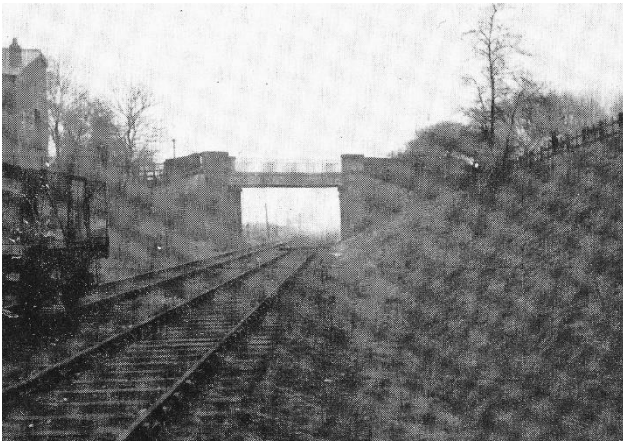


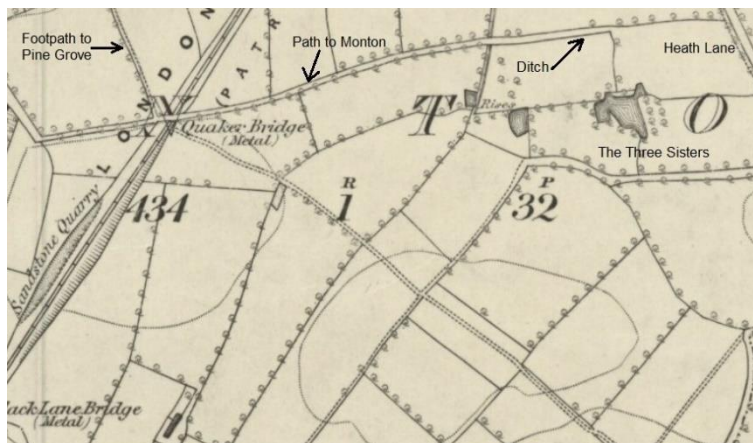
## Back in Time – 28 - Quaker Bridge

by John Rabbitt



Quaker Bridge, located at the end of Ellesmere Road, is quite interesting in that it was built pre-1845 as it appears on the 1848 6-inch O.S. map which was surveyed in 1845. When you think Stephenson's first 'inter-city' railway, which ran from Manchester to Liverpool, was opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1830 by the Duke of Wellington, our Quaker Bridge really is a vintage railway structure. If you look closely at the photograph it would appear that the right-hand track looks like it terminated at the bridge. This could indicate that the photograph was taken after 1953.

### Quaker Bridge - post 1953



The 1848 map shows quite clearly that the bridge was built to maintain the footpath/cart track access from Heath Lane (now Chatsworth Road) to Monton. This path went across the Three Sisters following the line of the right-angled ditch shown on the map. This ditch feature is shown on all the O.S. maps of this area.



The bridge was built by the John Scott Iron Foundry in Stockport; it is marked on the 1848 map as (Metal). The orientation of the bridge is at an angle to the railway track and corresponds to the alignment of the footpath from Heath Lane. The bridge is not very wide, just suitable for a horse and cart. This must have been an important route to warrant building a bridge suitable for horse drawn carts. Significant ramps were constructed either side of the bridge to facilitate wheeled traffic. If this bridge was for pedestrians steps on either side would have sufficed.

Quaker Bridge was named after Mr. James King, a prominent Quaker, and a partner of Lancaster and King, a company who mined coal in the areas of Monton and Ellesmere Park. The fact that the bridge was named in honour the owner of a local mining company, leads one to believe that Lancaster and King either partly or totally funded the bridge, and in return chose the name 'Quaker Bridge'.



The brick vaulted structure of Quaker Bridge looks in reasonable condition given the bridge is approximately 180 years old and has not had any significant restoration or maintenance work carried out on it since this line closed in 1953.

This railway line to Clifton Junction closed when the Clifton Tunnel in Swinton, known locally as Black Harry Tunnel, collapsed. In the early hours of the morning of Tuesday, 28th April 1953 two houses, 22 and 24, Temple Drive disappeared in a vast hole caused by the collapse of a brick-lined construction shaft which broke through into the railway tunnel.



Sadly five people died in this terrible disaster, the tunnel was never repaired and the line from Patricroft to Clifton Junction was never used again.



The map Temple Drive 1929 shows the location of the houses lost in the 1953 disaster. The houses were never rebuilt, the site is now the location of a few prefabricated garages.

**Map of Temple Drive 1929**

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