

# ON SHED

## The Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 4 Number 1 – March 2014



### Ditton Junction 1968

An ex LMS Black 5 locomotive number 45284 is seen passing westbound through Ditton Junction station on 30 March 1968. **Photo by Keith Holt**

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## Volume 4 Number 1

March 2014

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### Editor

Welcome to the first On Shed of 2014. We start our fourth full year of existence with 63 members. An achievement we could never have foreseen when a small group of us met up for the first time in late 2010.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Select Security Stadium on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The event was well attended and a full report is given on page 4.

The Spring will soon be upon us and the programme of walks for the first half of 2014 is shown on the back page. The 8D walks have always proved to be popular and an interesting programme has been put together. A visit will be made to the Hutchinson street area of Widnes to see the site of the yard before it is changed beyond recognition. Work will have begun on the Mersey Gateway bridge by the time you read this. The new bridge over the River Mersey between Widnes and Runcorn will make significant alterations in both towns but particularly in south Widnes. The 8D Association will be making a photographic record of what still survives before it is lost for ever. After all that is one of our key aims. **Paul Wright**



*The 8D association made two visits to Allerton Depot during the winter period. In this view from 14 December 2013 a class 156 DMU is seen inside the refurbished facility undergoing routine maintenance. In 2014 Allerton depot will receive EMUs that will be deployed on the Liverpool and Manchester via Chat Moss route. Photo by Paul Wright*

## News Round Up

### Waste Train to Folly Lane

During the late afternoon of Friday 31 January 2014 a full length Greater Manchester Waste Authority train operated by Freightliner ran to Folly Lane in the late afternoon. It is not known at this point if the train was loaded or not. Regular services of three trains per day are due to start in February. The trains will bring pelletised household waste to Folly Lane which will be used to fire the new Energy from Waste Power Station. Test workings to the new facility had operated to Folly Lane but it is thought that the working of 31 January was the first full length train. The train was worked by class 66 locomotive number 66 506.



*Class 66 number 66 506 at the Folly Lane unloading facility for the energy from waste power station on 31 January 2014. Photo by Paul wright*

### St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway to Re-open (As a footpath/cycleway)

A section of the St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway is set to become a footpath and cycleway. A new greenway is being created along a section of the line from a point just to the north of Watkinson Way in Widnes to Clock Face in St Helens. A footpath/cycleway that will be known as the Farnworth and Sutton Greenway will be constructed along the route of the line. Interpretive panels will provide visitors with information about the railway. The project is a joint Halton and St Helens Borough Council venture and work will start on 24 February 2014.

## **8D Association Annual General Meeting - 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

The third 8D Annual General Meeting took place at the Select Security Stadium on 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2014. Joe Cowley, 8D Chair, conducted the business of the meeting giving a report into the activities of the group over the preceding year. Joe also thanked the committee and the website editor.

Lee Woods, the treasurer, gave his report as did Paul Wright acting secretary.

At the time of the meeting there were 63 members of the 8D Association. Although membership subs had still to be collected from many it is likely that the association will easily sustain a membership base of this size going forward. The size of the group had far exceeded all of the original expectations.

Amendments to the constitution were proposed and accepted and nominations for the committee were read out and taken from the floor. There was also a proposal from the floor that the Journal Editor position be an officer post of the committee. There was general agreement that it should and the matter will be dealt with at the first Committee Meeting of 2014.

The new committee for 2014 was then voted into place.

**Chair** – Joe Cowley

**Treasurer** – Lee Woods

**Secretary** – Doug Birmingham

**Archivist** – Richard Mercer

**Journal Editor** – Paul Wright (To be confirmed as a Committee Officer position following the next committee meeting).

**Committee Member/Minute secretary** – Les Fifoot

**Committee Member** – Chris Hollins

**Committee Member** – Peter Murray

**Committee Member** – Colin Turton

**Committee Member** – John Wilson

Thanks were recorded for outgoing Committee Members Mark Aldred and David Thomas.

A slide show was then given by Doug Birmingham in which images of the Liverpool docks railways in the period between 1989 and the 2000s were shown. The period was an interesting one which saw the reversal of a decline in rail traffic to the docks from the mid-1960s to 1980 when it reached its lowest ebb.

After the illustrated talk members enjoyed a buffet lunch.

**A detailed set of Minutes from the AGM will be circulated to all Members.**

## Allerton Depot a History



*The Allerton Open Day of July 1969. Three steam locomotives were present at the open day ex GWR 4-6-0 Clun Castle, and Ex LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 Kolhapur and an ex LMS black 5. Photo by Les Fifoot*

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the 8D Association visited Allerton depot. The visits were facilitated by Northern Rail, the current owners of Allerton Depot, and they proved to be excellent hosts. Allerton Depot can trace its origins right back to the opening of the Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) North Liverpool Extension Line in December 1879. The line had its connection with the CLC Liverpool and Manchester line at Halewood where a triangle and sidings were laid out. To serve the sidings at Halewood the CLC started to construct a locomotive depot at Allerton in 1880. The depot opened in 1882.

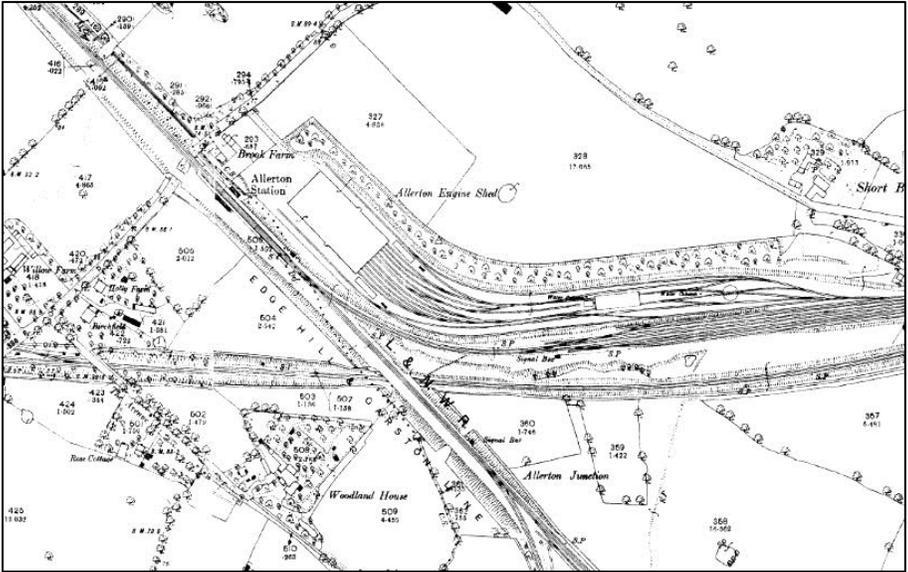
It was located on land to the north of the CLC main line to the east of the point where it passed under the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) Edge Hill and Garston line. Allerton station was to the west of the shed on the LNWR line.

The CLC did not own its own locomotives. The company was a joint concern with three partners, the Great Northern Railway (GNR), the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway (MS&LR) and the Midland Railway (MR). By agreement the MS&LR provided the locomotives for CLC services and the majority of the engines at Allerton were from that company. The GNR and MR were also a presence though.

It seems that although the depot was constructed to serve the sidings at Halewood it was also used by locomotives from Liverpool. The main depot there for the CLC line

was at Brunswick. It was on a cramped site with no room for expansion and Allerton considerably eased the congestion there. However by the mid-1890s the cost of light engine movements between Liverpool Central, Brunswick and Allerton was deemed to be prohibitive. By 1896 all of the MS&LR allocation of engines had been moved away from Allerton to other depots. The MR continued to use Allerton until 1897.

The shed became a wagon repair depot and carriage cleaning area.



**Allerton locomotive depot as it was in 1893. The CLC main line can be seen running west to east and the LNWR route north-west to south-east.**

Very little changed at Allerton for the next sixty years. The CLC remained independent at grouping of 1923 but its owning companies became the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) with two thirds of the shares and the London Midland & Scottish (LMS) with one third. At nationalisation Allerton became part of British Railways London Midland Region.

Big changes came at the end of the 1950s. In 1959/60 the connecting chord between the former CLC and LNWR systems was altered and new depot facilities were built on the north side of it where originally there had been a coaling plant and turntable. On 7 October 1961 the chord and the sidings within the new depot area were energised with 25KV overhead wires.

The works were associated with the electrification of the line between Liverpool Lime street and Crewe and with the introduction of DMUs onto the former CLC line. From 1960 Allerton had an allocation of class 115 four car suburban DMUs. The class 115s were allocated to Allerton to work express services between Liverpool Central and Manchester central. The depot was also given an allocation of class 108 DMUs



point where the engine shed had been. In 1983 the CLC line between Garston and Hunts Cross was electrified with third rail as part of the Merseyrail Northern Line. A short section of line at the east end of the depot was electrified with third rail so that class 507 and 508 EMUs could come into Allerton for wheel turning. From the mid-1980s British Rail started to introduce its second generation DMUs and Allerton was not chosen as a depot at which they were to be based. Newton Heath in Manchester was home to most of the new units that were introduced onto services in the Liverpool area.

The class 115 DMUs had disappeared from Allerton by 1988 and the 108s had followed within a few years.

By the early 1990s Allerton was in decline. Freight wagons were serviced at the depot and the wheel lathe continued to be used. The depot passed to the English Scottish & Welsh Railway (EWS) freight company during the privatisation era but it continued to decline.

In 2007 EWS was taken over by the German rail freight company DB Schenker who assumed responsibility for Allerton. In April 2008 DB Schenker mothballed Allerton depot and its future appeared uncertain. Amazingly the overhead wires remained energised despite the fact that the depot had started to be visited by local children and vandals. In August 2009 a 13 year old boy was killed when he climbed onto



**Allerton depot looking east on 20 April 1984. The view was taken from a train that was passing along the chord line that connects the former CLC Liverpool and Manchester Line to the former LNWR route between Liverpool and Crewe on 20 April 1984. The stabling sidings can be seen to the left of the chord line. Photo by John Wilson**

wagons that had been left at the depot. There was much criticism in the local media about the lack of security at the depot.

In 2010 plans were announced for the electrification of many lines in the North West including the routes between Liverpool and Manchester via Chat Moss and the Huyton to Wigan line. Northern Rail, the company that operated most of the local passenger services in the area, turned its attention to the mothballed Allerton depot as a suitable place to service class 156 and 150 DMUs as well as a base for the EMUs that would be deployed on the electrified routes.

Northern rail in a joint project with Network Rail took over the depot in 2011 and a refurbishment costing £10.6 million was carried out over a six month period. The works were substantially complete by December 2011. Even the wheel lathe, which had been flooded out for a number of years, was brought back into use.

On 10 May 2012 Allerton was officially re-opened by Transport Minister Teresa Villiers. The opening of the new Northern Rail depot had created 46 jobs. In 2014 the first EMUs for the Liverpool and Manchester electric services will be transferred to Allerton from the London area.

Following the refurbishment Allerton depot is assured of a bright future for many years to come. **Paul Wright**



*The Allerton depot open day of July 1969. In the foreground is ex GWR locomotive number 7029 'Clun Castle'. Further back can be seen the two ex LMS locomotives that attended on that day, 4-6-0 Jubilee number 5596 Kolhapur and black 5 number 5428. Behind the two ex LMS locomotives is the Allerton shed building of 1882. Photo by Les Fifoot.*



*An English Electric class 40 locomotive number 40 168 is seen in Allerton depot on 13 August 1984. The locomotive was having its batteries charged. The previous Saturday it had failed whilst working the 11.15 Liverpool Lime Street to Barrow train. Photo by John Wilson*



*Allerton depot played host to Coronation Class 4-6-2 locomotive number 46229 'Duchess of Hamilton on 26 September 1990. The locomotive had entered service with the LMS in September 1938. Photo by Doug Birmingham*

## The 8D Association visits to Allerton Depot



*The 8D Association visit to the Northern Rail Allerton depot on 14 December 2014. The 1960 depot building can be seen in the background. Photo by Terry Callaghan.*

The 8D Association had two visits to Allerton depot courtesy of Northern Rail who made both visits memorable occasions. The first visit was held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and the second on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2014. John Dillon Engineering Depot Supervisor with Northern Rail escorted both visits and showed members the features of the first class facility that has been created at Allerton.

During the first visit on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013 members were given a tour of the facility and told of future plans which include an extension to the current building so that it can accommodate more units and of a greater length. The wheel lathe which is now back in use was also visited. Only two units were on shed during the December visit both of the 156 class. John Dillon explained to the group how most of the work is done at night when passenger services are not running. The utilisation of units in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is far higher than it ever was 40 years ago and they need to be kept running and in service for the maximum length of time possible.

During the visit of 12<sup>th</sup> January members were able to watch units going off shed and into service. On both visits there was plenty of opportunity to take photographs and explore the depot. Rod Dixon was on the second visit. He had worked out of Allerton depot during his driving career. Rod was very impressed with the facility that northern have created. It was never as good in BR days.



**Looking west inside the depot building at Allerton depot on Saturday 14 December 2013. A class 156 DMU number 156 482 was undergoing an exam. Leading 8D association members around the depot is John Dillon of Northern Rail. Photo by Paul Wright**



**The depot building at Allerton looking east on 14 December 2013. The clean and tidy appearance of the depot is a credit to the Northern rail staff who work there. Their depot had probably not looked so good since it opened in 1960. Photo by Paul Wright**

## Totems at Widnes South station



*The east end of Widnes station in 1957 before it had been renamed as Widnes south. To the left on the up platform (Manchester direction) can be seen a gas lamp and fitted to it is a British Railways London Midland Region totem of a type that did not come into production until 1957. The totem would have been very recently fitted. In less than two years it would be removed and replaced with a Widnes South totem sign. Photo by H C Casserley*

When British Railways came into existence on 1 January 1948 thoughts turned to a corporate identity. For passenger stations a style was developed for the whole of British railways with a variation in colour for each of the six regions. One of the developments was the totem sign which was designed to be fitted to lamp columns. Various types of totem were produced and on the London Midland Region of British Railways a maroon colour was adopted. Totems have become much desired collector's items and much has been written about them.

The former LNWR Widnes station would have carried LMS signage right up to 1 January 1948 and possibly beyond. At street level British Railways branding was probably applied within a few years but at platform level the running in boards (the large signs at each end of the platforms) would have still been the ones that dated back to the LMS era and possibly even to that of the LNWR.

It had been thought that Widnes had only received totems after it had been renamed as Widnes South on 5 January 1959. However a photograph taken by H C Casserley in 1957 has revealed that Widnes totems had in fact been fitted. More interestingly the type of totem that had been fitted only came into production in 1957 so they must have been fitted shortly before the photograph was taken. These 1957 totems must have been in very good condition when they were taken down in 1959 to be replaced

with Widnes South totems. The Widnes South totems had a similarly short life as Widnes South was closed on 10 September 1962.

Widnes South had a very sparse passenger service in its later years its main source of income being through parcels. Before September 1961, when a new parcels depot opened at Edge Hill, Widnes south handled 400 parcels a day.

The totem signs and other platform furniture would have been removed very shortly after closure.

Neither a Widnes, nor a Widnes South totem has ever come up at auction. Should one ever do so it would fetch a high price as totems from closed stations are much sought after.

With all of the material that is turning up through members of the 8D Association it is probably only a matter of time before a Widnes, or a Widnes South totem turns up.



*Widnes station looking east in 1957. Photo by H C Casserley*

**Table 113 –**

**LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER (Via WIDNES)**

**The Service between Ditton Junction and Broadheath is discontinued and Widnes South, Latchford, Lymm, Heatley and Warburton, Dunham Massey and Broadheath Stations are closed for Passenger Traffic. The locality is served by omnibuses operated by North Western Road Car Co. and Crosville Motor Services Ltd.**

**For Service between Liverpool and Ditton Junction, see Table 96.**

**For Service between Manchester and Timperley, see Table 99.**

## Spotting Memories at Ditton Junction

My childhood home fronted onto the St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway at Clock Face and I have been interested in trains from as far back as I can remember.

By 1986 aged 14 I had been spotting trains seriously for some six years and had already undertaken a couple of Scot Rail rovers, but I was desperate to see and photograph some of the new Class 58's. I remember suggesting to my father that we could take a trip to Toton to see them, but he wasn't keen on the idea. I remember him arriving home from work one evening and telling me we were going to see a class 58 that evening, absolute joy! That evening, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1986 was to be my introduction to the station at Ditton.

Having parked on the old goods yard we walked to the station and waited. I was curious to know how he knew there would be class 58's running this far north and he explained that on his route home from work, over the Widnes Runcorn bridge, he had seen one heading in the Liverpool direction. We waited for an hour or so and then 58035 came slowly along the up goods line and into platform 4, coming to a stand at the signal. The friendly driver allowed a quick look in the cab and explained the working was from Toton to Garston, returning empty. I was rather excited and my picture of the train was very poor; luckily my father took a better one.



*Ditton station looking east along platform 4 on 11 May 1987. Class 58 locomotive number 58 018 is seen passing through on the down slow line with a Toton to Garston working. Although the station had been renamed as Ditton in 1973 the lamps still carried the name Ditton Junction. Photo by Terry Callaghan*



*Looking west from the western end of Ditton station on 30 October 1986. Heading east is an AC electric locomotive number 85 003 working a rake of InterCity liveried MK1 coaches. Heading away from the station is a Garston bound coal train on the down slow line. Photo by Terry Callaghan*

From this point I visited Ditton every night for the next couple of weeks and then at least two or three times a week for the next year or so. There was always such a variety of traffic with your usual mixture of express and local passenger trains, coal, BOC block trains and liner workings. Another lad, Andrew, also went spotting there and we would meet up for our two or three hours on the station. As winter approached it unfortunately got dark rather early and it was difficult to see the numbers. After being reprimanded for using a torch to see the numbers of passing trains we had a search around and found the switch for the station lights; they worked. It was great having the run of a whole station to yourselves and we always turned the lights off when we left.

We decided to take it a stage further and spend the whole day there in an attempt to see some traffic on the line to the sleeper depot. So at 08.30 on 30th October 1986 we arrived at Ditton to spend the next 9 hours on the platform. The first train of the day was departing with 25 904 hauling a rake of ICI tankers towards Runcorn; sadly I didn't get a picture. Then at 10.05, 47 645 arrived with a rake of wagons and proceeded to shunt into the sleeper depot. The weather had unfortunately deteriorated and a picture of the loco working in was not possible. Fortunately the light had improved slightly when the loco emerged and by sheltering under the footbridge on platform 2 I managed a picture. The afternoon brought a peak, 45 111 passing through at 14.03 on an Inter-City service and 08 858 passing through en

route to Allerton. We were then treated to three class 58's all working Toton to Garston trains, 58 003 at 14.46, 58 039 at 15.26 and 58 040 at 16.06.

The real highlight came at 15.46 as that familiar whistling sound came from the Liverpool direction. Heading along the main line, at speed, was 97 405, or 40 060 in real money. Whistling through the station, Crewe bound, this was the final time that I ever saw one of these English Electric beauties working on the main line at speed.

The day brought twenty-eight loco hauled workings from ten different classes of loco.

The station at Ditton was left to decay and following the withdrawal of the passenger service, the loss of the resident shunter and the S & T staff, it went into terminal decline. A new kind of folk were attracted to it, and they weren't interested in the trains! I made a trip up from Birmingham to see the demolition of the buildings and the abolition of Ditton No1 and No2. It was a dismal day which suited the mood, standing on the footbridge looking down at the remains of the buildings on platform 3 and 4 made me hanker back for the days of 1986. Whilst there on demolition day I managed to obtain a BR corporate Ditton station sign as a souvenir. On my way back to the car there was a derailment of a liner train and the police turned up forcing me to ditch the sign and beat a hasty retreat. I returned the next day to collect my booty, which I had stashed in a bush, only to find some sod had nicked it! I guess it now resides in someone's house or garage. **Terry Callaghan**



*On 30 October 1986 locomotive number 97 405 'Ancient Mariner' is seen heading east through Ditton working a southbound engineers train. The engine started life as an English Electric Type 4 number D260. It became 40 060 in February 1974. The nose end of the loco was rebuilt, following an accident, with a central headcode, replacing the discs that the loco was originally fitted with. Photo by Terry Callaghan*

## Track Gang at Clock Face



**A track gang at Clock Face sometime between March and November 1905. They were engaged in the installation of the junction for Sutton Manor colliery. Standing on the far right is David Callighan the Great Great Grandfather of 8D Association member Terry Callaghan. Photo from the Terry Callaghan collection.**

A real gem of a photograph recording a piece of important railway history has turned up amongst family photographs. The view shows a track gang in action on the Widnes and St Helens line at Clock Face sometime between March and November 1905. The gang was installing the junction that was to serve Sutton Manor colliery through until 15 August 1987. Looking at the rails that can be seen in the view it appears to be the north junction that was used by trains that travelled to and from the St Helens direction. There was also a junction that allowed trains to travel to and from the Widnes direction.

The junction was inspected and approved on 13 November 1905. The sinking of number 1 shaft at Sutton Manor colliery began in May 1906 and within a few years vast quantities of coal was travelling over the junction seen in the photograph.

Seen in the view on the far right is David Callighan (*correct spelling*) who was born in Bold parish in 1861. He is shown in the 1901 and 1911 census as a 'Railway Platelayer' living at St Thomas Villas, Clock Face Lane (now Road). David Callighan is the Great Great Grandfather of 8D member Terry Callaghan.



*Riddles class 2-6-0 locomotive number 78039 is seen at Widnes Locomotive Shed on 13 March 1960. The locomotive was built by British Railways at Darlington Works. It entered service at Rhyl on 27 November 1954. The engine was transferred to Widnes on 19 May 1956 and remained there until 25 May 1963 when it was transferred to Willesden. The engine ended its life at Shrewsbury on 23 April 1966. Photo by Ron Herbert*



*Looking east from the overgrown down platform at Filders Ferry & Penketh station on 29 June 1977. Heading west on a coal train is class 40 number 40 105. Photo by Barrie Watkins*

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# PENKETH MODEL RAIL CENTRE

## Events Programme

**10.00 – Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – Cab Ride** – Rod Dixon takes us on another interesting cab ride. Those who attended the last talk by Rod can vouch for the fact that this will be a real treat. **Select Security Stadium (Widnes Vikings Ground), Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

**10.00 – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2014 – Hutchinson Street Yard and the railways of the West Bank Dock Estate.** A guided walk looking at the site of Hutchinson street yard and the railways of the West Bank dock estate. The area will be changing beyond recognition over the next few years as part of the Mersey Gateway bridge construction so this may be the last chance to see these areas in their current form. **Meet in the Waterloo Centre car park Waterloo Road, Widnes.**

**10.00 – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 – The original stations of the St Helens Railway** – Paul Wright leads a walk looking at the sites of the original northern termini of the St Helens & Runcorn Gap Railway and its successors. **Meet in ASDA car park.**

**19.00 – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014 – Tanhouse Yard** – Back by popular request. On this walk the long forgotten former GCR/MR Widnes Branch is explored. **Meet by the Tan House Lane entrance to Moss Bank Park (the site of the former Level Crossing at Tanhouse Lane station), Widnes.**

**11.30 – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2014 – Rail Ale Trip Birkenhead and Liverpool** – Joe Cowley leads another of his popular rail ale trips. This time pubs are visited in Birkenhead and Liverpool. There will be much to see of railway interest too. **Meet outside W H Smiths in Liverpool Lime Street station.**



**'Where is this' competition?** A busy railway scene on a historic railway. But where? (Answers to [pwright964@btinternet.com](mailto:pwright964@btinternet.com))  
**Photo by Gordon Howarth**

The September competition winners were Richard Mercer and Arthur Turner. The location was the Lowerhouse Lane bridge.