-controlled coach that

propels one of the original tank locomotive bodies on a new chassis; an additional radio-controlled locomotive for freight use, a Wickham electrified personnel trolley and a modern express train. A decision has been made not to restore the third rail traction.

### Power supply and method of control

This whole area is one that has posed many questions during research, and we still cannot be certain of various aspects. Originally the layout was divided into approximately twenty-five electrical sections, and both direction and stopping and starting was controlled by banks of switches between box T and A, repeated at the end of the circuit. Very soon, before 1925, the switches at the loop end were replaced by round light switches at each signal post. The driver then controlled the train by use of these switches, the ones at box T only being used for control at that end of the layout and reversing the train. This method of control lasted until 1984 when it was not considered to be realistic, and at that stage there seemed to be no method of controlling the speed of the train. The decision was taken to install an overhead Catenary, which consisted of knitting needle posts and galvanised garden wire. A set of coaches was

converted to an EMU and was controlled by full size DMU controllers at a new desk. By 1986 the third rail was partly renewed and a new green EMU had been constructed, again worked from the desk.

It is not known how the power for the layout was originally supplied, but by 1932 photographs show that power came into a large frame on the wall, that seemed to contain transformers, a large variable resistance and a set of meters. Only the piece of slate that held the meters remains. We understand that the power to the layout was AC at about 40 volts. The layout was rewired in the 1948/52 period and fully track circuited, and we are told that by 1984 the power came from generator (or transformer?) situated in an outside corridor, which was very unreliable. Hence the change to DC powered trains.

The surviving L&YR Signalling School model railway at NRM is now at least 105 years old and has been certified by the Guinness Book of Records as being the oldest operating model railway layout in the world. That it is constructed to Gauge 1 and 1:32 scale, means that it has a special place of pride for the Gauge 1 Model Railway Association.



*On 26 October, 8D members made the trip to York for a hands-on session of instruction and practice in the Signalling School at the National Rail Museum. Here John Wilson (right) is photographed being photographed alongside 8D member Ed Graham.*



# On the Footplate of No.1000 at 'Rainhill 150'

Rod Dixon

The 'Rainhill 150' article and photographs in the last edition of 'On Shed' reminded me of the small part I played in those celebrations.

At the time I was a relief loco driver at Garston Depot in the winter of 1979-80 when we heard rumours of a big event being planned at Rainhill to commemorate the famous trials held there. We were later informed that there was going to be a cavalcade where a number of preserved steam and diesel locos would be allowed to run on the main line Bold Colliery and the area around Rainhill, the main line would have to be closed.

## Steam Experience is a Must !

A notice was posted at the depot asking for men with steam experience bearing in mind this event was planned for the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend so there were elements of over-time so at Garston the list was oversubscribed ! I think the same thing happened at the other depots involved. It was decided that names would be drawn and the men allocated to a steam loco for one day each of the three days. The senior of the two drawn would be designated driver and the other would be the fireman. I was placed fireman to driver Bill Taylor on the Midland Compound loco No 1000 on Saturday 24 May. Some of the older drivers were allocated to the replica of the Novelty and they were told

they would be dressed for the part. Drivers who had to wear spectacles were allocated to the diesels that formed the rear of the cavalcade.

## Assembly Point at Bold Colliery

When the big day arrived we were given a briefing by our loco inspector. I think there were about ten of us loaded into a mini bus and taken to the assembly point at Bold Colliery where we found our allocated locos. The locos had arrived in ones and twos mostly under their own power but some including the replica locos had come by road on low



*8D Member Rod Dixon seen (at left) on the footplate of Midland Compound No. 1000 at the 'Rainhill 150' celebrations.*

loaders. All had been made ready and marshalled in the right order by the support crews to be led off in the cavalcade by the three replicas Rocket, Sans Pareil and Novelty.



## **'Rocket' Derailed !**

A problem occurred as the locos were being marshalled. Rocket was derailed and suffered damage to its driving wheels. There was also a problem with Novelty, so that was put on a low loader wagon and for the three day event it was pulled through. The Rocket was withdrawn on the first day so that it could be repaired, but it did run under its own power on the other two days of the event.

The Cavalcade set off about 1-30 pm with the replicas leading, followed by Lion and the other locos according to age at intervals of approx. 2 mins. Running at about 5mph, our loco, the Midland Compound, was about eighth in the running order and we were pulling a heritage Midland dining car.

## **Older Locos Needed a Push**

After passing through St Helens Junction station the line climbs up to Lea Green it's not a steep climb but some of the older locos needed a push until they got to the level at Lea Green. It needed some of the old skills to keep the older locos going at a pace between them and not to make too much smoke and steam to spoil the photos.

## **Exchanging Coaches for the Return Trip**

Rainhill Station was the end of the run but we all had to run on towards Whiston to allow the rest of the cavalcade to pass the viewing stands. At the end of our run we detached our coach and attached our loco to the coaches on the preceding train so the loco behind us could take our coach back to Bold. After the last train reached Rainhill Station there was a pause as the whole cavalcade was reversed to go back to Bold with the same intervals at slow speeds bearing in mind we are going downhill now.

On arrival at Bold we handed over our locos to the custodians to be serviced and prepared for the next day. For the train crews it was a bit of a reunion, we all milled around and

talked to the other depot crews involved until our train crew inspector gathered us together and loaded us onto our mini bus for our return to Garston.

## **Rostered for Shuttle Service**

The next day I was rostered to work a special shuttle service of a six car DMU empty from Allerton Depot to Rainhill then when the line was reopened after the cavalcade was finished take the spectators all stops to Manchester Victoria a quick turnaround then empty stock to Rainhill pick up spectators for the all stops to Lime St. I think there were other trains doing the same thing from Manchester. On the next day Bank holiday Monday I had the day off, so I went to the stands at Rainhill to watch the cavalcade. Not quite the same as being involved !



Nearly forty years later I went along to see the Rocket at Rainhill when they had the Rocket 190 celebrations. It was a much quieter event because there is no way that the cavalcade could be staged now. There is not the manpower to run the steam locos, the sidings at Bold are now a big housing estate, and the line between Liverpool and Manchester has been electrified. Railtrack would not allow the line to be closed for three days

*Rod Dixon*

# CLC North Liverpool Extension Line

## An Illustrated Talk by Paul Wright

On Tuesday 29 October 2019 Paul Wright gave an illustrated talk about the CLC North Liverpool Extension Line. The line has been absent from the railway landscape since the last track lifting trains ran in the Spring of 1979 but much of its course can still be followed as the Trans Pennine Cycle and Walking route occupies the trackbed between Halewood and Aintree. There have been a number of guided visits to sections of the line over the years and Paul's talk complimented them perfectly.

In the talk Paul explained the history of the line and he showed those present the features of the line through a series of old photographs and maps.

The North Liverpool Extension Line is a particular favourite of Paul's. He explained to on shed how 'memories of this line are imprinted into my memory from my earliest of years. I remember being fascinated by Fazakerley South Signal Box aged 3 and 4. My mother worked on Saturday nights checking 'pools' coupons in a building next to the signal box and sometimes I would have to go with my father to pick her up. I well remember turning up on one occasion and the signal box had gone. I couldn't understand why that would be when

I was 4. My Mother had a friend who lived near to Knotty ash station. I remember being in the park adjacent to the station and looking down from the railings. This would be around 1971. There was a DMU at waiting at the station but I have absolutely no idea why as passenger services had long ceased. Perhaps it was on a route learning run. Who knows maybe one of our members could shed light on the matter. From around 1974 my Grandfather included the Walton Triangle as part of a walking route that he would take



*On 29 March 1958 a Grand National Special is seen passing north through Gateacre station. Grand National Day was always an extremely busy time on the North Liverpool Extension Line. Specials would travel along the line from many destinations throughout the country. For enthusiasts the line was a veritable cornucopia of exotic traction on Grand National race days.*

my brother and I on. There was only a single track by then but the locomotive shed was still standing and it was a fascinating place to explore. It became a playground for me in the 1975 to 1978 period whenever I was over at



At 16:53 on Friday 7 September 1973 train 9T21 is seen on a Huskisson Dock to Edge Hill trip working . The train is on the Huskisson branch of the CLC North Liverpool Extension Line close to Kirkdale station. It had only just departed from Huskisson. At the head of the train is Sulzer Type 2 locomotive number 7597. This was the era when the former CLC line was in its death throws. By this time the line had become a single track all the way down to Gateacre. A fire had recently occurred at Gateacre signal box and it would be abolished on 26 September 1973 and at the same time the remaining section of line as far as Hunts Cross west Junction was also singled. In July 1975 rail traffic to and from Huskisson ceased.

**Photo by Alan Roberts**

my grandparents' house. As did the Walton-on-the-Hill tunnels but they always carried an element of fear about them for some reason and we were always too scared to go much further than Walton Number 1 tunnel. An uncle of mine moved into a house by Gateacre station in 1977. Trains had ceased by then but the track was still there as were the

station platforms. So you all in all I developed a fascination and an affection for the CLC North Liverpool extension line'.

Note : Paul covered the history of the North Liverpool Extension Line in 'On Shed' Volume 3 Number 1 of March 2013 (*available to read on the 8D Association Website*).



## 8D Meeting on Tuesday 18 February 2020 'First Rescue from Barry Island'

8D member John Atherton presents an illustrated talk describing how the team that he was part of rescued and restored 4F No.43924 - the first locomotive to leave Woodhams scrapyard in South Wales. The locomotive was restored on the Keighley and Worth Valley line.

## 8D Events Programme

### **19:00 Tuesday 17 December 2019 – ‘My Railway Journey’**

An illustrated talk by John Wilson. John started taking photographs as a young spotter and continued after he became a railway employee. This talk will include many of those photos and John will explain the stories behind them.

**Venue – Halton Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

### **10:00 Saturday 18 January 2020 – The 8D Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the Association. The business of the Association will take place followed by what has now become the annual railway quiz. This year Chris Hollins has put the quiz together. After the quiz there will be a buffet lunch and time to socialise. The annual subscriptions will also be collected at the AGM.

**Venue – Halton Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes**

### **19.00 Tuesday 18 February 2020 – ‘First Rescue from Barry Island’**

In 1968, 8D member John Atherton was part of the team that rescued 4F No.43924, the first departure from Woodham’s scrapyard. He presents an illustrated talk describing that achievement and the subsequent restoration of the locomotive on the Keighley and Worth Valley line.

### **19:00 Tuesday 17 March 2020 – St Helens Central Station – 1900**

An illustrated talk by former 8D chairman Joe Cowley. During a stint as a volunteer at St Helens library Joe came across a selection of photographs that were taken at the opening ceremony of the GCR St Helens Central station in 1900. The discovery of the photos has led to Joe putting together an illustrated talk about the station focusing on the year of opening in 1900.

### **10:00 Saturday 18 April 2020 : The Wirral Railway Company : A Guided Tour**

This guided tour led by Paul Wright leads on from where the Mersey Railway tour finished off. If you didn’t attend the Mersey Railway tour, don’t worry about that as Paul will fill in any missing gaps in your knowledge. The surviving lines of the former Wirral Railway (Birkenhead Park to West Kirby and New Brighton) will be explored by train, and some of the closed sections will be explored on foot through short walks from stations. The tour will start at Birkenhead Park and conclude at New Brighton where members wanting to take refreshment can do so. **Meet on the Platform at Birkenhead Park station.**



## Where was it !

The ‘Where is it ?’ photo in the last edition of ‘On Shed’ appears to have defeated even the most knowledgeable of our members.

The photo shows a northbound steam special approaching Garswood station.