

HB1 Dam Lane Junction

As you look over the bridge parapet down the line towards Liverpool, you are almost looking due west across Rixton and Risley Moss with the cooling towers of Fiddlers Ferry visible in the distance. Birchwood Station is two miles distant and Padgate Station beyond. Birchwood, formerly Risley Halt, opened during World War II to service the huge Royal Ordnance Factory which had a railway of its own, although little remains of this today.

Turning around and looking over the bridge behind you to the east you can see the outline of where the branch line swept north east. The small quaint row of station cottages follow the start of the Wigan Junction line heading off North East on a tight 37 chain (745m) curve to Moss Junction.

HB3 Wigan Junction Railway

You are now looking at the disused Wigan Junction Railway which joined the main line behind. Built in 1879 the line to Wigan and St. Helens was principally to access the rich Lancashire coal fields. However, there were also regular passenger services, the busiest being from Wigan to Irlam, which was scheduled to suit the times of the shift changes at the Irlam Steel Works. Looking North West, the disused line is clearly visible today as the 37 chain (730mtr) curves towards Glazebrook Moss Junction where it meets the north east curve from Dam Lane Junction. This would have been just visible with its traditional Cheshire Lines Committee signal box at the point where the line from Dam Lane Junction joined, forming the apex of the triangle. The Wigan Junction Railway closed to passengers in November 1964 and finally to freight in 1968. The tracks were lifted and the land sold to the adjoining farms.

HB2 Glazebrook West Junction

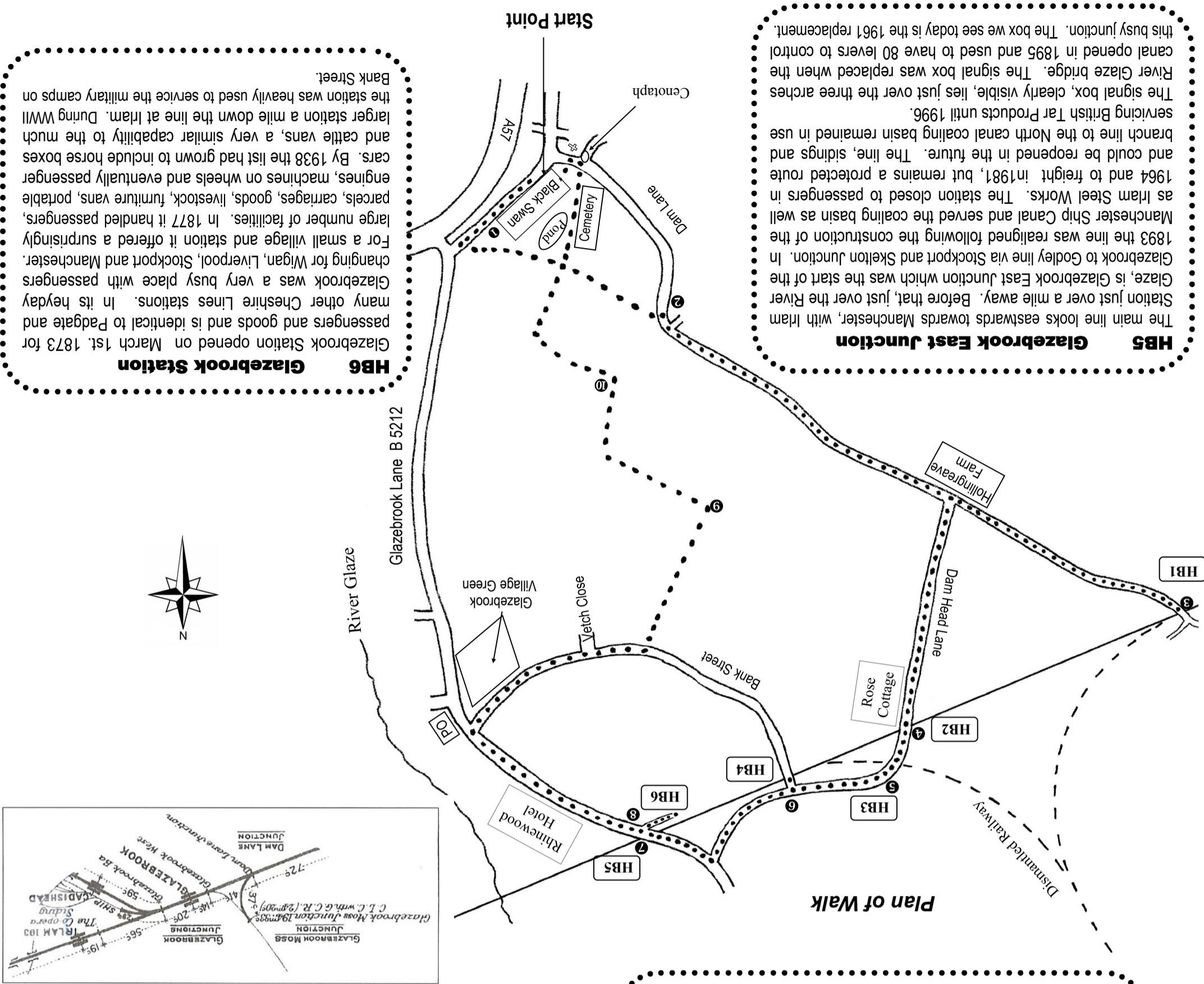
You are standing on Dam Head Lane bridge No.182 looking west towards Liverpool. In the post war era this was one of the busiest goods lines in the country, mainly transporting coal from the Yorkshire and Lancashire coal fields to the docks of Liverpool. Today the line is a busy passenger route between Manchester and Liverpool. Prior to 1964 you would have been able to see all three junctions from this point that connected the main line to the Wigan Junction Railway which opened October 1879. Three signal boxes once controlled this busy junction – Dam Lane, Glazebrook Moss and Glazebrook West.

Today from this vantage point the curve of the disused railway to Culceth and Wigan is clearly visible. The triangular field in between was bounded by the three junctions which collectively made up Glazebrook West Junction. Looking eastward over the other side of the bridge the wooded area you see today was once part of the expanse of Glazebrook West Junction.

HB4 Bank Street Bridge

Looking east you see Glazebrook Station. Now fenced the station sidings to the right are lifted and overgrown and the ten points and crossovers that once allowed shunting in and around the station removed. On your right would have been the sidings and a 5 ton crane for off-loading goods. A hundred yards to the left would have been the turntable for turning locos around.

Plan of Walk



HB5 Glazebrook East Junction

The main line looks eastwards towards Manchester, with Irlam Station just over a mile away. Before that, just over the River Glaze, is Glazebrook East Junction which was the start of the Glazebrook to Godley line via Stockport and Skelton Junction. In 1893 the line was realigned following the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal and served the coaling basin as well as Irlam Steel Works. The station closed to passengers in 1964 and to freight in 1981, but remains a protected route and could be reopened in the future. The line, sidings and branch line to the North canal coaling basin remained in use servicing British Tar Products until 1996.

The signal box, clearly visible, lies just over the three arches River Glaze bridge. The signal box was replaced when the canal opened in 1895 and used to have 80 levers to control this busy junction. The box we see today is the 1961 replacement.

HB6 Glazebrook Station

Glazebrook Station opened on March 1st, 1873 for passengers and goods and is identical to Padgate and many other Cheshire Lines stations. In its heyday Glazebrook was a very busy place with passengers changing for Wigan, Liverpool, Stockport and Manchester. For a small village and station it offered a surprisingly large number of facilities. In 1877 it handled passengers, parcels, carriages, goods, livestock, furniture vans, portable engines, machines on wheels and eventually passenger cars. By 1938 the list had grown to include horse boxes and cattle vans, a very similar capability to the much larger station a mile down the line at Irlam. During WWII the station was heavily used to service the military camps on Bank Street.

- ⌚ Allow 1½ to 2 hours
- 🅑 Park in Black Swan car park
- 📍 No. 100 from Warrington & Manchester stops outside The Black Swan pub on Manchester Road
- 📄 OS Explorer™ 276
- 📍 The Black Swan
- 📍 The Old Red Lion

A 3½ mile circular walk that includes sections that capture historical points reflecting the importance of the railways to the area. Easy walking on level terrain — boots or strong footwear recommended.

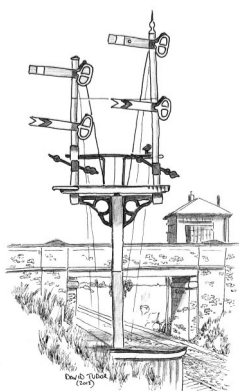
Glazebrook Railway Trail



The walk starts from the Black Swan pub car park on Manchester Road. As you meander through the quiet country lanes and footpaths, it is hard to imagine that Glazebrook once had one of the busiest railway junctions in the country. It used to have two junctions — the West in Glazebrook and the East Junction sited just over the River Glaze in Cadishead, but carrying the name Glazebrook. The map and numbered Heritage Boards (HB) over page provide a snapshot of the areas railway history, whilst guiding you gently on a lovely scenic walk.

➊ From the car park turn left down Manchester Road and in 140m turn left onto the path crossing stile by metal gate. Cross next stile in 30m into field and follow path, keeping hedge and then fence on your right for 90m to junction. At junction bear left up the step then continue along edge of field towards the houses, keeping hedge and ditch on your right. After 220m emerge onto Dam Lane and turn right passing a detached house on your right (Wayside).

➋ Continue along lane for 700m, passing a shooting range on your right, to the junction with Dam Head Lane at Hollingreave Farm. Keep straight on up Dam Lane for a further 420m to the bridge crossing the railway line from Manchester to Liverpool. At this point take a moment to reference some railway history over page [ref:HB1] before starting the next section.

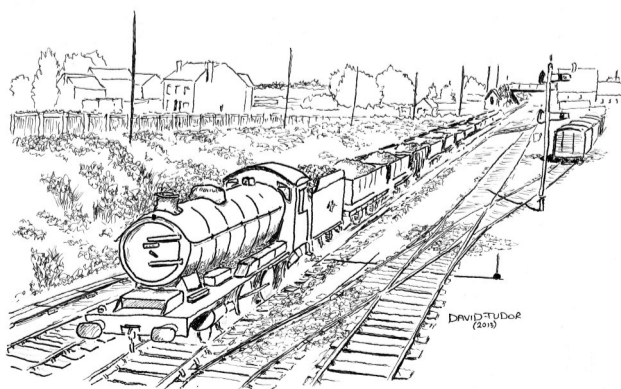


Dam Lane Junction Signal Box

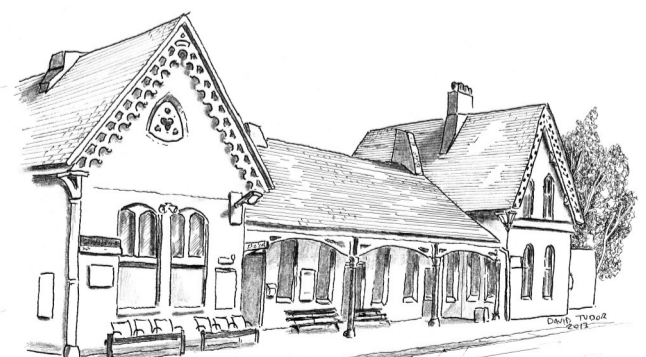
➌ Leave the bridge and retrace your steps back to Hollingreave Farm at the junction with Dam Head Lane. Turn left up Dam Head Lane and in 350m, just past Rose Cottage, ascend the hill up to Dam Head Lane bridge. Pause here on the left hand side of the bridge to take in some more railway history [ref:HB2] before carefully crossing the lane to look over the bridge to what is today a wooded expanse, once Glazebrook West Junction.

➍ Continue along Dam Head Lane as it bears right to a second bridge, No WJN01. This bridge once crossed the now disused Wigan Junction Railway. The line joined the main line behind and ran up to Glazebrook Moss Junction ahead. [ref: HB3]

➎ Continue along the lane for a further 160m to the corner of Bank Street and turn right. Looking eastwards over the bridge to your left there is a clear view of the platforms on Glazebrook Station on the main line towards Irlam, just before the Glazebrook Lane bridge. [ref: HB4] Looking to the west from the other parapet you obtain an impression of the expanse of Glazebrook West Junction.



Glazebrook Station Sidings



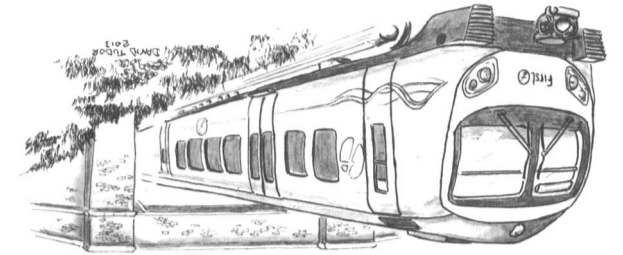
Glazebrook Station and original Drinking Fountain



➏ Carefully re-cross the road, turning left downhill and then first right passing the pretty station cottages as you approach Glazebrook Station. The rear of the station, incorporating a more modern extension, is in a state of disrepair. However, the view from the platform reminds one of bygone times with the carved barge boards and finely detailed windows. The original drinking fountain can still be seen towards the end of the Liverpool platform. Across the track, on the Manchester platform, stands the original waiting room building, which is now closed. [ref: HB6]

➐ Return to Dam Head Lane and turn right. Follow lane which swings to the left before joining Glazebrook Lane in 180m. Turn right along Glazebrook Lane towards the station. In 110m, a delightful view of this rural station and the row of pretty station cottages is afforded as you reach the bridge. Carefully cross this busy road to look down the main line to the east where Glazebrook East signal box is clearly visible just beyond where the track crosses the River Glaze. The signal box marks the start of Glazebrook East Junction. [ref: HB5]

➑ Turn left towards a solitary hawthorn tree and then across the next field. After 100m turn right at the waymark following the hedge and fence along the edge of the field. As you make your way note the sound of passing trains in the distance. At the end of the fence, in 70m, pass between the fence post and hedge following the waymark to continue with the hedge on your right to the corner of the field.



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➓ Return to Glazebrook Lane and turn right. In 250m, opposite Glazebrook Village Green, turn right down Bank Street. Continue ahead passing Vetch Close on your left in 220m and in a further 90m turn left down the footpath at the edge of the field along the side of the wood. In 200m, at the end of the tree line, continue straight on for a further 45m to the waymark in the corner of the field.

Please follow the Country Code

This is one of a series of local walking guides which are available to download from: www.rixtonwithglazebrook.net. Your feedback will be much appreciated - please email us at info@rixtonwithglazebrook.net

For more information on the Rights of Way network and brideways please telephone 01925 443321 or visit the website: www.warrington.gov.uk/leisureandculture and follow the links to Parks and Open Spaces.

There is a surprising amount of railway history in Rixton-with-Glazebrook and Irlam and Cadishead. Further reading: 'The Cheshire Lines railway between Glazebrook and Godley - a route of strategic importance' Bob Pixton 'Lost Railways of Merseyside and Greater Manchester' Gordon Suggitt A booklet entitled 'The railways of Irlam, Cadishead and Glazebrook' is available on: www.irlamandcadishead.net

Original illustrations by David Tudor
Researched and written by:
Neil McArthur and John Eccles
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