The Railways of Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook

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Introduction

Early years and construction.

The recent history of Irlam and Cadishead owes much to the industrial revolution although its history is as a trade route between the great cities of Liverpool and Manchester. Lying on a narrow strip of land barely half a mile wide and three miles long it was bounded to the south by the Rivers Irwell and Mersey and to the north by the large peat bog of Chat Moss.

Many people, if asked what really changed Irlam and Cadishead from a pair of small villages nestling on the Rivers Irwell and Mersey into a pair of thriving busy industrial towns, would say the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal on the 1st January 1894. This brought the industry and prosperity and changed the region forever. It is certain the canal had a big impact, but it was the combination of the canal and the railways which were the catalyst for the industrial revolution which took place and it was the railways that arrived first.

Glazebrook was a tiny village perched on a strip of clay that followed the River Glaze valley and separated Chat Moss from Rixton Moss. What is now Glazebrook Lane/Holcroft Lane was then the only north-south road crossing between these two impenetrable bogs. Glazebrook lay straight on the path between Manchester and south Liverpool. The few houses that there were would not support a station, but Glazebrook lay at the heart of what was to become two very busy railway junctions, which were to put Glazebrook firmly on the railway map.

This article is a brief history of the railways in the area and the part they played in transforming Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook. This paper is mainly concerned with the heavy standard (4'8½") gauge railways, starting with the first Liverpool to Manchester Railway. This is regarded by many as the first passenger railway in the world, and opened in 1830.

Rather surprisingly, one of the largest railways in the area started life as a narrow gauge tramway in 1816 and became the extensive narrow gauge railway of the Chat Moss Estate, extending to well over ten miles. Although this document is principally about the railways of Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook, it has been necessary, on occasion, to step outside the district to include Partington, Wigan, Barton and Culcheth.

We start in 1830, with the now famous Robert Stephenson's Liverpool to Manchester Railway.

The Liverpool to Manchester Railway (1830).

The first that most people in Irlam and Cadishead would have heard about passenger railways was when, on the 15th September 1830, the world's first passenger railway was opened, from Liverpool to Manchester. This was not the world's first railway to carry passengers, that honour going to the Stockton and Darlington, it was, however, the first specifically designed for passenger travel.

In the nineteenth century, Manchester, and the surrounding area, was fast becoming a major exporter of goods to the world, led by its huge cotton interests. Goods manufactured in the area had to be transported to the port of Liverpool for export. Prior to the railway, the thirty six miles of turnpike road took over three hours to cover by horse and cart. Goods carried by the Mersey and Irwell Navigation (1740), or by the Bridgewater Canal (1761), took two days. The railway was about to change all that. Although this first railway did not go directly through the villages of Irlam and Cadishead, the area would feel its presence, the railway being just over a mile to the north of the villages and laid across the peat bog of Chat Moss. This was no mean feat in 1830; of the £820,000 total cost of building the line, some £27,000 was spent draining the bog and preparing a roadway to carry the line across the moss land.

It was Robert Stannard, who was employed by William Roscoe on draining part of Chat Moss, who convinced Stephenson to float the railway, rather than keep tipping spoil into what seemed a bottomless pit of the bog. The railway was floated using the method of warp and welf, employing the trees of nearby Botany Bay wood. He successfully constructed a raft foundation, upon which the railway was built.

The line remains famous to this day, as both the first passenger railway in the world, and for the Rainhill Engine Trails in which Stephenson's Rocket was the winner. The Rocket went on to carry the first passengers from the new Liverpool Road Station in Manchester. Today the station is preserved as a museum and is worth a visit, as it now adjoins the Manchester Air and Space Museum. Sadly the railway also has the honour of having the first railway fatality, when, on the opening day, the Right Honourable William Huskisson M.P. was hit by a train near Golborne and rushed across the moss to hospital at Eccles, where he later died.

The Liverpool-Manchester (L&M) Railway had a major impact on Irlam and Cadishead. The turnpike road through the two villages brought much trade for the coach houses and stables. In 1830 14,000 people a year went by coach between the two cities, often taking refreshments in the district. In its first year 445,000 people were carried by the railway. Within two years the coach services were withdrawn.

The success of Liverpool and Manchester Railway started a national railway boom. In 1831 The L&M was connected to Warrington, by a branch line from Newton, and then, in 1837, on to Birmingham, via the Grand Junction Railway. The ninety nine mile journey from Manchester to Birmingham took four and a half hours. By 1838 Birmingham was connected to London by the London Birmingham railway, allowing trains to travel from Manchester to London, for the first time, the journey taking over ten hours. In 1845 the Liverpool-Manchester Railway merged with the Grand Junction Railway and again with the London Birmingham in 1846, forming the London & North Western Railway (LNWR), a company that went on to dominate rail working in Lancashire for the next thirty years.

The impact this railway had on the speed and cost of transport of people and goods could be said to have started the railway boom of the Victorian era. (Ref 1)

Figure 1 A painting of the inaugural journey of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, by A.B. Clayton

Figure 2 Crossing Chat Moss 1833

Irlam and Cadishead's first stations

Little evidence remains of the first stations to service the needs of Irlam and Cadishead. There were four, arguably five, stations on the first Liverpool to Manchester line opened after 1830, all of them over a mile from the villages, and accessed by roads up onto Chat moss.

Flow Moss Cottage/Flow Moss, Astley, Lamb's Cottage, Barton Moss 1st, Barton Moss 2nd

These early stations often started as crossing points, where a gate-keeper would issue tickets, from perhaps, a small adjacent cottage. In these early days trains would stop as required for "***The convenience of the public***" and, by 1841, platforms were being added.

Flow Moss: This was one of the early stations to serve the area, opening sometime after 1832 and was called Flow Moss Cottage. It was built after representation to the Railway Company from the farmers of the moss. With the building of a narrow gauge tramway in 1833, from the River Mersey (see p41), Flow Moss Cottage was closed and the halt moved half a mile east to where the tramway met the main line and simply renamed Flow Moss. A waiting room was built at the new station in 1838. It closed to passengers in 1842. Its location is virtually lost today and no evidence that it ever existed can be seen near the line. The first station would have been right at the very top of Cadishead Moss and would have been easier to access from Glazebury. The second station would have been right at the very top of Astley Road. Both of these stations are just outside Cadishead, as they are just over the county boundary, in Lancashire, in the Borough of Wigan.

Astley: Moving east from Flow Moss, the next station built was Astley. It opened in the mid 1840's, probably around 1844/5. The inhabitants of Astley had petitioned the Railway Company to open a station at Rindle Road, following the closure of Flow Moss and Lamb's Cottage Halts, in 1942.

Figure 3 All that remains is a level crossing. The signal box is sited around the end of where the Manchester platform once stood.

Astley Station: closed to passengers on 7.5.1956 and to all services on 7.7.1958. It was finally demolished in 1972. Unlike Flow Moss, it's clear to see where this station once stood, as a level crossing and signal box remain. You can access it by going virtually right to the top of Astley Road, before taking a right turn onto Top Road for several hundred yards then a left turn. Once crossing over the line, you rejoin the metalled road of Rindle Road in Astley. The signal box we see today was built in the 1970's on the site of the former west bound platform. This replaced one which originally stood on the east side.

Figure 4 All that remains today of Lamb's Cottage Halt

Lamb's Cottage: Like Flow Moss, this station, or, more accurately, a halt, was opened following representation from the farmers of Chat Moss. It opened sometime around 1832 and was closed in 1842. It's located not to far to the east of Astley Station, at the very top of what became Barton Grange Road. In 1840 this was known as Tram Road or Wagon Road. This, as we shall see later, was because a narrow gauge railway ran from Boysnope Wharf, past Barton Grange Farm, across the moss and halted just short of Lamb's Cottage.

No interchange was ever constructed with the Liverpool Manchester line. Today all that remains is a warning sign and a foot crossing. In the 1950's there was also an east and west junction and branch line heading north. Presumably linking the main line to the coal pit at Astley, using what is termed an industrial tram way, the term often used to describe a light railway.

Figure 5 Barton Moss second station today, is an unmanned level crossing. B. Price

Barton Moss (1st station): This is probably the oldest station in our list, as the timetable of 1831 includes a stop at Reid's Farm. It is thought this was an early name for Barton Moss Station (Halt). There were no platforms, the train merely stopping and people alighting alongside the track. The Halt closed in 1832 in favour of nearby Lamb's Cottage, so it had a short life. However, it was to make a comeback in 1862, when a new station bearing the same name would appear just to the east. Toady there is no evidence to be seen. Access is by a small track past Birch Farm to the railway.

Barton Moss (2nd Station): Opened to passengers on the 1.5.1862 and closed on the 23.9.1929. Technically, both the Barton sites are outside Irlam and Cadishead, as Barton is in Eccles. The station was located at the top of Barton Moss Road. The station would have just been to the east of what is today a level crossing, an unmanned simple level crossing, that carries Barton Moss Road onto the southern fringe of Botany Bay Wood.

If you want to read more about these early stations there is an excellent web site for disused stations http://www.disused-stations.org.uk Anyone trying to locate these sites please be aware access across Chat Moss is by roadways and tracks not suited to cars. Most of the roads are public footpaths. Please refer to OS maps for rights of way. Astley Station is the only one accessible by asphalted surface from the A580 at Astley to the north of Chat Moss.

Cheshire Lines Committee (C.L.C.)

The Cheshire Line Railway or more officially the Cheshire Lines Committee (C.L.C.) to give it its proper name, was a joint ownership between the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (MS&LR, later called the Great Central Railway, GCR), the Great Northern Railway (GNR) and the Midland Railway (MR). Although, over time, many Acts of Parliament were needed before the CLC became the major railway company it did. The reader is referred to (ref 2 and 3) if they wish to pick their way through this tangled web of the necessary Parliamentary Acts needed for this great undertaking. The first Act of 5/7/1865 named the MS&LR and the MR as joint owners, before GNR joined to form the three-way committee on the 18/7/1866. Arguably, the Cheshire Lines Act of 15/8/1867 was one of the most important to Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook.

The principal reason that the committee had formed the joint venture was to take on the powerful London and North West Railway (LNWR), which owed the first (1830) Manchester line and dominated railway working in the west and south west of Manchester. The rich trade of Liverpool and west Lancashire was the attraction. The chairman of the MS&LR was Sir Edward Watkin, a major force in the Victorian railway era. The Joint Venture pulled together the fragmented approach the partners had, and the various already approved constructions to co-ordinate their efforts to compete with the LNWR. The CLC was ultimately to build 143¼ route miles or 435 miles of single track stretching from Godley (east of Stockport) through Stockport, Altrincham (Skelton) and Manchester, to Liverpool and then North to Southport in the west and south west from Manchester to Chester. It was called Cheshire Lines because the first sections planned were in Cheshire. As we shall see, Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook featured very much in the network.

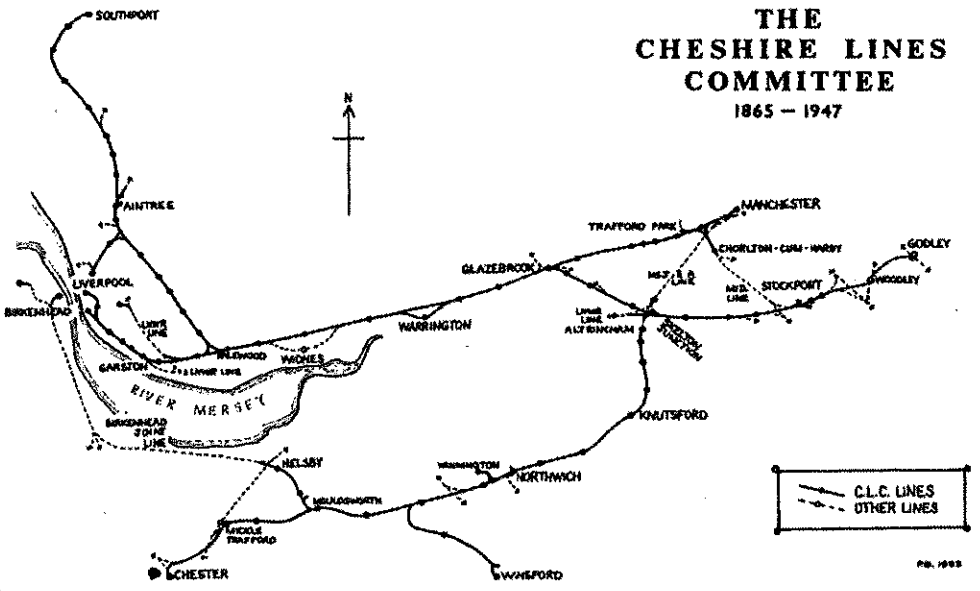


Figure 6 Map showing the extent of the CLC (143 ¼ miles) P. Bolger

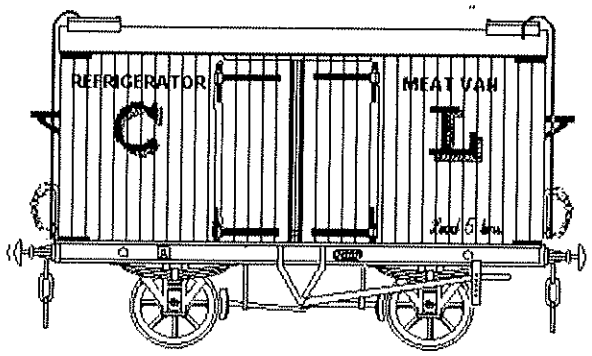
This paper is not about the CLC, but not to mention some of the company's history and the impact the company had on railways of the North West would be remiss. Initially, the CLC Liverpool line to Manchester, through Glazebrook and Irlam, ran from Cressington Junction (Garston) south of Liverpool and terminated at Manchester's Oxford Road Station, opening on the 1/3/1873. It was not long (1880) before the magnificent Manchester Central Station was constructed, as well a new city centre station in Liverpool, also named Central. Manchester Central had the second largest station roof span in the country, after London St. Pancras. Today, Manchester's Central Station has been preserved for all to see as the Manchester Central Exhibition and Conference Centre. The CLC was the

only railway company in the UK to operate under its own management for eighty two years, from its formation, right up until nationalisation in 1948, when it then became part of the London Midland Region By 1939 it was carrying eleven million passengers and eight and a half million tons of freight, a number that was to double during the Second World War, much of it travelling through Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook.

Cheshire Lines locomotives and rolling stock.

Although the Cheshire Lines was a major railway company it never owned its own locomotives; all locos were provided by the MS&LR in the original agreement.

This was challenged on several occasions, on grounds of cost, by the other partners the MR&GNR. In 1892 they managed to change the agreement so that through trains could use the individual companies' own locos, but for all other movements locos, engine sheds and footplate men were to be supplied by the MS&LR. A minor exception was the purchase of four Sentinel-Cammell railcars, bought in 1929.



Rolling stock, however, was purchased by the CLC. Coaches, built to MS&LR standards, were built at Gorton. Initially four-wheeled coaches were used, moving to six-wheeled in 1876. Six-wheeled carriages were replaced with eight-wheeled bogies from 1904. In 1922 the CLC had 462 passenger carriages, 91 luggage parcel and horse boxes, 4,573 merchandise and mineral wagons.

The Cheshire Lines Committee was to have a big impact on Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook. For further reading see Ref 3 and Ref 4.

The second Liverpool to Manchester Railway (1873)

Following the huge success of the first Liverpool to Manchester railway, the LNWR had built more track and controlled the area west of Manchester and with it, the movement of goods in the region. The MS&LR, keen to gain access to Manchester and the port of Liverpool extended its railway across the Pennines from Sheffield, via a long tunnel through Woodhead, as far a Godley, just east of Stockport. It was then extended in stages on to Woodley, Stockport (Tiviot Dale) and as far as Skelton Junction near Altrincham. From this important junction the CLC could connect to the City of Manchester and the, by now, great port of Liverpool. Initially, the CLC had running rights to Liverpool over the LNWR tracks, from its connection at Skelton Junction (Altrincham) on the line through Lymm then Latchford, taking a southerly approach to Liverpool, but this was costly and the route slow. The old LNWR line through Lymm and Latchford closed to passengers in 1962 and for goods in 1985, and is today part of the Trans Pennine Trail.

The CLC decided it needed its own tracks (metals as they called them) to connect between the two great cities and to its Trans Pennine route. To construct the CLC network, over twenty Acts of Parliament were needed, only one of these is directly relevant to Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook, Namely the MS&LR Extension to Liverpool Act, passed on the 6th July 1865. This allowed for thirty four miles of track to be laid, effectively connecting up Manchester with Liverpool at Garston (Cressington Junction), just south of Liverpool, via Irlam and Skelton Junction (Altrincham) to Glazebrook East Junction via Cadishead.

Completed in 1873, the CLC were now able to run trains through from Manchester, initially from Oxford Road, before Central Station opened on the 1/7/1880, through to Garston. Liverpool Central Station finally opened in November 1874. Trains could also now travel direct from Hull, Sheffield via Godley, Woodley, Stockport, Skelton Junction (Altrincham) joining the main line at Glazebrook East Junction and on to Liverpool. Similarly, passengers from Liverpool and Manchester could now go direct to London via Stockport, through Derbyshire, entering London St. Pancras.

As an aside, in 1900 the MS&LR built the last mainline railway to London (until the channel tunnel line) the Great Central. It ran from Annesley, near Nottingham, to its new terminus at Marylebone. Upon the opening, the MS&LR changed its name to the Great Central Railway. Travellers from the North West now had much more choice and could now enter London by St. Pancras, Euston or Marylebone.

Grouping and nationalisation

In 1923, the Midland Railway, along with the LNWR, were grouped into the London Midland and Scottish Railway while the MS&LR (by then the Great Central Railway) became part of the London and North Eastern Railway. The line continued to be joint, with a one-third share LMS and a two-thirds share by the LNER. Upon nationalisation in 1948, both parent companies became part of British Railways and, shortly afterwards, operation of the CLC lines came under the control of the London Midland Region, thus ending eighty two years of independent operation.

Impact of the lines

The main Manchester line dissects Irlam running at an angle across Liverpool Road. In building the railway, a road bridge was constructed, which in 1873, carried Liverpool Road *over* the railway. Today it's known as Station Road. If you look carefully, you can see evidence of brick abutments where the road bridge once crossed the line. This bridge is now demolished and filled in. The subsequent re-alignment of the tracks in 1895, when the Canal was being built, has made this difficult to envisage and actually to find evidence of the 1873 route. The rear gardens of Cromwell Road were once on the route of the main line. Having run behind the current, but disused, station house, under Liverpool Road (now Station Road) it ran on what was to become the CWS Soap Works line, just behind Tesco, crossing the Irwell at a much lower level. We shall return to this line later in the text.

Just off Liverpool Road (now Station Road) a station building was constructed along almost identical lines to others at Glazebrook, Padgate, Flixton, Urmston etc. The original building is not the one you see today, since it was

demolished following the deviation of the line for the canal construction, although this was a few years after the canal opened.

The line through Cadishead also took its toll on the area. Moss Lane was one of the original access roads to Cadishead Moss, the other being Fir Street. The building of the railway dissected Moss Lane requiring a level crossing, later to be replaced by the building of Sandy Lane Bridge between Fir Street and what is today New Moss Road.

The Cadishead line (Glazebrook east to Skelton Junction) leaves the main line at Glazebrook East Junction. This is now the vast expanse of overgrown area looking west of Sandy Lane Bridge. It then crosses Liverpool Road, over a plate iron rail bridge. This bridge remains to this day and is next to the later built, high level bridge. We will revisit the original iron bridge later and the reason it has survived all these years.

The original Cadishead Station opened in 1873 and was a simple affair, more of a Halt than a Station. It did not last long, closing on 1/8/1879. But that was not to be the last we saw of Cadishead Station as it would have a new lease of life when the line was elevated and re-aligned during the construction of the canal.

The railways now firmly established in Irlam and Cadishead (1873) would play a major part in the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC) construction and its future railway operations. The MSC Chief Engineer from 1887 to 1895 was Sir Edward Leader Williams (Leader Williams Road).

The Manchester Ship Canal (1894)

Although this paper is about railways, it's difficult to mention the history of Irlam, Cadishead and Rixton without reference to the Manchester Ship Canal. It's also the combination of the canal and the railways which is responsible for much of the industry that followed.

The Commercial Imperative

The 1830 railway between Liverpool and Manchester had fuelled a massive growth in freight between the two cities. However, there was much tension between these rival cities and the success of the railway had put a stranglehold on the cost of goods from Manchester. Liverpool's port charges further fuelled the fire. So it was, on the 27/6/1882, that Daniel Adamson held his famous meeting in Manchester and set about building a canal thirty-six miles long to take ocean-going ships all the way to Manchester, some thirty miles inland. Despite objections from the land owners, the City of Liverpool, the Duke of Bridgewater and the owners of the railways, it was finally opened in 1/1/1894. In reality, the railway companies need not have feared so much, as the mere fact that both Liverpool to Manchester lines remain open to this day says so much about their influence and importance.

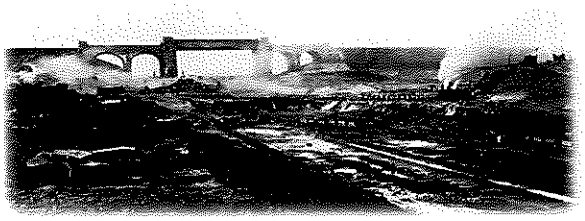


Figure 7 The pictures show the true extent of the excavation for Irlam Locks, the temporary contractor's railway and the finished Irlam viaduct. Circa 1893. Below: Original railway alignment and locks taken from the new viaduct.

The railways were to play an important part in both the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal and its subsequent operation. Initially suspicious of the intentions of the Canal Company, the railway companies all opposed its construction, but, once underway, they would seize the opportunity to bring in the goods needed for its construction.

The Ship Canal Company would go on to build, and operate, an extensive railway system of its own. Following construction, it would require connections to the existing major railway companies. Irlam and Cadishead would have key rail connection points.

Six lines crossed the canal over its length; one was at Irlam and a second at Cadishead. Of the remaining four, one was at Runcorn (carrying the LNER line from Liverpool to Crewe), the second at Acton Grange (Nr Warrington), thirdly a four line bridge carrying both the GWR line to Chester and the LNWR (now west coast main

line to Crewe), the fourth at Latchford carrying the (LNWR) Liverpool to Stockport line, now disused and part of the Trans Pennine Trail mentioned earlier. The line ran from Skelton Junction, through Lymm, over the canal at Latchford, though Arpley to Bank Quay (lower) Station, via Widnes and on to Liverpool.

Canal Rail Deviations.

The construction of the canal was to play havoc with the district. Not only the huge excavations for the canal and the locks, but also the need to elevate the two rail lines over the canal and cross the former Rivers Irwell and Mersey. The responsibility for the crossings, should a canal be cut, was that of the railway companies, but their obligation was only to build swing bridges. Although costing considerably less than viaducts, swing bridges would cause much delay to shipping. So the MSC Co. decided to bear the full cost, and consequential disruption, by building high level viaducts. In order for ocean going ships to reach Manchester there needed to be a clearance distance of seventy-five feet, this height was actually determined by the clearance of the existing viaduct (built 1869) over the Mersey at Runcorn, under which the canal flowed. This required the lines to be raised by forty-three feet from the existing level. With a design gradient of 1:135, the rail deviations would require the building of new lines to one side of the existing tracks for over a mile on each site of the canal.

These rail deviations were known during construction as Deviation 4, for Cadishead, and 5 for Irlam. Because the rail lines were in daily use, the existing tracks and bridges over the Irwell and Mersey had to be retained until the new deviations, viaducts and river bridges were completed and tested. The rail company, in no hurry to encourage the canal's use, managed to delay opening up the diverted lines for some time. Testing the viaducts was done by lining up engines end-to-end across the full width of the structure. In addition to the challenge of the canal and rivers, there was the added complexity of the road crossings, particularly at Irlam. These imposing structures would ensure Irlam and Cadishead would never look the same again.

Deviation No. 5, at Irlam, opened to goods traffic on the 9/1/1893 and to passengers on the 27/3/1893. Deviation No. 4, at Cadishead, opened for goods on the 27/2/1893 and for passengers on the 29/5/1893. There was a period of three months between 27/2/1893 and 28/5/1883 when both the existing lines and the deviated lines were in service.

Canal and River Rail Crossings.

The crossing at Irlam also dictated that Irlam locks had to be upstream of the rail crossing to maintain the required seventy-five feet clearance for ships. Of the Rivers Irwell and Mersey, the two rivers merged on what was to become the site of the Steelworks (1910).

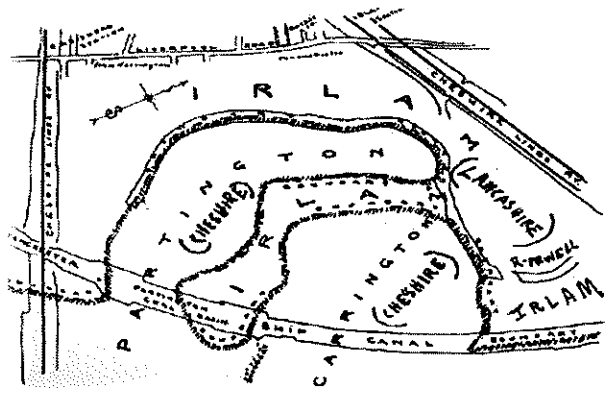


Figure 8 The Cheshire/Lancashire boundary was not moved until 1920, hence the name Partington Coaling Basin rather than Irlam.

Following the confluence of the two rivers and despite the Irwell being the larger, from this point on the Mersey was the adopted name. The Mersey and Irwell Navigation, as it was called, flowed to the south of Irlam (taking its name from the river) past the boathouse at the bottom of Ferryhill Road where a ferry connected the two

communities of Irlam and Flixton. Today a small piece of the river remains and tracing its path to Fairhills Road which it crossed and through the former Soap Works.

Figure 9 dry Irwell bed, this is behind the CWS Soap Works. The bridge was removed and in-filled at the same time that the Irlam viaduct was refurbished in 1998. F Shackleton

A low level rail bridge carried the main line over the Irwell. Similarly on the Glazebrook to Stockport line through Cadishead, a low level bridge carried it across the Mersey, which, following the opening of the canal, was just south of the new canal viaduct. The canal engineers faced a huge challenge of the diversion of both the rivers and the railways. For many years the whole area must have been a massive building site.

Figure 10 The deviated line over the dry Mersey bed Partington (now removed) Just south of Cadishead viaduct (Deviation 4)

In order to obtain the seventy-five feet clearance for the new canal, both railway lines would need to be raised forty-three feet, Two new viaducts would need to be built to cross the canal, in addition to two new bridges over the by now semi-dry old river beds. Today, both canal viaducts are almost satanic in their scale, and remain highly visible. The old river bridges, however, have now been removed. An added complexity was the need for a shallow gradient to the now raised level of the canal viaducts. To achieve the required gradients of 1:135, embankments would need to be constructed, with approaches either side of the canal of over a mile on each side. On the Irlam and Cadishead side this would take both lines back as far as Glazebrook East Junction, requiring both line re-alignment and huge amounts of earth movement.

Irlam: Canal and river viaducts

The Irlam viaduct (bridge 192) has to carry the main Liverpool-Manchester line over the canal just to the east of where the River Mersey now joins the canal and just west of the extensive construction of Irlam Locks. Both Viaducts are of brick construction, built in hard blue engineering brick, of which over seventy million were produced for the canal company at Thelwall. Take a close look at both Irlam and Cadishead viaducts, as initially they were intended to be identical, but they are not. Both viaducts have central steel structures spanning the canal. The approach viaducts were originally both built with brick arches. However, whilst filling the canal, the Irlam viaduct, the main structural piers of which are one-hundred and ninety-two feet high, twenty feet thick and eighty-six feet wide, started to shift inwards, towards the canal. The piers were built seventeen feet into the clay, below the bed of the canal. Opened to goods traffic in January 1893 and passenger traffic three months later, the movement had become acute by June that year. The piers were now over seven inches off-centre and cracks had started to

appear. In October the piers were propped, and a decision was taken to replace the brick arches with horizontal steel girders. The work was completed in May 1895, this eliminated the lateral thrust on the upper piers and all has been well since. The work had to be done while the railway remained open. Fortunately, the viaduct was built for four tracks, so the track could be re-aligned to the north side of the viaduct, while the south arches were replaced, and vice versa. This process had to be repeated over a century later, with serious cost implication, the steel having badly corroded, required replacement. In 1998 the whole of the steelwork was refurbished and much of it replaced in a £5m refit. The approach viaducts being replaced in April 1998.

The original steel structures for both Irlam and Cadishead viaducts were manufactured by the Glasgow firm of Sir William Arrol and Co. The Cadishead viaduct spans one hundred and thirty-seven feet and has four hundred and ninety-four tons of steel in its main span, the Irlam viaduct spans one hundred and forty-nine feet and has five hundred and fifty tons of steel in its main span.

Figure 11 Irlam viaduct (deviation 5) - the original line about to be severed Note: The brick approach viaducts, later replaced with steel.

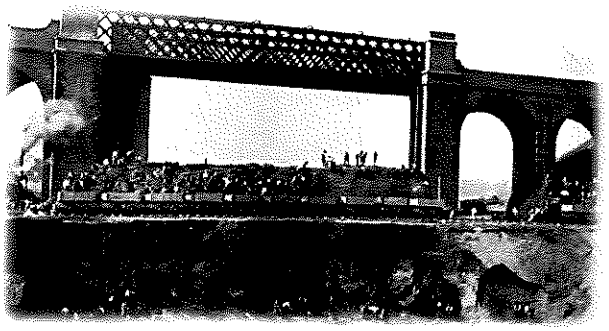


Figure 12 The CWS wharf under construction, the railway viaduct in use and the canal cut through the old route, sometime mid 1893

Another feature of both viaducts is that they were constructed to carry four lines, although the embankments only carry two. This was to avoid construction of a second viaduct if extra rail capacity was needed.

As well as needing an elevated viaduct, a second bridge was needed to cross the now drying old river bed (bridge 191). As noted earlier, the Irwell crossing was to the rear of the soap works. It stood bridging the dried up river bed for over a hundred years, before being removed, and the gap filled in, when the main viaduct was renovated in 1998.

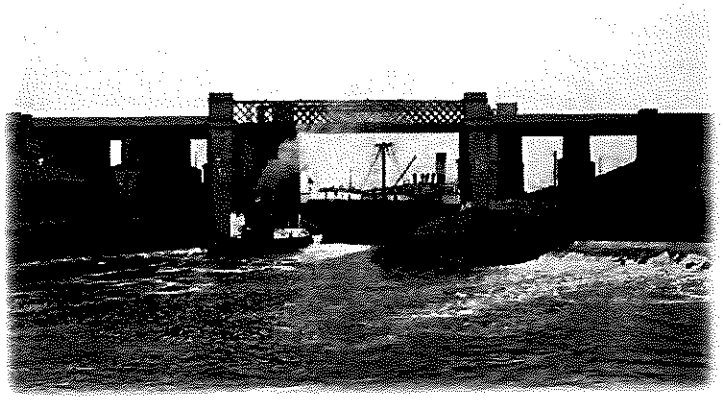


Figure 13 Irlam viaduct looking towards Manchester. Note the steel approach viaducts that replaced the brick arches after subsidence. The river Mersey joins from the right

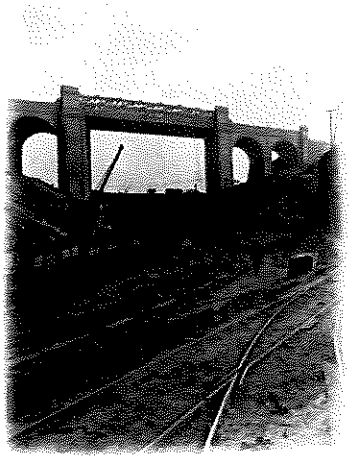


Figure 14 The contractors' railway in the canal bottom just west of Irlam locks

Cadishead: Canal and river viaducts

The Cadishead viaduct, built to the original design including the approach arches in brick, is today, disused, and a sorry state. It carried the line from Glazebrook East Junction to Stockport. The viaduct had to be constructed, whilst at the same time, keeping the existing rail line open for rail traffic, until the new alignment was completed and tested. The rail company, in no hurry, delayed as long as possible, but eventually the new, deviated, route was accepted and opened. The existing line can still be made out, which I will cover later. As at Irlam, the drying river bed needed a new bridge to carry the elevated line. The River Mersey at this point was to the south of the canal. If you look just to the south of the (now disused) main Cadishead canal viaduct, you will see the cut in the embankment where the bridge use to be. It was removed around 1990 as it was disused and badly corroded. Although in a sorry state, the Cadishead viaduct could still be renovated should the Cadishead line re-open. There have been proposals to do so.

Figure 15 A sad-looking vandalised Cadishead canal viaduct (deviation 4)

Figure 16 Mersey viaduct (Deviation 4) ten locos, weighing seven hundred and fifty tons, were used to test both the canal and Mersey viaducts. The original alignment in the background.

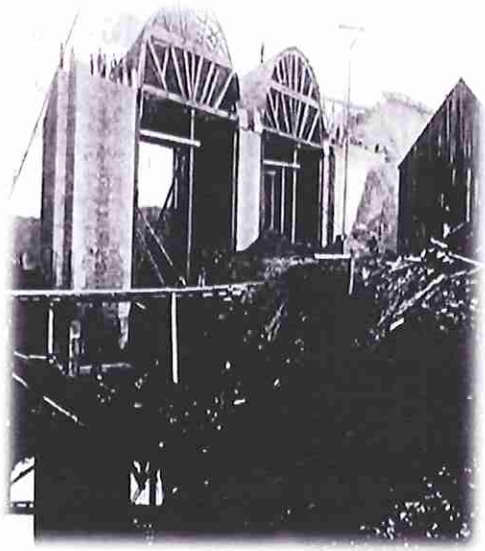


Figure 17 Cadishead viaduct under construction 1892/3.

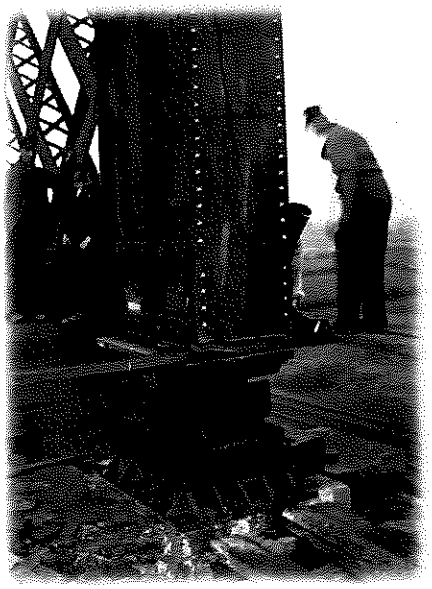


Figure 18 Cadishead viaduct rocker bearing - note original line below. MSC

Road Crossings

Irlam Road Crossings.

The impact of the realignment or deviation to gain sufficient height to cross the canal was felt all the way back to Irlam Station and beyond, to Glazebrook East Junction. It's not easy to envisage just how much this must have changed the district, particularly the Irlam crossing. Trying to explain the changes without diagrams is somewhat difficult. But, I shall try.

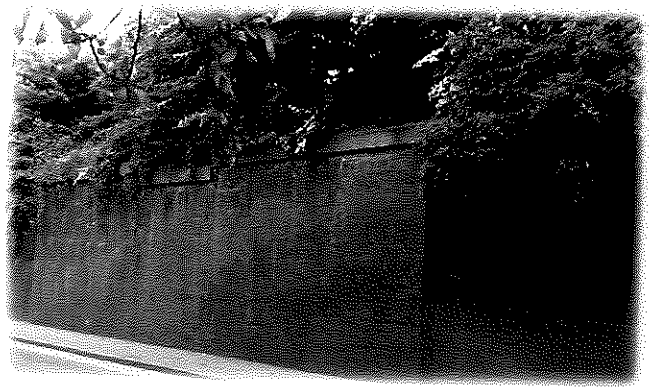


Figure 19 Remains of the bridge abutments of the original-alignment, dismantled, Liverpool Road over bridge Irlam. This became know locally as the Soap Works line or Queens Road. Author

The alignment of the original line has been described above. The deviated Irlam line was built slightly to the west of the original main line and is the alignment we see today. To ensure the required gradients, even a mile back from the viaduct, the station level had to be raised. One option was that the course of Liverpool Road (now Station Road) and the bridge going over the 1873 main line would also need to be raised. A better solution was to re-align Liverpool Road under both the new deviated line and the lower existing line. This is the high-level, beautifully constructed, skew arch bridge, built in blue engineering brick, we see today. It was also intended to retain the existing line as a connection to both the CWS Soap Works and the canal-side lines of the Manchester Ship Canal company. This entailed making the dip in Liverpool Road (known locally as Irlam brew) much deeper and constructing a new iron bridge over to carry the existing line at the lower level. This was carried out in the winter of 1891/2. Removed on the 4th and 5th/12/1965, when the line was no longer required, clear evidence remains of the bridge supporting brickwork.

The original line (now the Ship Canal and CWS line) ran ***under*** Station Road and over the newly-aligned and lowered Liverpool Road. The newly-deviated main line truncated the old Liverpool Road (now Station Road) and also ran over the newly-aligned Liverpool Road, on a new high-level bridge.

The next road crossing to note is the steel rail bridge to the west of the main line, which was opened in 1957, to connect the sidings of the Steel Works with the main line, we shall return to this rail connection later.

The final road crossing at Irlam is one of the most historically interesting. In Section 20 we look at the reclamation of Chat Moss and the use of tramways and narrow gauge railways. One of the original tramways from 1816 ran down Tramway Road, under a small iron bridge of the original 1873 line, then under the newly-deviated high-level line, through a small tunnel, on to what was to become the Steel Works site.

Figure 20 Original Liverpool Road crossing OVER the railway. Now Station Road, Irlam station is to the right

Figure 21 Liverpool Road Crossing at Irlam. (Steel Works branch line bridge in the background) Author

Cadishead Road Crossings.

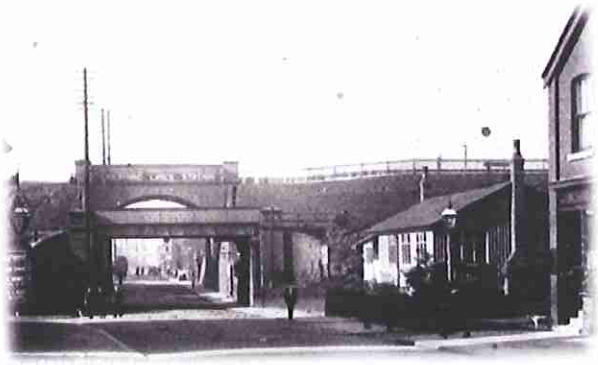


Figure 22 Cadishead Station high up on the embankment, the original line in the foreground. The writing on the bridge reads "Cheshire Lines Station"

There were originally three, but now only two road crossings remain at Cadishead. The first is the small iron bridge already referred to, which carried the original line of 1873 and later the branch line of the Manchester Ship

Canal company. The second, and more imposing, is the high level brick-arch bridge. Not quite the same as the one at Irlam, as it crosses Liverpool Road at right angles. Nevertheless, its height and structure make it stand out. Built to carry the deviated line in 1893, it now stands idle, but none the worse for its years. Built in the same blue engineering brick as are all canal company structures, it will be there for many years to come. There is talk of re-opening the line to access Carrington from the main Liverpool to Manchester line; we may yet see trains once again high up on the embankment in Cadishead.

Figure 23 Cadishead Road Crossing 2009. The Station entrance was on the left. Original 1873 Road Crossing is in the background.

The third road crossing was on Moss Lane, where a level crossing gave access to Cadishead moss. This was closed when the line was re-aligned at the higher level in 1893, thus truncating Moss Lane. Access to the moss was, from then on, as its name suggests, via New Moss Road, or from Fir Street, by Sandy Lane Bridge.

Stations and Junctions

Irlam Station

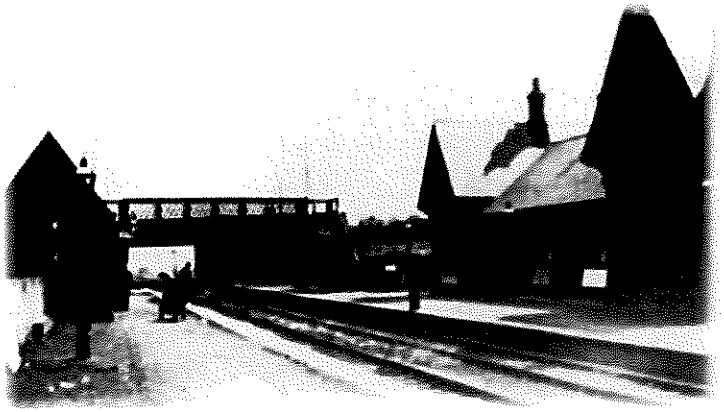


Figure 24 Irlam's first station 1873. The main building is on the Liverpool platform. Liverpool Road bridge is just behind the footbridge.

Irlam Station has a quite complex history. It was originally opened for both passengers and goods on the 2/9/1873, after the closure of the first Cadishead Station on 1/8/1879 it was renamed Irlam and Cadishead. Renamed again in August 1954, as Irlam for Cadishead, and finally, back to just Irlam on the 6/5/1974.

The canal construction moved the line (deviation) to both a higher level and to the west. This required the construction of a new station in 1890. All station offices on the CLC were constructed on the Liverpool (west bound) platform. As a result of the reconstruction, Irlam is now the only station building on the Manchester (east-bound) platform. The new station had to be built high on brick piles, so as to be level with the new line. During construction, the deviated line was moved further, hence the very wide platform between the building and the line.

Figure 25 The second station circa 1906. The original station by now demolished.

Following the rebuilding of the station in 1890, the original station was demolished. The new one opened, initially for goods only, on the 9/1/1893 and finally, for passengers too, on the 26/3/1893. Goods continued to be carried from Irlam until 7/11/1966. All stations were classified by the type of traffic they handled. Irlam in 1877 handled passengers, parcels, carriages, goods, livestock and furniture vans, portable engines, machines on wheels and eventually passenger cars. The station was classified as having a five-ton crane for goods unloading. By 1938 the list had grown to include horse-boxes, cattle vans. You can just imagine the mixture of passengers, animals, goods and freight around the station. In order to handle all the goods, Irlam had extensive sidings and a coal yard.

The sidings and accompanying signals were managed by a signal box, just west of the station. Today the station building is all that remains, although now in private ownership

Figure 26 Construction of Irlam second station. The original station buildings and platforms behind. The original through lines on the left The road over bridge in the background is the original alignment of Liverpool Road, soon to be renamed Station Road.

Figure 27 View from the end of the Liverpool platform West towards Glazebrook. Note the extensive sidings The line off to the left is the branch line to the Steelwork.sThe signal box controls this busy junction and sidings.

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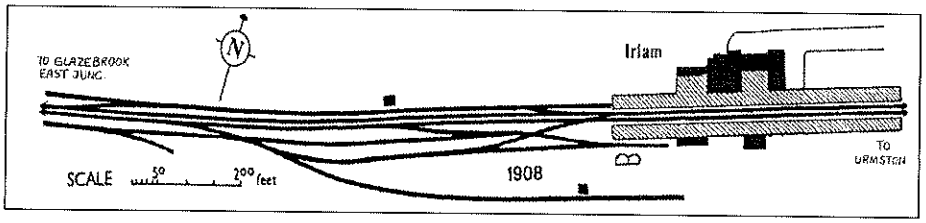


Figure 28 Irlam track and platform layout in 1908

Cadishead Station

Figure 29 Concrete signs replaced the original wooden ones in 1951 O. Conner

The first Cadishead station opened on the 1/9/1873 with the original line from Glazebrook East Junction to Skelton Junction (near Altrincham.) and on to Stockport. The line was principally a goods line. The station struggled, given that Irlam Station was only half a mile away and on the main Manchester-Liverpool line. Industry in Irlam and Cadishead in 1873 was also in its infancy. In 1851 the population of Irlam was nine-hundred and Cadishead nine-hundred and eighty-three. In 1891 the population was stated to have doubled to four-thousand three-hundred and thirty-four, so we can reason that around two to three-thousand people lived in the district in 1873. By the start of the Second World War in 1939 it had risen to fourteen-thousand six-hundred and by 1974 over twenty-thousand. The total today is still around twenty-thousand.

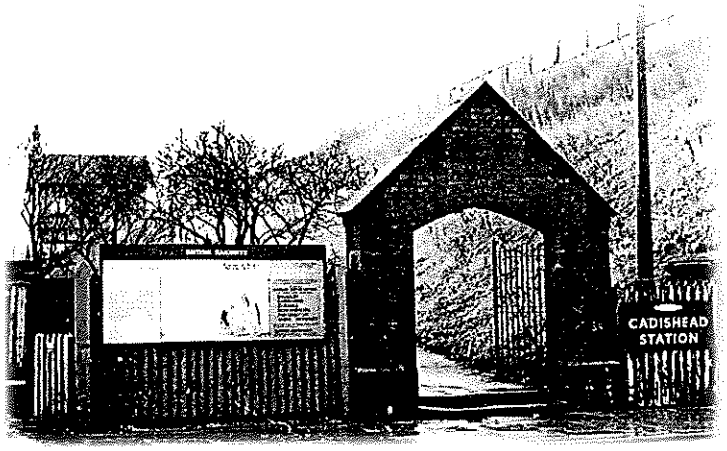


Figure 30 Cadishead Station on the last day of service 24th November 1964. The notice board has the closure notices on. This entrance is for the Liverpool platform. R.J Hughes.

The first Cadishead station closed on 31/7/1879. With the construction of the canal, in the 1890's, there was a need to deviate the line to the west. A new high-level bridge and embankment was constructed, opening for freight on 27/2/1893. It was also decided to build a new station, which opened to passengers on 29/5/1893, this time at a higher level, due to the elevated embankment.

The station remained open for nearly seventy years. Although there was quite a lot of through traffic, by 1922 there were only five trains stopping at Cadishead on a weekday. With the removal of passenger services, Cadishead, and all stations to Stockport Tiviot Dale, closed on the 30.11 1964. The last service ran on the 28/11/1964. The line remained in use for goods traffic until the 3/8/1982 when it closed, along with the canal viaduct. Today, little evidence of the station can be seen from the road. Standing under the imposing Liverpool Road Bridge, looking north, the entrance to the Liverpool platform was to the left. The entrance has been lost to the garden of the adjacent house. The entrance to the Stockport platform was between the bridges. If you climb to the top of the now disused embankment you can still see the concrete remains of the old platforms.

Figure 31 Cadishead 1st station: a goods train heads towards Glazebrook East Junction Above:

Figure 32 Cadishead second station in construction circa1892.

Figure 33. The finished second station 1896

Figure 34 A Stockport through-bound goods train approaches Cadishead in 1962

Figure 35 1958 outbound from Cadishead. A Glazebrook to Stockport service heads up the incline to the canal viaduct which is just visible in the distance..

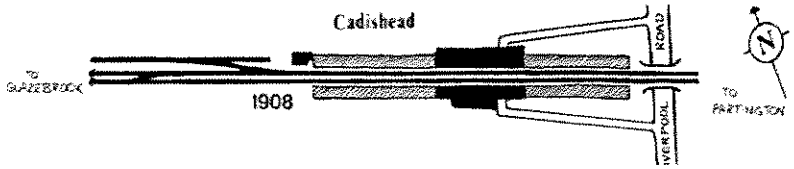


Figure 36 Cadishead 2nd station -Track and Platform Layout 1908 P Bolger

Glazebrook Station.

Glazebrook Station is located about one third of the way between Manchester and Liverpool. It opened on the 1st September 1873, for both passengers and goods. It closed for goods on the 3/8/1964. It remains open today for passengers, although services are limited, most being through trains. The station is much the same today as when it opened in 1873. It is almost identical to Padgate and many other CLC stations. It is still is a in a good state of repair, partially open as a station office, the remainder is a private residence. The signature CLC drinking fountain is still in place. The small original and quaint shelter is also still on the Manchester platform, although not used as such any more.

In its heyday, Glazebrook was a busy place, interchanging passengers from the Wigan branch line and the Stockport services. For a small village and station, it offered a surprisingly large number of facilities; in 1877 it handled passengers, parcels, carriages, goods, livestock and furniture vans, portable engines, machines on wheels and eventually passenger cars. The station was classified as having a five-ton crane for goods unloading. By 1938, the list had grown to include horse-boxes and cattle vans; a very similar capability of the much larger station at Irlam. In order to service all this, Glazebrook had sidings of its own. Around ten sets of points and crossovers directed traffic to both the sidings and facilitated swapping traffic between the two main lines. The station had its own forty-five foot turntable for locos, and a water tower. There is no doubt that Glazebrook played a big part in helping manage traffic and shunting for the busy, but single-direction east junction and sidings. The turntable was just to the west of the Manchester platform and would have been very close to Dam Head Lane where it bends to go up the hill. All this complexity of track required its own signal box. This was located on the junction of Bank Street and Dam Head Lane.

Figure 37 Glazebrook Station looking west today, Note all the sidings, signal box and turntable long gone

Figure 38 1872 CLC drinking fountain at Glazebrook. 2009

Figure 39 Glazebrook Station, note the curve to the right for the loco turntable and its associated signal. The signal box in the background, for the west junction and the extensive sidings to the left.

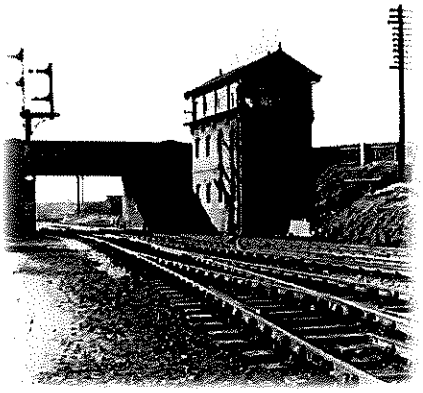


Figure 40 Glazebrook west signal box, Just outside the station, the box is on the corner of Bank Street and Dam Head Lane.

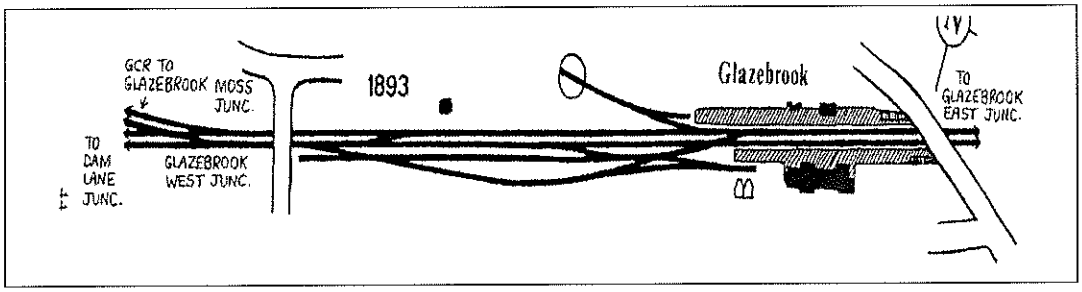


Figure 41 Glazebrook Track and platform layout in 1893, note the siding, points, crossovers, signal box, turntable and the start of the west junction to Wigan, P. Bolger

The Glazebrook Junctions

There are two major junctions at Glazebrook, East and West. In their heyday, these were two of the busiest freight junctions in the UK, linking Liverpool docks with Yorkshire and Lancashire coal fields.

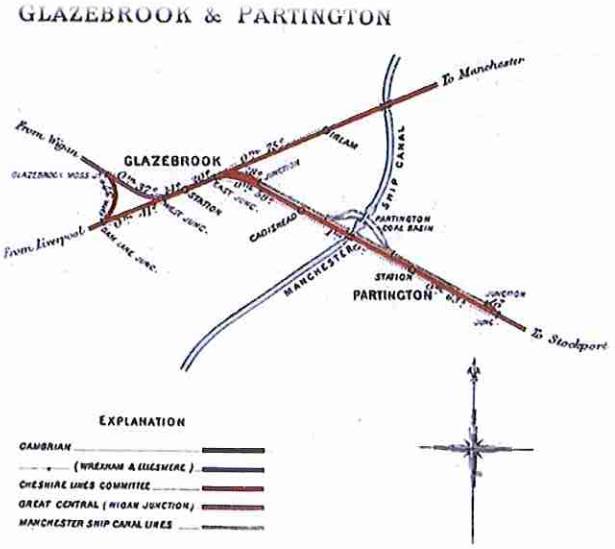


Figure 42 Above: Railway junction diagram produced by the Railway Clearing House. Clearing house RJD's were produced to assess track charges between companies

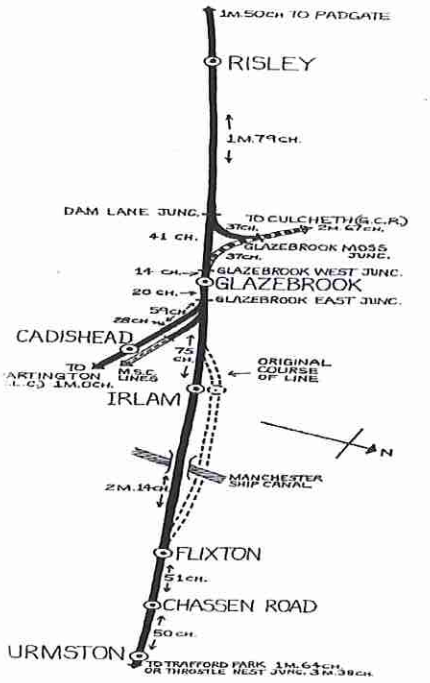


Figure 43 The complexity of the Glazebrook junctions and the Canal deviation5 at Irlam

Glazebrook West Junction.

Construction of the west junction was begun by the Wigan Junction Railway company on 27 October 1876. It was opened by for goods as far as Strangeways, just south of Wigan, and on the 16/10/1879 and for passengers on the 1/4/1884, after being extended to Wigan Central. It was built by the MS&LR and MR, two of the partners of the

CLC, but remained independent of the CLC. A branch to St. Helens was built from Lowton St. Mary's, opening on 2 January 1900

Initially, Glazebrook West Junction was only open to running to-from Manchester, joining the main line just west of Glazebrook Station near Dam Head Lane. Dam Lane junction was built sixteen years later, when the CLC added the Glazebrook curve a thirty-seven chain (seven-hundred and fifty metre) curve to the north. It was a tight radius requiring a fifteen miles per hour speed limit. Dam Lane and Moss Junction opened in July 1900, to allow running to-from Wigan to Warrington and Liverpool, for both passengers and freight. With both east and west running, a third junction, called simply Glazebrook Moss Junction, was required to complete the triangle.

The Wigan Line was originally built as goods only to access the coal fields of Lancashire, but it later carried passengers to Haydock, St. Helens and Wigan. It was the railway access to the coal fields of Lancashire and Yorkshire that resulted in the choice of Cadishead and Partington for building the Ship Canal coaling basin. However, it was not just coal the Wigan line carried. When the Partington Iron and Steel Company opened the works at Irlam in 1913, several trains a day brought workers from the Wigan area, a traditional iron-making town, now supplying labour to the new works at Irlam. Steel workers from Wigan were famous in Irlam and Cadishead; their traditional use of clogs could be heard at the shift change on the cobbles of Kings Road, heading to Irlam Station for the journey home.

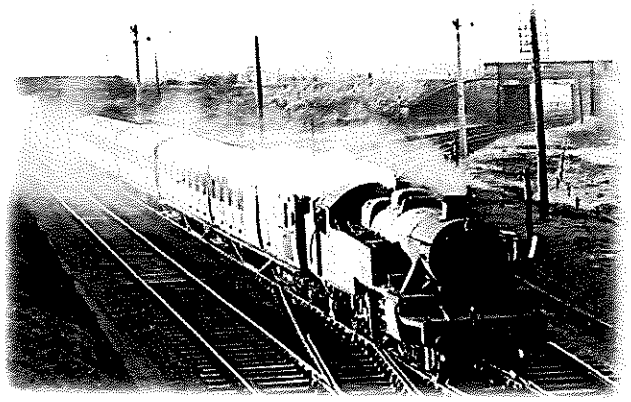


Figure 44 Glazebrook west junction, the Wigan line leaving off to the right. The two bridges of Dam Head Lane clearly visible.

Figure 45 A Wigan train on route to Glazebrook approaches Culcheth Station in the 1960's. A Beeching casualty it closed with all others on the line on the 2/11/64.

Although called the Wigan line, it also serviced Ashton, Haydock and St. Helens. Passenger trains ran regular services to the races from Liverpool to Haydock. Just over a mile from Glazebrook, the first stop on the Wigan line would be at New Church Halt, built in 1943 to service a nearby Royal Naval Air Electrical School. There was also

a one and a half mile branch to a small station at the nearby massive Risley munitions factory, opened in July 1941, closing on 2/1/1952. Shortly after Newchurch Halt was Culcheth Station, which opened, with all others on the line, to Wigan Central on the 1/4/84.

Glazebrook Dam Lane junction also required its own signal box. This was located on the east side of Dam Lane Bridge on the Liverpool down line very close to the road. Less complex than the east junction signal box it still had twenty-five levers. Rebuilt in 1961, its function reduced. With the branch line closure it finally became redundant around 1973 and was demolished.

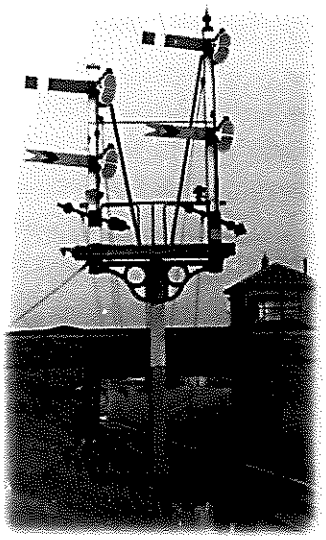


Figure 46 Dam Lane Signal and Box. The left post controls the line to Wigan, the right post the main line to Manchester. J W F Scrimgeour Signalling Record Society

Another Beeching casualty, the Wigan branch line, was closed to passengers on the 2/11/1964 and to goods in 1968.Today, the junction has all gone, but the route of the lines is still clear to see from Dam Head Lane, where the now disused bridge forms a good vantage point. Glazebrook Moss Junction, where the two lines converge, can just be made out across the fields.

Figure 47 Dam Head Lane box Signalling indicators 1956 The CLC had its own signalling works at Battersby Lane, Warrington. J W F Scrimgeour Signalling Record Society

Glazebrook East Junction.

Glazebrook East Junction is actually located over the River Glaze, in Cadishead. The junction starts as the line crosses the Glaze, just beyond the three arches bridge. Here, both the line to Stockport via Cadishead, and the Ship Canal branch line to the Coaling Basin and Steel Works, leave/join the main Liverpool-Manchester line. The tight curve to the south east required a thirty miles per hour speed limit. Notably, the junction only allowed traffic to-from the Liverpool direction. This must have caused quite a lot of shunting off the main line, as, prior to the opening of the Steel Works own rail connection in 1957, this was the primary import and export rail connection. Any raw materials from Yorkshire, such as coal and limestone, would probably have been carried over the canal railway, through Cadishead to Glazebrook sidings, before returning to Glazebrook East and on into the works. The same shunting would also be required for finished steel products going the other way. To control what was a very complex junction and sidings an eighty lever signal box was built close by. Rebuilt in 1961, it's still in use today, although with a much reduced function.

Figure 48 Glazebrook East Junction signal box. This is the 1961 replacement. The houses in the background are on Glazebrook Lane

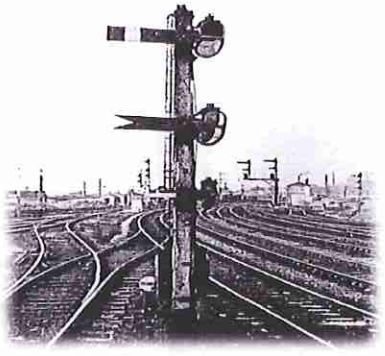


Figure 49 This photo gives some idea of the extent and complexity of the Glazebrook East Junction and the approach to Irlam station from the west. The Ship Canal transfer line off to the left. Glazebrook East signal box in the background right. N. Jones.

During the First World War, additional sidings were added, in 1915, to supply the Steel Works. Today, the junction has been entirely closed and the lines lifted. The line to Stockport closed for passengers on the 30/11/1964 in the Beeching cuts. The Manchester Ship Canal branch junction was lifted relatively recently, in the late nineties. British Tar Products, of Hayes Road, continued to receive feed stock by rail, with a tanker off-loading facility near

the canal bank, until they closed in the mid 1990's. More recently, a passing loop has been added to the Liverpool-Manchester main line where the East Junction sidings used to be. This runs parallel to Sandy Lane, and can be seen from the bridge on New Moss Road.

Figure 50 Looking down the MSC lines that run down to the North side coaling basin and the steelworks laid on the old track bed of the CLC. A load of steel bars leave the works. The new elevated deviated line heading towards Cadishead Station and the Canal viaduct beyond. D Thorpe.

Figure 51 Approaching Glazebrook Station, the east junction clearly visible in the background.

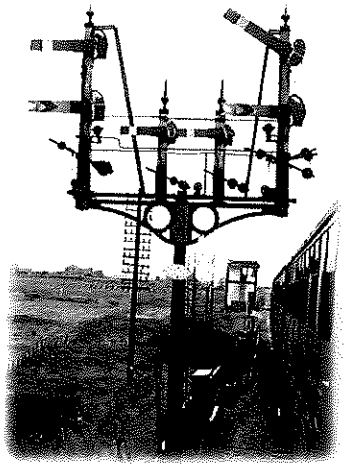


Figure 52 Typical upper quadrant signals controlling the east junction The left post controlling the Manchester through line the right post, to Stockport, the two centre small signals the MSC sidings. Glazebrook east signal box in the distance.

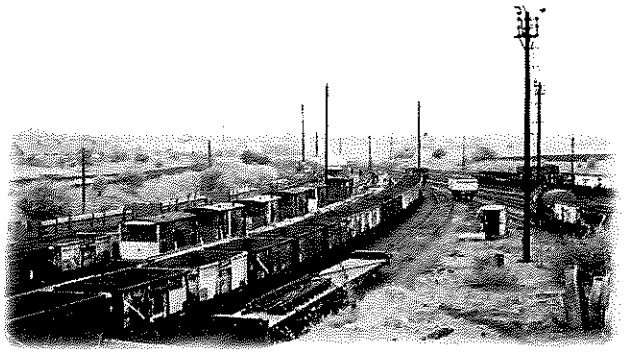


Figure 53 Glazebrook East Junction and sidings in 1977, the sidings are the former CLC 1873 line supplying the north side Coaling Basin and the Steel Works. The Manchester line through Irlam is off to the right

Glazebrook to Stockport line (via Cadishead)

If you look at a Railway map of North West England, it's easy to see why this line was built. The MS&LR had crossed the Pennines via their first three-mile Woodhead tunnel in 1845 (a second tunnel opened in 1853) and had built as far as Godley, where they connected to the CLC. Next, they built onto Woodley, Stockport (Tiviot Dale) and through to Skelton Junction, the southern hub of the CLC. The CLC had built out from Manchester to North Cheshire via Skelton Junction (Altrincham) towards Knutsford and on to Northwhich and Chester. The next logical step in the plan was to build a link from Skelton Junction, connecting to the planned main Liverpool-Manchester line. From Skelton junction, the line routed through Partington, crossing the Canal at Cadishead and joined the main Liverpool line at Glazebrook East Junction. This would allow through traffic from Yorkshire access to the busy port of Liverpool without using other companies' metals (rails) and avoiding Manchester. Similarly, in the other direction, trains from Liverpool Central could now go direct to Stockport, diverting at Godley towards either Sheffield/ Hull or on to London St. Pancras.

In 1897 there were seventeen weekday passenger trains from Liverpool Central, to Warrington, Stockport, Sheffield, Hull and London, but the main use of this line was freight. This line, and Glazebrook East Junction, over the next fifty years, was to become one of the busiest freight routes in the country.

The railways of the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC).

No account of the railways of the area would be complete without reference to the railways of the Manchester Ship Canal company. The MSC railway was the largest private railway in the British Isles. The Canal railway was originally formed from the contractors' railway, following the completion of the canal. The contractor: Thomas A Walker; suddenly died on the 24th November 1889, leaving his executors with the job of negotiating with the canal directors. After nearly a year of wrangling, the directors took charge of the contract, and in so doing, acquired for the MSC company all the plant and equipment, including the temporary railway assets. During construction some two hundred and twenty-eight miles of track were laid, both in the canal bottom and along the banks. The contractor had owned one hundred and seventy-three locos and six thousand three hundred wagons. The construction railway originally had a connection to the CLC main line, east of Irlam station, to bring in construction materials. At its peak, some ten thousand tons of coal and eight thousand tons of cement a month were delivered by rail to the various construction sites along the canal excavations.

Figure 54 Loco No.6 Longsight 0-6-0 saddle tank, at Partington North, the Steel Works Chimneys behind. Purchased in1888 by the contractor, it was in service for forty years, mostly at Partington. It was sold in 1931. J. Steggles.

Using remnants of the contractors' railway, the MSC slowly developed a canal-side railway of over thirty-three miles of the canal, at its peak it had two hundred and thirty miles of track, seventy-five locos, two thousand seven hundred wagons and employed seven hundred and ninety staff. The largest concentrations of rail and equipment were at Salford Docks and Trafford Park, but there were extensive facilities at Partington North Coaling Basin and Glazebrook sidings. Partington Basin, described below, was split between the north and south of the canal. The north side operations were the largest, managing both traffic for the Coaling Basin and the Steel Works sidings.

Figure 55 MSC Steel Works Irlam junction. The single track canal side railway heads off under Irlam Viaduct to Weaste. The Mersey joins the canal from the right.

For a truly excellent account of the MSC railways the reader is referred to ref 6.written by Don Thorpe, whom we have to thank for many photographs as well.

The MSC railway originally followed the line of the old River Irwell, through what became the CWS Soap Works site and under the rail bridge, across the now dry river bed, but, with the construction of the Soap Works and the Steel Works, it was realigned along the canal banking under the Irlam viaduct (Deviation 5). This required the support of the banking under the viaduct.

The retaining wall is still to be seen, but, now only prevents the banking collapsing onto the by-pass, built in the 1990's, on the route of the Canal railway.

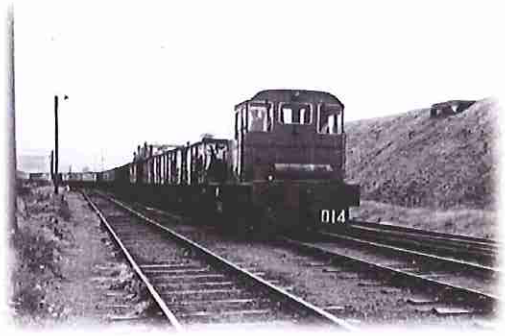


Figure 56 D14 0-6-0 built by Hudswell Clarke in 1962 and scrapped in 1983 heading up from the North coaling basin to Glazebrook siding. The elevated Stockport mainline is on the right. D. Thorpe

Figure 57 One of the MSC first Diesel Locos No 4001 Alnwick Castle built by Hudswell Clarke in 1959 and preserved today with its sister No 4002 on the East Lancs railway.

Irlam and Cadishead figure often in the history of the canal railway. The MSC track ran on the north bank of the Canal and entered Irlam from Barton in the east as a single line. The MSC railway was single track from Weaste Junction, all the way through to Latchford. The line between Weaste Junction through Barton, Irlam, to Partington North Basin was the busiest on the network. There was a small marshalling yard just east of Irlam Locks, now lost under the A57 by-pass, but the main operations were at Partington North and Glazebrook sidings.

The pictures below show the Weighbridge and single line controller office.

Figure 58 Below: Partington North weighbridge and also the office of the controller. D Thorpe

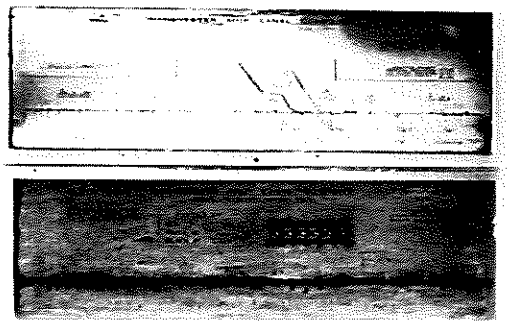
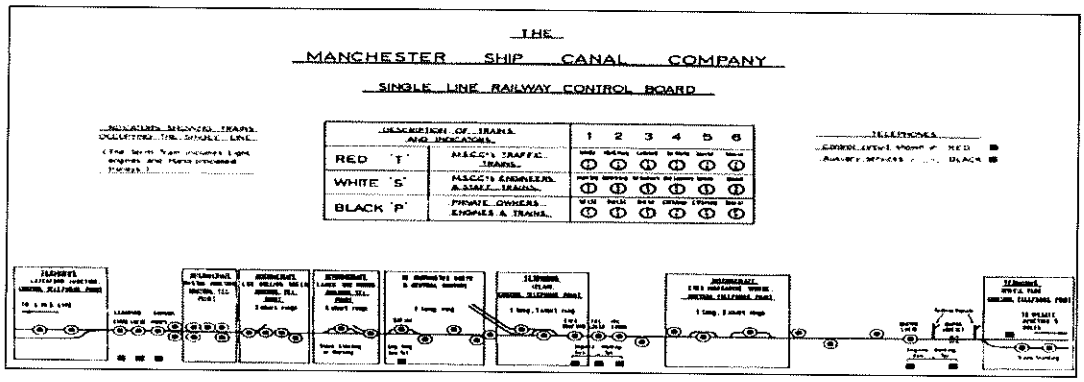


Figure 58 A simple peg and socket board controls the single line from Irwell Park through to Latchford. D Thorpe



The original CLC rail lines through Irlam and Cadishead incurred the Canal Company in great cost for elevating and deviating them to cross the Canal at the required seventy five feet clearance. But there was to be a benefit as well. The Canal Company took over the truncated remnants of the old lines and their connections to the Cheshire Lines railways at Irlam, Glazebrook East and Partington. The truncated Irlam branch of the CLC mainly provided a connection for the CWS Soap Works, but also connected to the MSC canal side rail line, next to the Irlam CWS wharf. This line was known locally as Queens Road.

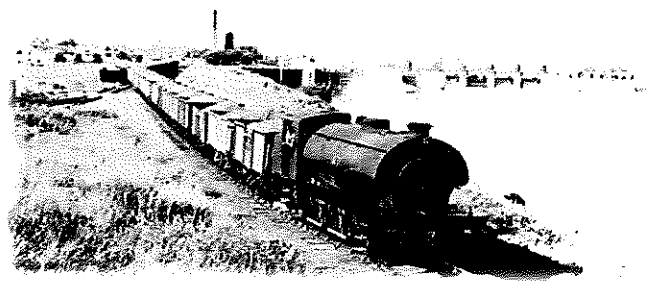


Figure 59 An ex-WD saddle tank engine hauls a load of coal as it passes Irlam locks and the CWS wharf. The line branching off to the left is the MSC connection to the CLC at Irlam station used by the CWS. Note the stationary wagons in the Magadi loop (see below) in the background. A. Appleton

Figure 60 View west off Sandy Lane bridge, Glazebrook East sidings

The major CLC connection was however, in Cadishead, originating at the Glazebrook East Junction with the main Liverpool Manchester line and the vast expanse of sidings. This connection was to be a major freight facility importing coal, limestone and scrap steel to the Steel Works, coal to the Partington (North side) Coaling Basin and exporting of finished steel products. Major sidings were added and expanded during the war years, near Sandy Lane Bridge, to mange the huge increase in traffic.

The third connection to the CLC main line was to be over the canal at Partington (South), this connection also used the redundant truncated low level line to feed the Partington (South Side) Coaling basin. The south coaling basin closed on the 30/12/1966.

The canal railways had connections to most of the major companies in Irlam and Cadishead.

The MSC railways converted from steam working to diesel on the 6/7/1966, but, as freight moved to the roads the MSC railway slowly contracted and closed as traditional heavy industries declined. Maintenance on the line trough Irlam from Weaste to Partington North was halted in 1977 and all traffic except engineering trains stopped on the 21/12/1977. The line was finally closed to all traffic in 1978.

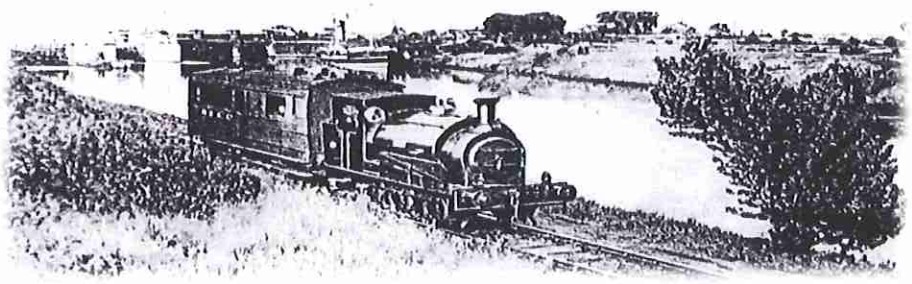


Figure 61 Hunslet Loco No 84 of the MSC Railway hauls the cashier's coach as it heads away from Barton locks in the background and heads to Irlam, taken around 1949. A. Wadsworth

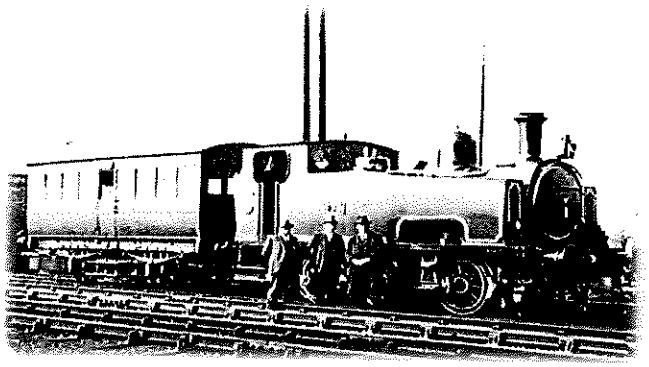


Figure 62 The engineer's inspection coach hauled by Hudson Clarke No79 built 1927, The figure in the centre is the canal resident engineer G Leader Williams. A road in Irlam is named after him A. Appleton

Ship Canal railway bridges.

The Ship Canal railway alongside the canal had a number of river crossings, the original bridges were constructed in wood. Both Rixton Junction and the River Glaze bridges were replaced with concrete in 1928. Boysnope Bridge was finally replaced in 1938.

Figure 63 Ship Canal railway over the course of the old Irwell at Boysnope. The inlet forms the Wharf for the Manchester Corporation Cleansing Department. D. Thorpe

Figure 64 Ship Canal railway as it crosses the River Glaze as it enters the Canal at Cadishead. D. Thorpe

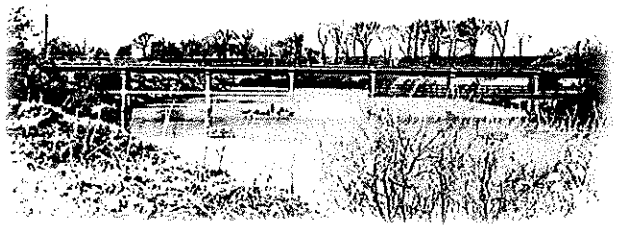


Figure 65 Two views of the Canal railway as it crosses the Mersey at Rixton Junction.The original contractors' wooden bridge (above).

Figure 66 and its concrete replacement of 1928 below.Rixton Junction is where the River Bollin enters and the River Mersey leaves the canal. MSC and D. Thorpe.

Partington North

Partington Coaling Basin.

If you're old enough you may recall seeing the sign for the Partington Coaling Basin painted on the Cadishead low level iron bridge (original 1873 Cadishead rail line) near the George Hotel. The sign directed you down Atherton Lane (Alabama to locals) and Whitfield Street (now Anglers' Rest) which was the road access to the Partington north canal bank coaling basin. Why is it called Partington Basin when Partington is south of the canal? See section 6 for county boundary map. When the canal was cut, it left isolated areas of land in both Cheshire and Lancashire between the old river beds and the canal. The county boundary in 1896 was the Rivers Irwell and Mersey. The county boundary was not moved by Parliament until 1st April 1920. The significance of this was that the rates payable to the district councils and provision of services now had to span the canal for twenty-four years, before it was resolved, much in favour of Irlam and Cadishead. During construction of the canal, the river was crossed fifteen times between Warburton and Irlam.

Most of the site that was the Coaling Basin and the Steel Works, and is now The Northbank Industrial Estate, was in Partington. Hence Partington Coaling Basin and Partington Iron and Steel Co. The Coaling Basin was built on both sides of the canal bank.

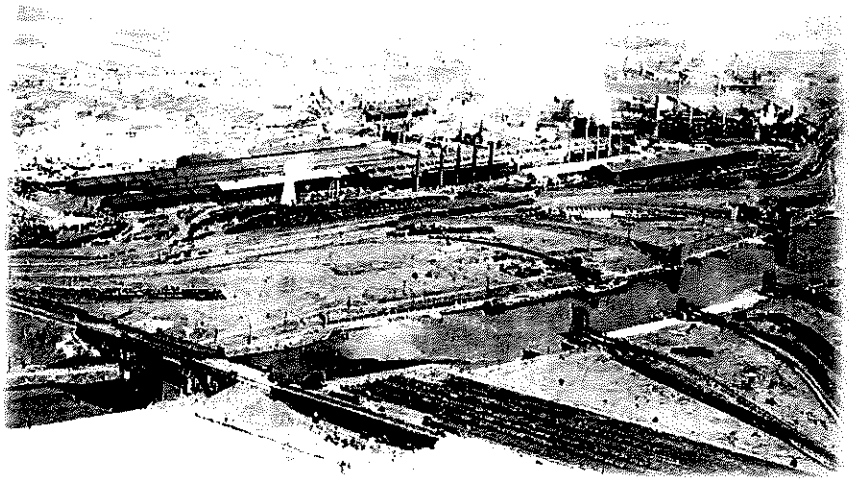


Figure 67 Partington north and south coaling basin, north coal tips 1, 3, 5 & 7 far right, south 2, 4, & 6. Cadishead rail viaducts over the canal and dry Mersey bed. The Steel Works in the background. Airviews Ltd.

The coaling basin was mainly built to load coal, for both bunker fuel and export, for the ships which moored on both banks of the canal. Coal was brought by rail from the South Yorkshire and Lancashire coal fields. The basin also handled sixty thousand tons of soda ash for ICI, coke from Partington Gas Works and pitch from British Tar. When the Steel Works opened in 1913, the rail sidings were expanded to deliver both coal and limestone to the company and export finished steel products. Being a little more that half way up the canal, there was good reason to locate the coaling facility at Partington: the proximity of the railways and their access to the Lancashire and Yorkshire coalfields. The line through Cadishead was ideal for this purpose.

When the main line was re aligned in 1893 to elevate it over the new canal viaduct, the canal truncated the original line at a lower level. This was ideally suited to form two branch lines, one each side of the canal, running off the main line, in order to supply the North and South coaling basins. On the Cadishead side, the connection to the main Liverpool-Manchester line was left in place at Glazebrook East Junction, It ran parallel to the Stockport (Cadishead) line, under Sandy Lane Bridge, across Liverpool Road, on the iron bridge we see today, before opening out onto several miles of sidings on the north bank of the canal. There was also a connection to the MSC lines along the canal.

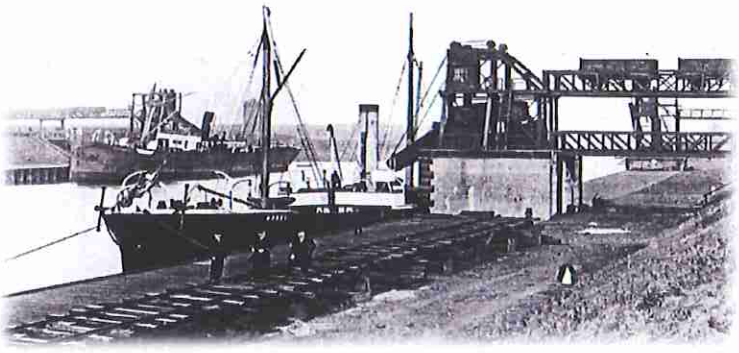


Figure 68 No2 coal tip South bank. Full wagons gravity fed on the lower track, empty ones returned again by gravity on the upper track. A coal tip could load one hundred and sixty tons an hour. Stretford Library.

When the canal opened, there were originally four coal tips (Nos. 2-5) and a dummy tip with a steam crane (No. 1 tip) to load smaller ships. Each coal tip could load one hundred and sixty tons an hour. Nos. 1, 3 and 5 tips were on the north side and Nos. 2 and 4 on the south side. To service the coal tips, seven miles of sidings were built. In 1900 the rail siding mileage was doubled. By 1907 demand had grown again and two extra coal tips (Nos. 6 and 7), were constructed, one on each canal bank. The sidings were further extended to a total of nineteen and-a-half miles. As a result of the Steel Works, they were further expanded again in the 1920s to twenty-four miles, ultimately reaching, at its peak, a total of thirty-four miles on both sides of the canal banks. Ironically, the original line of 1873, by now the coaling basin siding, remained open ten years longer than the deviated route built to replace it.

On the Partington south bank there were also three coal hoppers and many miles of sidings. The connection to the main line on the Partington side was about a mile-and-a-half back from the canal, just south of Partington Station (closed at the same time as Cadishead).

With the decline in the Lancashire coal field, decline of exports, the closure of the Steel Works and ships no longer bunkered by coal, the coaling basin slowly died. The south side was closed on the 31/12/1966, the north side finally closed on the 9/7/1981, when remaining coal shipments were moved to Garston Dock, at Liverpool.

Figure 69 Above, BR loco crossing Liverpool Road delivering oil products to the BTP railhead at Partington North basin.

The closing of the canal-side railway caused local company BTP a problem, as it received eighty to ninety thousand tons of oil products a year by rail. A new railhead was constructed, adjacent to the canal, modifications were done on the branch line from Glazebrook east, and the line cleared for use for British Rail-owned trains on the 9/7/1981. This continued use retained the original iron bridge over the A57 until BTP closed in the mid 1990's

Partington north workshops and loco sheds

The extensive workings at Partington North and Glazebrook sidings on the MSC railway, required local maintenance facilities. The original Shed located at the end of Whitfield Street (Atherton Lane) could only house three locos. By 1920, ten locos were operating the coaling basin: two on the south side and eight on the north (Cadishead) side. The locos based/seen at Partington around this time were steam, and all but one 0-6-0.

They were named:

Romiley No2,	Longsight No6,	St. Petersburg No62,	Alexandria No 11(0-4-0),
Port Limon No36,	Bordeaux No58,	Stockholm No 35,	Adelaide No 37,
Rotterdam No 22	Hamburg No31,	Stettin No49,	Copenhagen No 34 and
Gothenburg No 32.			

To operate two shifts of twelve hours required twenty drivers and similar numbers of firemen and shunters, plus support staff. Around this time all MSC locos names were replaced by numbers.

A new shed housing ten locos was opened in September 1925 between Nos. 5 and 7 coal tips.

Figure 70 Two locos of the MSC just outside the north side loco shed in 1957

Figure 71 The new Partington North workshops under construction in 1964. To the left is the loco shed and behind the chimneys of the Steel Works. W. Williams

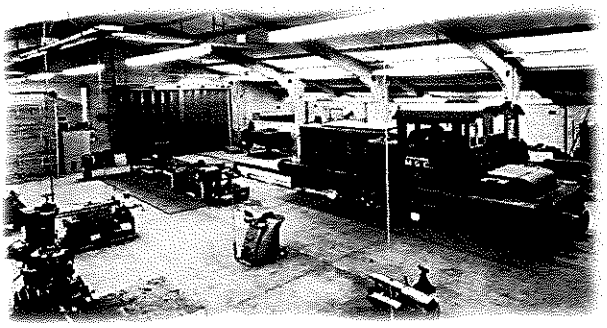


Figure 72 Inside the completed workshops. Under maintenance is Loco D1 Ashdown, built by Hudswell Clarke Co., the first diesel loco bought by the MSC railway in 1959. MSC Co

The change over from steam to diesel on the MSC railway started on the 8th March 1959. The following year D1 was delivered to Partington followed by D2 and by 1962; most operations at Partington were diesel.

The Industries of Irlam and Cadishead (with rail connections)

The combination of the opening of the CLC railway in 1873 and the canal in 1894 can be said to be the real catalyst for the subsequent rapid expansion of industry in Irlam and Cadishead. This is a story about railways, not local industry, but the combination of the railways and the canal that provided the main reason the major industries arrived. Here are just a few companies in the area that had rail connections.

Partington Iron and Steel.

If one company can be said to have influenced an area, it was this one. The building of the Manchester Ship Canal had left a very large (one hundred-and-nine acres) area of land that was the former confluence and flood plain of the Rivers Irwell and Mersey. Being close to the river level, it was called Lower Irlam. The local name of Sandwarps is taken from this area of Lower Irlam. Before the canal was constructed there was a large lazy loop in the river, a small lock and wharf, on the site. A large part of the site was in Partington before the canal was cut, hence the name.

Construction of the works began in 1910/11 by the Partington Iron and Steel Company. The MSC built sidings to service the works in 1911 and built a junction to connect the internal works railway with the MSC, at the western end near the Partington Coaling Basin, in 1912. A junction at the Eastern (Irlam) end was also added. Additional sidings were added in 1913/14, and in 1915 sidings were expanded at Glazebrook east for the war effort.

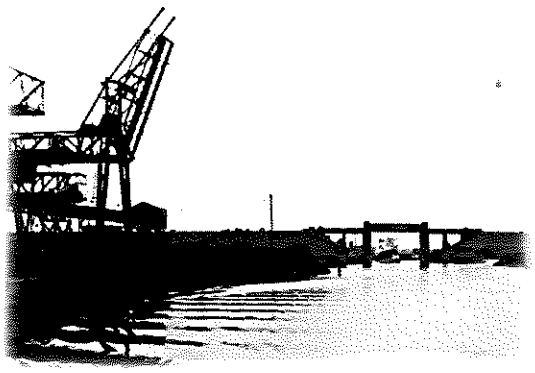


Figure 73 Steel Works canal wharf completed in May 1932.Ore was unloaded directly onto conveyors to the blast furnaces. A great loss of revenue to the MSC railway. Irlam viaduct in the background

In the early years Iron ore was brought in by CLC and MSC rail from the ironstone quarries at Wakerley in Rutland. The quarries were owned by the company. Due to the low quality of the ore the quarries were only active from 1916-21 as the ore proved to be of a lower quality than had been hoped. Thereafter materials were brought in by the MSC railway from Trafford wharf and transported using the MSC canal side line until the Steel Works opened its own wharf in 1932.

Figure 74 0-6-0 Peckett Loco No13 in 1917. The company had running rights on the MSC railway Urmston Model Engineering Society

As the Steel Works grew, a wharf on the canal was built. Opening in May 1932, this allowed ocean-going ships to offload iron ore direct into wagons, to be shunted into the plant. The other three bulk raw materials to make steel are coal, limestone and scrap steel. However, the railways were the most critical transport connection for the works, and, by the mid 1950s, were handling one and a quarter million tons of these raw materials. Limestone was delivered from the Peak District quarries and coal for coking from the Yorkshire coal fields. The railway lines of the Canal Company provided the essential rail connections to the CLC from 1913 until 1957.

Figure 75 Above: The Steel Works immortalised by the model makers..

I have already mentioned the extensive sidings at Glazebrook East and the Partington Coaling Basin which, until 1957, were the main connections for the Steel Works to the CLC at Glazebrook East. As well as the importing of raw materials to the works, the railways were also used to export the finished steel products. The Steel Works had an extensive rail network of its own on the site. Initially the company used steam traction but, converted to diesel locos in 1953.

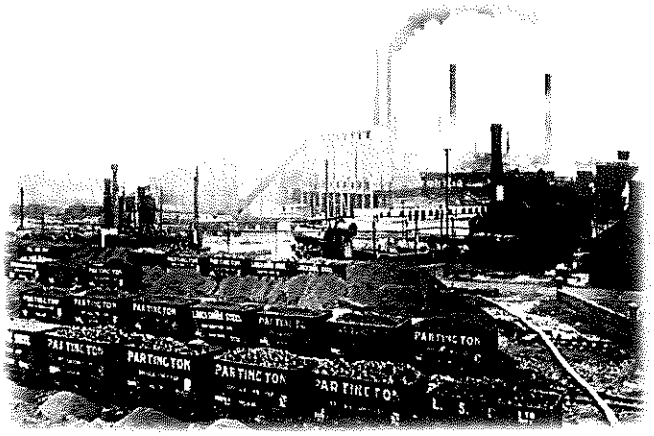


Figure 76 Above: The real thing, wagons belonging to the Partington Iron and steel company. The works had an extensive railway of its own

Figure 77 The Steelworks connection to the CLC lines, opened in 1957. The CLC Manchester line behind.

In 1956, the now renamed the Lancashire Steel Corporation Ltd., applied for an Act of Parliament to build its own rail connection to the CLC direct into the works. They achieved this by way of a branch siding off the mainline, just west of Irlam station, costing over one million pounds. This required a new bridge across Liverpool Road to the south east side of the main line crossing, and the widening of Moss Lane bridge (now New Moss Road). Although the Steel Works are long gone, the Liverpool Road bridge remains. Painted blue, it unfortunately hides the sweeping arch of the main line Liverpool Road crossing. It opened on the 24/3./1957, depriving the MSC railway of significant revenue.

The Steel Works obtained running rights for its own locos and rolling stock on the MSC lines in 1920. It made extensive use of the lines for both the movement of finished steel products, but also the removal and tipping of slag, initially to the tip at Hollins Green, but by the end of the 1920's, to further down the canal at Statham. Lack of water facilities at Rixton and Statham required the locos to be fitted with extra large water tanks.

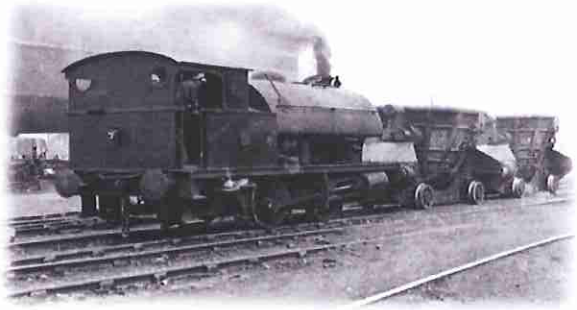


Figure 78 Above: 0-4-0 Saddle tank shunting molten iron from the blast furnaces

Figure 79 Diesel replaced steam from 1959 onwards

CWS Soap works.

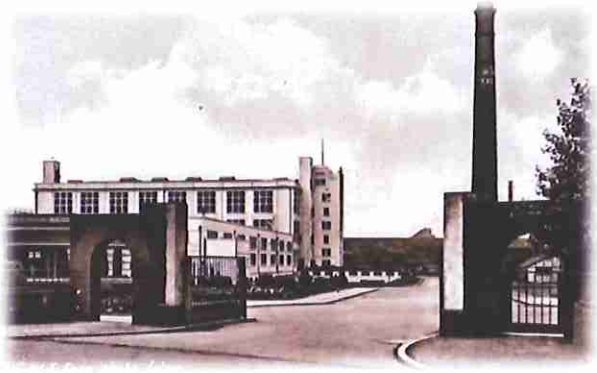


Figure 80 CWS Soap works Fairhills Road, the CLC elevated deviated line in the background

This is another company built on land freed by the construction of the canal, between the isolated remains of the River Irwell and the new canal. The site also benefited from rail connections to the CLC and the Ship Canal lines, as well as its own three hundred feet canal-side wharf. I touched on the rail connection when describing the deviations at Irlam station. The route of the original 1873 line runs parallel to the current main line, but at the original low level. This would be behind what is now Tesco, Fairhills Industrial Estate and the CWS Wines and Spirits buildings. With the new deviation opening in 1893, the Manchester Ship Canal Company, just as at Cadishead, retained the old line as a branch siding off the main line, both to connect the Soap works and, nearer the canal, connect to the Canal Company lines. This line was known locally as the "Queens Road". Retaining this line required the continued use of the original bridge under Station Road and constructing a new iron bridge over the re-aligned Liverpool Road. Just to the east of Liverpool Road, the line also crossed Tramway Road on a plate iron bridge, the brick bridge abutments are still to be seen. We will return to Tramway Road later on. The bridge over the old Irwell River crossing (now a drying river bed) was also retained.

Figure 81 Staff descending steps to the rear of Irlam station to the Soap works connecting line. Peckett Loco (Irlam) and six-wheel carriage, now preserved in York Railway Museum

Figure 82 CWS Soap works engine shed. Peckett loco and carriage, the Irlam Station service just about to depart

The Soap Works had its own extensive sidings, where today Tesco superstore stands. They owned both rolling stock and locos. For many years the Soap Works ran a twice-daily service for the work force, to/from Irlam Station, to coincide with main line train arrivals and departures. The service used an ex-Midland Railways six-wheel carriage, hauled by a Peckett loco. The carriage has since been restored and is on display in York Railway Museum.

CWS staff had to access the now new, high-level station at Irlam by wooden stairs at the rear of the station. The Soap Works ceased to use its rail connection in the 1960s. The branch line closed in 1964 and, as described earlier, the bridge under Station Road was demolished and filled in. The iron bridges across Liverpool Road and Tramway Road were removed by local company AC Brew on the 4/5th 12/1965. The old river crossing was removed a little later. The Canal Company and CWS had used the line from 1897 until 1965 when it severed its connection with the canal lines.

Figure 83The last day of service 6th Sept 1959, approach to Irlam station, while a Liverpool-Manchester express heads up the incline towards the Canal viaduct. In the background the gas holders of the Steel Works

0-4-0 Peckett fireless Loco No 2155, built in 1955, has been preserved locally as a static display. Initially, when the Soap Works closed in the late 1960's, it was located at the George Thomas Recreation Ground, Irlam. I remember it arriving and climbing all over it. Today, it stands alongside Cadishead Way (A57) new by-pass, just east of the disused Cadishead canal viaduct.

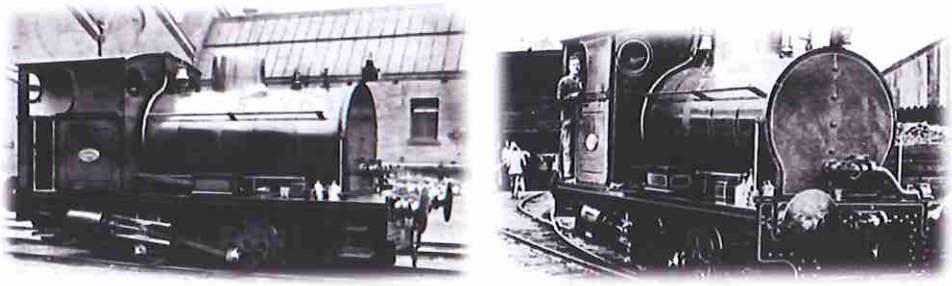


Figure 84 CWS Peckett Fireless Loco, following the Soap works closure circa 1970

Figure 85 it was moved to the George Thomas Recreation Ground,

Figure 86 before being moved in 2005 to a site on Cadishead bypass.

Other rail connections

Several other companies had rail connections via the Canal Company Railway.

- **Morgan Wallworks Ltd.** opened its works in 1945 at Higher Irlam, receiving timber from distant parts via the canal. The canal company's railway connected onto their own sidings to deliver timber products from the docks.

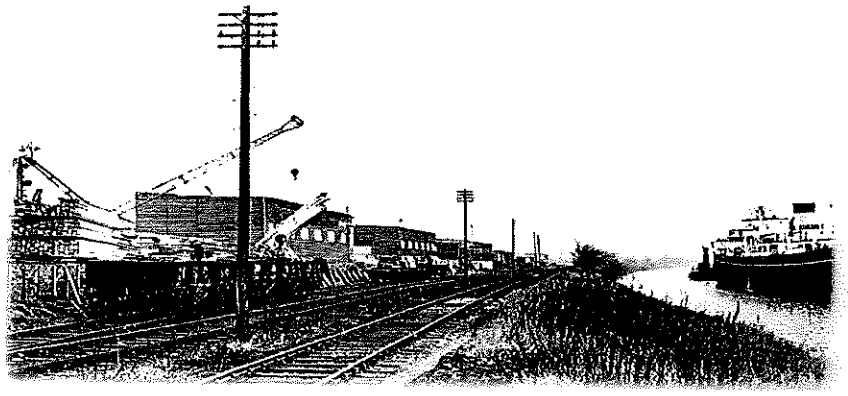


Figure 87 Unloading timber at Morgan Wallworks sidings higher Irlam. A passing ship heads up the canal to Barton Locks

- **CWS Margarine Works** at Higher Irlam, like the Soap works, had its own sidings and rolling stock, accessed by the Canal Company railway. They also had a number of 0-4-0 locos for shunting and running a small train to Irlam Station. They had running rights along the MSC and the branch "Queens Road" to Irlam station.

Figure 88 This 1925 wagon a, batch of 10 were built in 1925 by Charles Roberts and Co

- **British Tar Products** opened in 1916 on a site at the bottom of Hayes Road, to make explosives for the war effort. After the war, it produced oil, chemicals, tar and pitch. Using its MSC rail connections, it exported pitch, using the coaling basin. Following the MSC railway closure in 1981, it built a rail-head, canal-side, off the MSC branch line to Glazebrook East Junction. BTP had its own 0-4-0 loco for internal shunting, a Sentinel steam loco "Ann" purchased in 1927, it was in service until 1971.

Figure 89 Shunting at British Tar products sidings. Cadishead viaduct is in the background.

Figure 90 British Tar rail-head adjacent to Cadishead viaduct, remained open into the mid-1990's, retaining the MSC connections to the CLC at Glazebrook East. The first BR train ran on 9/7/1981

- **North Western Tar Distillers,** better known as the Lancashire Tar works, opened in 1928 at Cadishead. They produced very similar products to British Tar works and had east and west connections to the canal railway, for heavy oil products.

- **Lancashire Patent Fuel Company**. This company, based in Cadishead, had a rail connection to supply raw materials and carry finished goods. They made fuel briquettes until closure in 1918.

- **The Manna Oil works**, who took over the Patent Fuel Company, made cattle feed cakes. This factory, built by local builder Brew Bros., closed in 1935. Although it had a rail connection to the MSC railway, they used horses for shunting within the works.

- **Magadi Soda Company**. This is a most interesting story. Built on the land sandwiched between Irlam Locks and the Old River in 1913, the company converted soda into calcium nitrate. The site was part of that originally used to dump the spoil excavated from the construction of Irlam Locks. The canal built a siding to supply it. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the First World War cut off its supply of soda from East Africa. The factory was closed, and during the war, was converted to an army boot repair depot, utilising German prisoners of war, henceforth the site became know as the Jerry works. The original branch siding remained, and was forever known by the MSC railway men as the Magadi loop.

Local Rail bridges.

I have mentioned the principle rail bridges in the area. There are a few more that are worthy of mention.

Sandy Lane over bridge.

Figure 91 Sandy Lane. The MSC lines lifted

Sandy Lane Bridge connects Fir Street to New Moss Road. Today, it's only open for pedestrians. I assume it was built around 1893 to replace the Moss Lane level crossing, as the deviated railway had severed Moss Lane, one of the original access roads to Cadishead Moss. It spans both the original 1873 (later the Canal Company lines) and the new-deviated line of 1893. Its length gives some indication of the extensive track and sidings adjacent to Glazebrook East Junction. Looking in both directions, you can imagine the wide expanse of the lines heading off towards Partington North basin and the Steel Works.

Figure 92 Sandy Lane Bridge today.Note the sandstone construction

Figure 93 View off Sandy Lane bridge towards the Canal. The MSC line to the left servicing the Steel Works and the Partington North Basin, using the former CLC line, and the elevated, deviated Stockport line in the background

Looking north west, you can see the expanse that was once the East Junction with the Manchester main line. The signal box of Glazebrook East, rebuilt in 1961, is visible between the trees. Unusually, this bridge is built in stone with an iron deck, which makes me question when it was built. All the other structures effected by the canal construction are built in the blue engineering brick from the Canal Company's brick works. The answer might be as simple as there was a local quarry with cheaper available material.

Three arches rail bridge

Figure 94 The three arches bridge over the River Glaze, between Glazebrook East and West Junctions. Glazebrook East Junction starts immediately to the left. Glazebrook station is off to the right. Author

Another interesting bridge can be seen at the very bottom of Fir Street; by following the footpath as the road ends, you can see the Three Arches rail bridge. This bridge carries the main Liverpool-Manchester line over the River Glaze. There is also a small foot tunnel under the line adjacent. If you look at the brickwork closely, you can see the tell-tale signs of a widening of the bridge in the Canal company blue engineering brick. Maybe it had to be widened when the deviated Stockport line junction had to be moved slightly west? Going under the bridge, you can see the Glazebrook East Junction signal box in close detail. The box was originally constructed in 1873 to control Glazebrook East Junction. This had eighty levers at its peak, which indicates just what a complex and busy junction this was. It was replaced by the one we see today in 1961.

Tramway Road bridge

What an interesting little bridge this is. It's more of a tunnel than a bridge. I will be describing its purpose in detail in section 20. The road name gives its purpose away. If you go to the bottom of Tramway Road you will see a small bridge (tunnel) under the main Liverpool-Manchester deviated line. This was the original route of an old tramway. Disused by the 1890's, when the deviated line was built, it was probably by then a roadway to Sandy Warps lock and wharf. If you look through the undergrowth before the foot tunnel, you will also find evidence of the old bridge masonry of the original 1873 line bridge over Tramway Road. Once the Steel Works opened in 1913, it was used as a pedestrian and cycle entrance to the works.

Narrow gauge tramways

Chat Moss Narrow Gauge Tramways and Railways.

Just when I thought I had finished this document. I remembered as a teenager working on farms on the moss hearing about trains that brought waste from barges, moored at Boysnope Warf, up onto Chat Moss. Researching on the web, I found a copy of Robert Nicolls' book: Manchester's Narrow Gauge Railways Ref 7. This little gem of information answered a lot of questions, not only on railways, but also on the wider history of the area. Here is just a summary of what was to become an extensive railway network.

The history behind the Chat Moss narrow gauge railways is all about land reclamation and waste disposal. There are three different era's of tramway and railway building on the moss. The first; from around 1816 to 1830, the second; from 1830 to 1888 and the third; from 1888 to 1939. Chat Moss, as we discussed earlier, was a formidable peat bog of some six thousand acres. In 1793 William Roscoe (Roscoe Road) took a ninety-two-year lease from the de Trafford family (who owned the Chat Moss Estate), to drain and reclaim a large part of the bog for agricultural use. His venture failed with his bankruptcy in 1821. The challenge was taken on by Edward Baines, and, as with Roscoe, has a local road named after him, (Baines Avenue).

Robert Stannard's Tramway 1816-1830

Robert Stannard had been employed by Roscoe in 1805; he had worked on the reclamation of Trafford Moss (Trafford Park) Estate. In 1816 he laid an eighteen inch gauge moveable railway, or tramway as they were called, on parts of Chat Moss. The process of recovering the bog started by marling, which is the mixing in of sand or clay into the bog to stabilise it, so that it could withstand the weight of people and horses. The tramway was the key to lowering the cost of transporting the marl. It was later realised that mixing in manure, waste and night-soil made the ground highly fertile. Work was temporarily halted in 1821, due to Roscoe's bankruptcy, but Robert Stannard was to play a significant role in the first Liverpool-Manchester Railway. Its construction was to further the reclamation of the moss. Construction of the first Liverpool to Manchester Railway started in 1826, and it was Stannard who laid the contractors' railway. As noted earlier in the text, it was also Stannard who convinced Stephenson to float the Liverpool-Manchester Railway, rather than keep tipping spoil into to what seemed the bottomless pit of the bog.

Barton Grange and Astley Road Tramway. 1830 -1888

In 1823 surveying started for the Liverpool-Manchester Railway, which opened in 1830. The same year, Edward Baines paid for the laying of a more permanent tramway, down what is today Barton Grange Road. It was a more substantial version of Stannard's 1816 tramway. It ran between the River Irwell at Boysnope, where a wharf had been built on the River Irwell, and Lamb's Cottage Halt, adjacent to the newly-opened Liverpool-Manchester Line, a distance of two miles. Goods could be exchanged between the two railways by hand, but no interchange sidings were built. The tramway was to be used to transport manure, night-soil and marl The former off-loaded from barges at Boysnope wharf.

Following Roscoe's bankruptcy, Baines had taken the lease on the eastern end of Chat Moss, leaving a large parcel of land to the western end. John Arthur Borron, a Warrington Glass Maker, and also owner of Little Woolden Hall, obtained this lease, and, seeing how Baines' Barton Grange Road Tramway had worked, planned a similar scheme on his lands, which lay on either side of what is today Astley Road. In 1833 he laid a tramway from the Liverpool-Manchester Railway at Flow Moss halt.

The station was renamed, having been moved half a mile from Flow Moss Cottage, to the end of the tramway down to the River Mersey to a wharf near Sandywarps Locks. The route went down Astley Road (then named Tramway Road) from Flow Moss Halt, crossing Liverpool Road by way of a level crossing, then down an incline which is still known today as Tramway Road, and on to the River Mersey. Before the Manchester Ship Canal was built in 1894, and the steelworks a while later in 1910, the Rivers Irwell and Mersey met on the flood plain in Lower Irlam, where it meandered in a big loop. A locks, known as Sandywarps, had been build to shorten the Irwell navigation, along with a nearby wharf for off-loading goods.

Today you can still see the tunnel under the Manchester-Liverpool Cheshire Lines railway, realigned (1894), at the bottom of Tramway Road and the old abutments for the original under bridge of the original 1873 route and subsequent Soap Works line, referred to earlier.

By the 1850, marling had fallen from favour, and the traffic on both tramways was limited to night-soil from the wharfs of the Irwell and Mersey, and coal. By this time, the farming on the moss was being managed by John and Richard Bell, as stewards of the Trafford Estate. The tramway became knows as Bell's Railway, and the road itself as Tram Road or Wagon Road. They also acquired the leaseholds of the farms around Astley Road, known at the time as Tramway Road. By the 1880's, both tramways had fallen out of use and were dismantled and covered over in 1888, forming roadways.

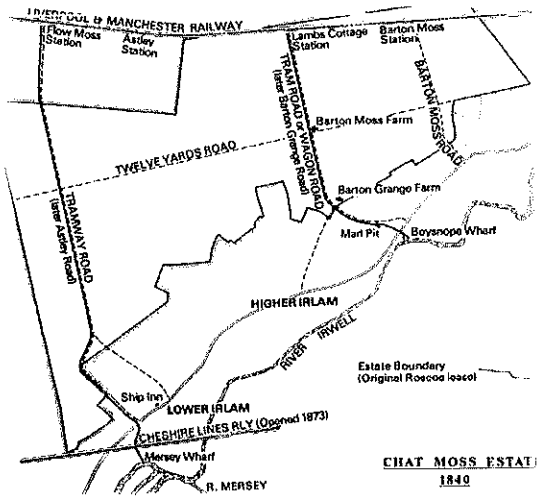


Figure 95 The diagram shows the two early tramways on the Chat Moss estate. Boysnope wharf on the Irwell to Lamb's Cottage station.Tramway Road, from Sandywarps on the Mersey to Flow Moss Station

Manchester Corporation railway 1888-1939

The building of the Manchester Ship Canal started in1888 isolated both Sandwarps and Boysnope Wharfs. The former being abandoned, and obliterated completely, when the Steel Works was built over it, on the land drained when the canal opened. By the late 1880's, Manchester was producing an increased amount of waste. Current methods of disposal were inadequate. Manchester Corporation Cleansing Department had acquired over one thousand acres of Carrington Moss in 1885, building a wharf on the Mersey and Irwell Navigation at Carrington. They built a narrow gauge railway form the wharf to the Carrington Estate. The success of the Carrington project, and the planned opening of the Canal, prompted them to negotiate the purchase of the Chat Moss Estate from the De Trafford family on the 2nd August 1895.

Figure 96 Manchester Corporation narrow gauge twin track under-bridge A57 at Boysnope

Initially it was planned to bring refuse in by rail to the LNWR Station at Barton Moss, and to a site near Irlam Station, but problems with both sites made them turn their attention to bringing waste in by barge to Boysnope, and use the site and line of Bell's railway to access Chat Moss. Before they could do that, major improvements had to be made costing thirty five thousand pounds.

The old Bell railway had crossed Liverpool Road just to the east of where the Crossfield Estate (Crossfield Farm) is today, by way of level crossing. The proposed increase in volume required the Corporation to construct an under-bridge for Liverpool Road, this was built just to the east of Boysnope Farm.

The structure was of such quality it is still in use today, the rail line long gone. The wharf line route and cutting was used in the early 1970's for the main drain for the M62 to the canal. Today, it's a roadway under the bridge between the clubhouse and the first tee of Boysnope golf course. From here the twin track rail route ran in a cutting on to the Moss, following a new alignment, roughly sited half way between Barton Grange Road and Barton Moss Road. The railway was to be laid out in a grid with three east-west, lines known as Raspberry Lane, Twelve Yards and Top Road, running as far west crossing Astley Road, and on to the boundary with Cadishead Moss, the extent of the Corporation's land. There a north-east south-west line would run the full length of the boundary, to what is today the boundary with Wigan in the north, and south to a site near Irlam station, which is today the school playing field.

A further line, running north-east, was laid past Park Hall, on to what is today the site of Barton Airport. Temporary tracks would then be laid into the farmers' fields, and moved as the estate was worked. Farmers' leases obliged them to take so many tons per acre of waste, a year. Around sixty thousand tons of waste a year was carried on the system from 1899 to 1906. In all, over ten miles of main track were laid, plus sidings.

The wharf line, as it was called, ran as a twin track up and down line as far as the east branch to Park Hall. It was then singled all the way to Top Road. In general, the locos would run clockwise down Raspberry Lane, as far as the Cadishead west boundary, then north to Twelve Yards or Top Road, turning east as far as Barton Airport, turning south, then west, past Park Hall, back to the twin track junction, returning to the wharf.

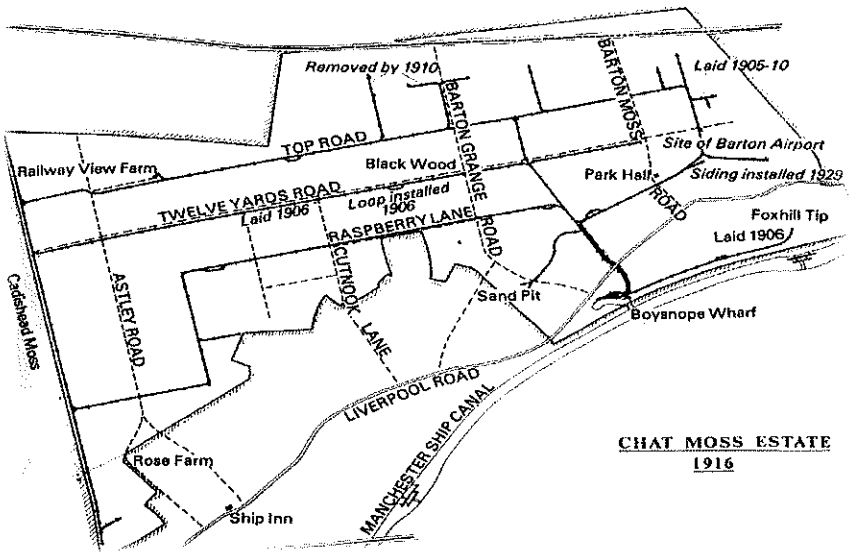


Figure 97 The extent of the Manchester Corporation Chat Moss railway in 1916 - over ten miles of track

The east-west lines of Raspberry Lane, Twelve Yards and Top Road were four hundred and twenty yards apart. Temporary branches would then be taken off, I suspect, every twelve yards, into the fields. Hence the name Twelve Yards Road. Twelve yards by four hundred and twenty yards is five thousand and twenty square yards - just over an acre (four thousand, four hundred and forty square yards), leaving an allowance for the branch track. Thus the Corporation and the farmer would know how much to tip per acre.

At Boysnope, a new wharf was constructed, engine sheds (1899) and sidings. Five parallel lines were installed and two steam cranes for off loading. The Corporation owned five locos over the period it operated, owning four at any one time. They were all named, either from previous owners, or after officers of the Cleansing and Estates Committees: Hugo Shaw (Windsor), Grantham (Robinson), Richards (Alice), Dixon and Trevor, original names in brackets.

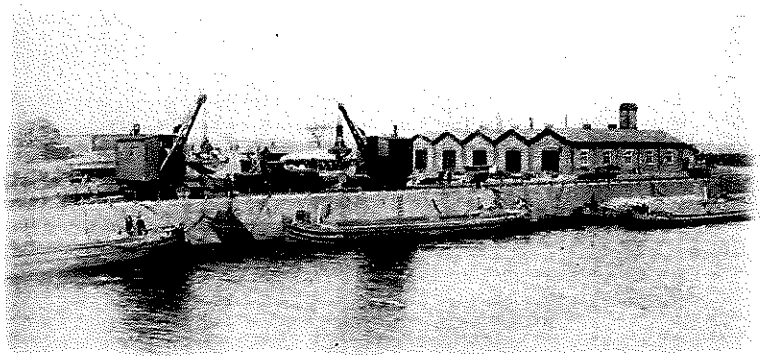


Figure 98 Offloading barges at Boysnope wharf onto the narrow gauge railway. The engine sheds in the background.

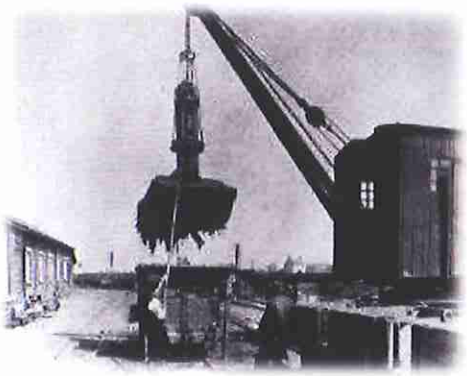


Figure 99 Offloading barges at Boysnope wharf onto the narrow gauge railway.

In 1928 the Air Ministry were looking for a site to locate a new airfield. The Corporation leased them the site, and arranged to extend the railway for construction, three hundred tons of clinker and ash were delivered each week to form the runways. The result was Barton Airfield, one of the oldest in the country, which today has a listed control tower and art deco terminal building.

Figure 100 Barton Airport control tower. Now a listed building

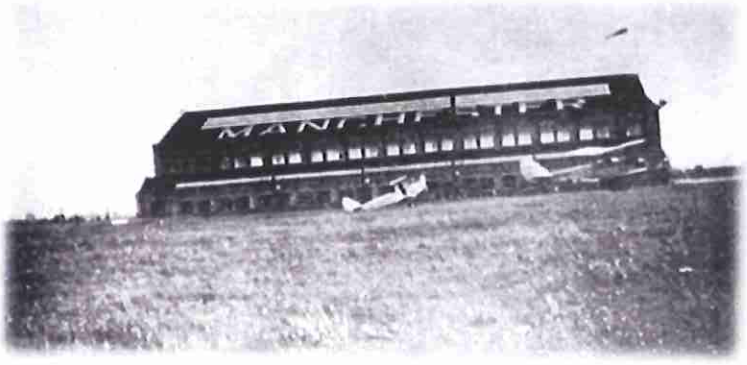


Figure 101 The original hanger complete with Manchester coat of arms

Another small branch line was laid in 1906, from Boysnope wharf to Foxhall tip, back along the side of the canal towards Barton. At the time of writing (2010) the site was being reclaimed for the new Salford City Reds Stadium.

The demise of the railway came with the changes in waste management, and the advent of better motorised transport. Once it became cheaper to transfer what, by now, was mainly slaughter-house waste of around ten thousand tons a year, by truck, the end for the railway was near. The last barge delivering waste to Boysnope, was in March 1939. The outbreak of war in 1939, and with it the national need for track and rolling stock, the Ministry

of Supply controlled the sale. It's not easy to work out exactly how many miles of track were laid, as it was moved as the moss was reclaimed. We know that in May 1940, twenty two miles of track were offered for sale, being the remaining track from both the Carrington Estate, which had closed in 1937, and the Chat Moss Estate

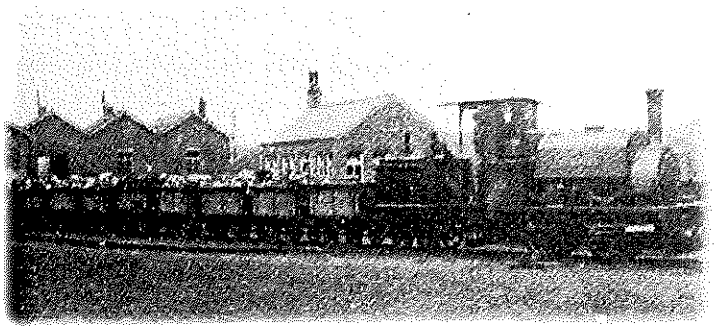


Figure 102 Loco Hugo Shaw leaving Boysnope wharf with a full load of manure for the moss

The wide scope of this document has necessitated shortening the story of what was a major railway, although about a third of it lay outside Irlam, at Barton.

I would refer the interested reader to Robert Nicholls' excellent book, ref 7, which has detailed maps and a wealth of information on both the Chat Moss and Carrington Moss Narrow Gauge Railway.

I must warn readers that although most tracks on Chat Moss are public footpaths, driving vehicles down the roads is hazardous, due to the uneven nature, and some tracks are private. Today, Raspberry Lane, and Twelve Yards in particular, are the main roads across the moss They can be enjoyed by foot, but little sign of the railway remains, excepting at Boysnope, where the engine sheds and the under-bridge are still to be seen..

Corrections.

I am sure there are many errors of detail and omissions of content. Anyone reading this who finds either I would welcome there input. Please send to Info@hamiltondavies.org

Acknowledgements.

I would like to acknowledge the authors of the reference texts. For their excellent accounts of the railways in question. Very little of this article is my original research. Most of the information has been collated from the reference texts.

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Ref 10 The Manchester Ship Canal. - Cyril Wheaton.

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