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The Journal of the 8D Association

Volume 8 Number 3 – September 2018

Garston Junction

On a cold and snowy January day in 1968 class 5MT (Black 5) number 45187 rounds the Garston curve and heads towards Allerton Junction.

Photo by Alan Robinson

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Editor

Left: Looking towards street level along the pedestrian access subway of Dingle (Liverpool Overhead Railway) station on 10 July 2018. **Photo by Doug Birmingham**

There were a couple of hiccups in relation to the 2018 summer programme with two events having to be postponed. The first was the Liverpool and Garston line visit which has been rearranged for Saturday 6 October 2018. The original date clashed with the Liverpool Lime Street upgrade works and industrial action. It was felt that an alternative date would be the better option.

The second hiccup was brought about through an altogether unforeseen event. This was the trip to the Churnet Valley Railway. The trip actually commenced but was brought to an abrupt end when a car crashed into our heritage bus as it was about to go onto the Mersey Gateway Bridge. There is more about that in the Society News but it is important to stress that this trip will be rearranged for the New Year.

There are still a couple of outdoor events to enjoy before the winter programme begins and, as usual, they are shown on the back page. **Paul Wright**

Society News

8D Visit to Dingle LOR station

8D Association members at the present day entrance to the Dingle LOR station on 10 July 2018. **Photo by Tony Foster**

On 10 July 2018 the 8D Association visited the Dingle LOR station site. The visit was made possible through the kindness of the station site owner Nigel Wills-Browne who gave us full access to, not only the station site, but also to the Dingle LOR tunnel.

Although the station closed on 30 December 1956 and went on to become a rope works and then a car repair centre, there is still much to see from the period when it was the southern terminus of the LOR. Paul Wright explained the history of the site and led a tour which included the entire length of the tunnel. Nigel chipped in with some interesting history of his own. He has owned the site since 1976 and has made many finds over the years.

One of the interesting features of the site is the collection of old cars that lay scattered around the site, (***See photo left by Doug Birmingham***) many of them being vintage models. They all date from the era when the site was a car repair centre (1976 to 2012) and there are many from the 1970s and 80s. Nigel was keen to emphasise that he was open to offers should anyone like to take any of them away.

The era of the car repair garage, called Roscoe Engineering, was brought to an abrupt end on 24 July 2012 when there was a catastrophic collapse of the tunnel roof in the station area. Thankfully nobody was hurt, but the days of Dingle station being a car garage were over. It took years to sort the problem out, and millions of pounds. The result of that was that the site is now uninsurable, and Nigel is left with it. As he pointed out during the visit he is open to offers on the site, but as you can imagine, he hasn't had much interest.

A single buffer attached to the tunnel wall marks the point at which the up line siding at Dingle station came to an end. LOR trains did not have conventional buffers. They had a single buffer centrally positioned at each end of a 3-car unit . **Photo by Doug Birmingham**

Interesting railway finds included buffer stops, signalling equipment, live rail insulation pots and an axle box. Members also spent time working out were features such as the signal box had been located.

A highlight of the visit for many members was the walk along the Dingle tunnel to its western portal. An interesting feature within the tunnel is the point at which it passes over the CLC Dingle tunnel with very little clearance, because of that the rails at that point had been carried on longitudinal timbers (the rest of the track within the tunnel being conventional rails on sleepers embedded in ballast).

An axle box from one of the LOR 3-car EMUs. It was found by Nigel Wills-Browne and was displayed within the garage for visitors to see. **Photo by Tony Foster**

Judging by the comments made by members the Dingle station visit was very much enjoyed. It was a real coup for the Association as few people will ever get the opportunity to visit such a fascinating site as this.

After closure, the LOR quickly vanished from the Liverpool landscape, but at Dingle a time capsule treasure trove exists, and one that we had the privilege of seeing with our own eyes. A history of Dingle LOR station can be read on page 15.

Churnet Valley Railway visit brought to an abrupt end

End of the road. The 8D Association trip to the Churnet Valley Railway was brought to an end in Widnes when a car collided with the heritage bus on which members were travelling. **Photo by Paul Wright**

The 8D Association trip to the Churnet Valley Railway organised by Neil Wilson got no further than the Widnes Loops Junction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, when the heritage bus on which the group was travelling was struck by a car. Ironically the trip ended only a stone's throw from the Widnes Locomotive Depot site from which the group takes its name.

Left: The damage that was done when the car hit the bus. Photo by John Wilson

The former Warrington Corporation Bristol RE bus, dating from 1976, received damage to its front bumper, and to a side panel below the drivers seating position.

The bus had picked up passengers from Warrington Bank Quay station from where it travelled to Widnes

Victoria Square. After picking up passengers from that location, it travelled down Victoria Road and passed under the railway where Widnes South station had been. It then turned onto the Widnes Loops Junction of the Mersey Gateway. At that point a car tried to turn in front of the bus and struck it at the front-end driver's side. After the exchanging of details, the bus returned to Victoria Square, and it was decided that the trip would be called off.

The Churnet Valley Railway have agreed to honour the group ticket that was purchased and the trip will be reorganised in the New Year.

Interesting Find during CLC Winsford branch visit

A section of track was an unexpected find at the site of Newchurch Crossing on the CLC Winsford branch during the 8D Association visit of 14 August 2018. **Photo by Paul Wright**

On Tuesday 14 August 2018 the 8D Association visited a section of the CLC Winsford branch. Members walked the course of the line between Whitegate station and a point just short of Winsford Junction (near Cuddington). The line had seen its last trains on 13 March 1967, and officially closed on 11 February 1968, and therefore the last thing that members expected to see was a section of track still in situ. That was however exactly what they did find at the site of Newchurch Crossing. A short section of line remained embedded into timbers that had made up the crossing. The rails had probably been too much trouble to lift back in 1968.

News Round Up - *by Chris Hollins*

First Train from Halton Junction to Frodsham Junction in Over two Decades

On Sunday 10 June 2018, the first passenger train to traverse the Halton Curve in the Chester bound direction ran. The train ran as 1Z78 the 10.18 Liverpool South Parkway to Cosford and used the Northern Belle train top and tailed by West Coast Railways diesels 57 313 and 57 314, to convey guests to the Cosford air show. The train returned to Liverpool in the late afternoon taking a roundabout journey through the West Midlands enabling dinner to be served to the guests, with a late evening arrival back at South Parkway.

Left: The first passenger train to travel south along the Halton Curve is seen at Beechwood, Runcorn on 10 June 2018. **Photo by Doug Birmingham**

Royal Train at Runcorn station

On Thursday 14 June 2018, the Queen and the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, visited Widnes to officially open the Mersey Gateway bridge. They arrived at Runcorn station on the Royal train which was top and tailed by DB Cargo Class 67's 67 005 Queens Messenger and 67 006 Royal Sovereign.

Steam through Warrington

On Monday 18 June 2018, UK rail tours "The Lakes Express" from London Euston to Carnforth was double headed through Warrington Bank Quay, by Stanier Class 5 45212 and Gresley Class A3 60103 Flying Scotsman. The return journey on Thursday 21 June 2018 featured Stanier Class 8F 48151, but this had to be removed at Crewe due to gauging issues and was replaced by a diesel to take the train back to London Victoria.

Rail Tour to Ince Sand Sidings

A rail tour visited the new sand sidings at Ince and Elton on Saturday 23 June 2018. The tour also traversed the Bootle branch to Liverpool bulk terminal and Seaforth

Container terminal. UK railtours 'Another Liverpool Docker' started at Reading, and was top and tailed by DB Cargo Class 66 66 035 and 66 133.

All Change on the CLC main line

The problems affecting Northern Rail have impacted on the CLC Liverpool and Manchester route. Until further notice the stopping train service between Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Oxford Road has been withdrawn between Liverpool and Warrington Central. To provide a service to the stations affected by this, the new Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Airport train has made additional stops at Hunts Cross, Halewood, Hough Green, Widnes and Sankey. This service had been introduced in May to replace those previously operated by Trans Pennine Express. Interestingly this now gives stations such as Widnes an hourly direct service to both Liverpool and Manchester airports.

Details for the new East Midlands franchise has been published. It is due to commence in the Autumn of 2019, but the major change for our area will be from December 2021. From then it is proposed to terminate the Liverpool Lime street - Norwich service at Nottingham. The service will be transferred to either Northern or Trans-Pennine for them to operate. Northern have made no indication that they are interested in operating a replacement service but Trans-Pennine have. However, Trans Pennine have indicated that they would want to transfer the service to the LNWR route via Rainhill between Liverpool and Manchester. This would mean an end to express services along the CLC route through Widnes.

Notwithstanding the possible transfer of the Liverpool to Nottingham portion of the route, the new operator of the franchise is required to acquire new trains for the Norwich service to replace the present Class 158's, even though they will only be used on the full route for less than two years.

New Liverpool to London Service, maybe

It had been proposed that from the December 2018 timetable changes that the London North Western Railway would extend one of the half hourly Liverpool Lime Street to Birmingham New Street services through to London Euston. End to end journey time expected to be 4 hours. However, the Department of Transport has advised West Midlands Railway, who operate the London North Western service, that they cannot implement any December 2018 timetable changes. As a result of this, the proposed extension of one of the half hourly services through to London Euston has been postponed. Extending the service will restore a direct link from Liverpool and Runcorn to Birmingham International and Coventry which was withdrawn when Cross Country services to and from Liverpool ceased to operate.

Halton Curve Services

Keolis, who are to be the new operators of the Wales and Borders franchise, and the operators of the Chester to Liverpool via Runcorn service from December, have announced plans for this service in the coming years. Commencing in 2022 or earlier, the service will run from Llandudno with the present Llandudno to Manchester service being diverted to commence at Bangor. Additionally, a new 2 hourly express service will start running between Liverpool Lime Street and Cardiff

Central, via Chester and Shrewsbury. Combined with the Holyhead to Cardiff service, this will give an hourly service between Chester and Cardiff.

Liverpool – Scotland in December, Perhaps

Along with other companies, Trans Pennine have been affected by the Department of Transport ruling about the December 2018 timetable changes. Basically the department is stopping changes from taking place so as to avoid the chaos that was seen in May 2018. However, Trans Pennine are in talks with the department about getting them to agree to allow the introduction of the new 3 trains a day service between Liverpool Lime Street and Glasgow Central from December. As the new Class 395 EMUs are unlikely to be available by then, if the service is given the go ahead, Class 185 DMUs will be used until such time as the electrics arrive.

Liverpool Lime Street

Looking along the 'new' platform 1 at Liverpool Lime Street on Saturday 4 August 2018. This had previously been platform 2 and it was still undergoing modification when this photo was taken. **Photo by Paul Wright**

Liverpool Lime Street station reopened fully on Monday 30 July 2018 following a period of closure that had allowed extensive modifications to be made. The station now has 10 platform faces and the lines leading into it have been completely remodelled. It can now handle more trains, which is important because new services are due to start over the next few years.

The former platform 1 is now out of use, and will be converted into a retail area.

The CLC Winsford Branch

Winsford & Over station in the early 20th Century. A GCR locomotive with a rake of CLC coaches waits to depart for Cuddington.

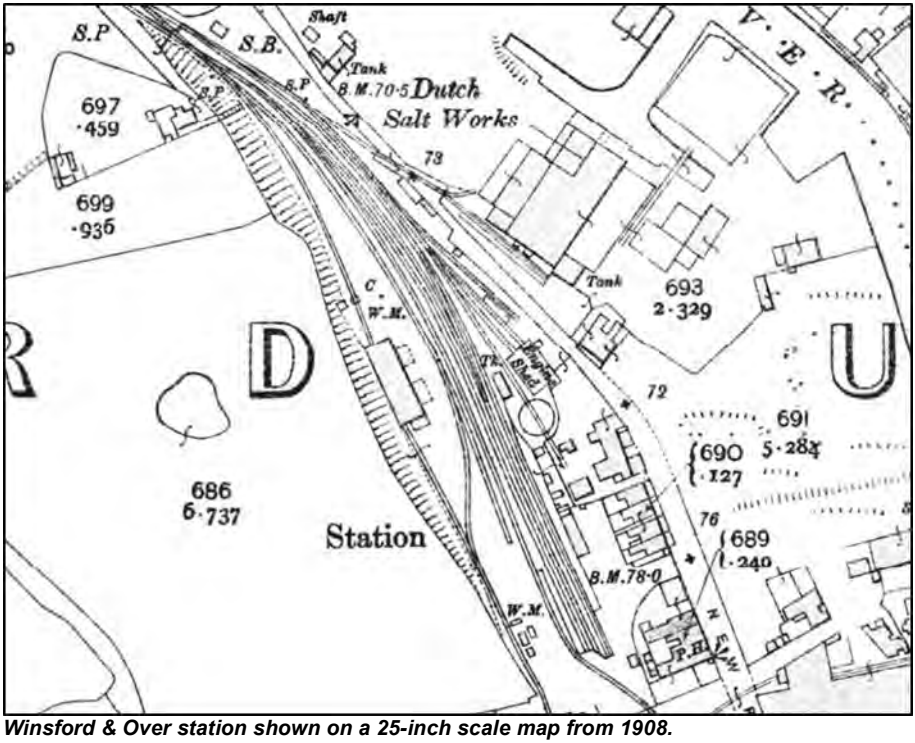
The Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) Winsford branch was a six-mile long line that connected the Cheshire salt town of Winsford to the CLC Altrincham – Chester line at Winsford Junction (51 chains to the west of Cuddington station). The line was authorised as part of the West Cheshire Railway on 29 July 1862, but that company became part of the CLC on 5 July 1865, before it opened to goods on 1 June 1870.

The line was a single track railway, and it was provided with two stations, Winsford & Over and Whitegate. Winsford & Over was the southern terminus of the line, and Whitegate was an intermediate station located in an isolated area of scattered farms. There was a short branch at the southern end of the line that served a salt works. It branched off from the main line at Falk's Junction.

Winsford & Over station had the most extensive facilities on the line. As well as a single platform passenger station it was provided with numerous sidings, a large goods shed, a lifting crane and a weighing machine. There was also an engine shed at the station which was equipped with a turntable. There was a salt works adjacent to the station, which had its own sidings. From 11 January 1892, the station area was controlled by a signal box located to the north of the site, on the east side of the line. Prior to its opening there were probably a number of ground frames controlled by station staff.

The station was located on the north-western side of its namesake, which should have made it convenient for passengers. A passenger service was introduced onto

the line on 1 July 1870 but takings must have been poor because it was withdrawn on 1 January 1874.



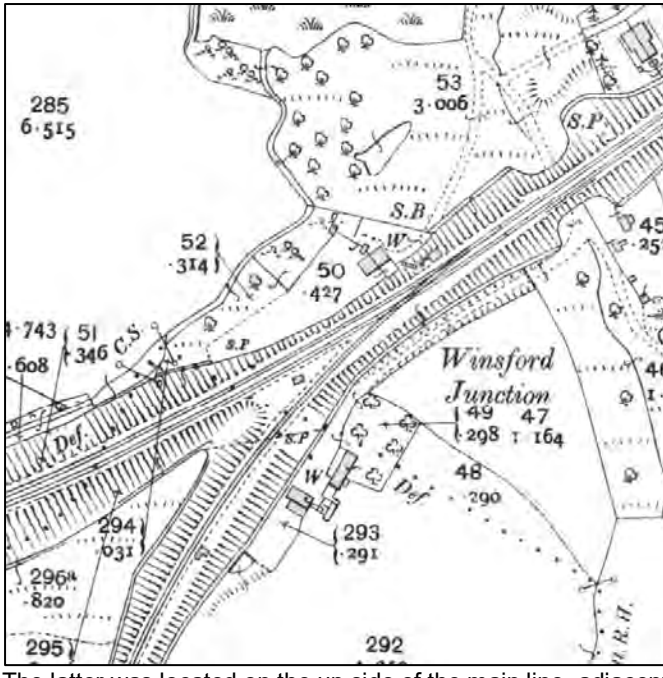
Winsford & Over station shown on a 25-inch scale map from 1908.

Falk's Junction was controlled by a signal box from the opening of the line. It was a Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Type 1 box that lasted until 29 September 1891 when it was replaced by a box of an unknown type which lasted until 1 January 1931.

Left: Whitegate station seen from the Clay Lane overbridge in 1952. Passenger services had been withdrawn by that date, but the station still served the local community for goods. Photo from the John Mann collection

Whitegate station had just a single platform but it was provided with goods sidings and a weighing machine. By 1891 the station also had a passing loop but that was only used by goods services. A signal box opened at Whitegate on 10

August 1891. It was a CL1a type box, located on the down side of the line (opposite the platform).



Winsford Junction was the point at which the branch diverged from the Altrincham – Chester Northgate main line. It is shown on the 25-inch scale map to the left. The line was controlled by a signal box from the time of opening. Little is known about the first box which was replaced on 24 July 1886. That box was in turn replaced by a CL1a type on 29 November 1896. The latter was located on the up side of the main line, adjacent to the junction.

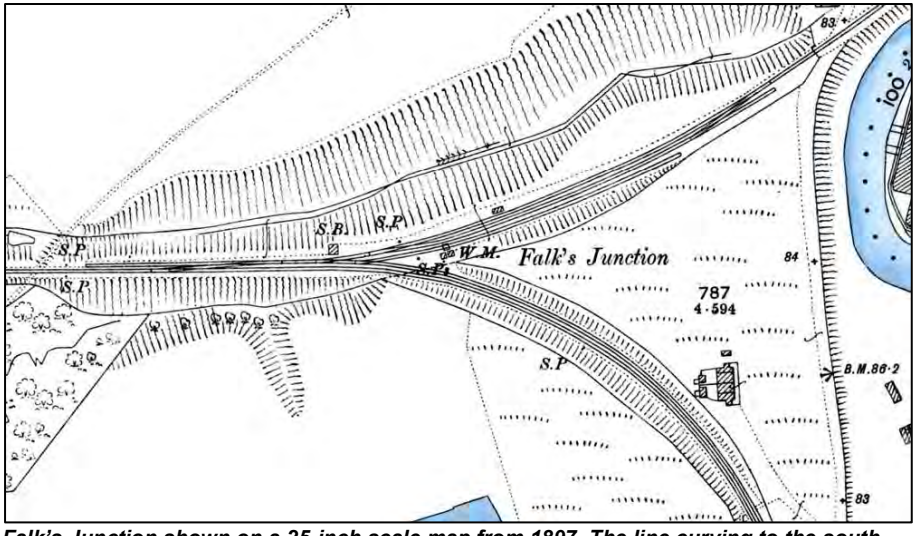
Left: Whitegate station looking towards Winsford in the 1920s. A passenger service for Winsford & Over had just departed from the station.

The primary purpose of the line was to tap into the lucrative salt trade, but as we have seen a passenger service, that did not last long, was introduced shortly after it had opened. The CLC tried again with a passenger service which started on 1st May 1886. It fared little better than the first attempt being withdrawn on 1st December 1888. On 1st February 1892 passenger services started to run again. This time with more success. The new service consisted of six trains in each direction on weekdays. They mostly ran between Winsford and Cuddington only, but on market days services continued on to Northwich. The service even built up to seven trains in each

direction by the 1920s and steam rail motors were provided for it. The service lasted until 1 January 1931, when it was withdrawn for the final time.

Following the withdrawal of the passenger service, economies were made on the branch with all of the signal boxes closing. The line was then worked on the 'one engine in steam' principle controlled from Winsford Junction signal box. Ground frames were provided to control junctions and sidings.

The branch was operated by locomotives and crews that were based at Northwich Locomotive Shed.



Falk's Junction shown on a 25-inch scale map from 1897. The line curving to the south was the main line to Winsford & Over.

The line became part of British Railways London Midland Region on 1 January 1948.

On 5 May 1952 the RCTS ran a rail tour along the branch which ran all the way to the passenger platform at Winsford & Over (***see photo to the left***).

On 1 September 1958 Winsford & Over station was

closed to public goods services but private traffic continued to run.

Another rail tour visited Winsford & Over on 26 March 1960. By that time the station was in poor condition but its running in name board was still in place.

Whitegate station was closed to public goods on 4 November 1963.

The RCTS rail tour of 1952 seen at Whitegate station. This view shows the train returning to Winsford Junction with the locomotive propelling the coaches which were fitted for push and pull operation.

Salt traffic remained buoyant throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.

On 1 May 1965 Winsford & Over station was closed completely and the line was cut back to Falk's Junction. Services continued to run to the salt works at the end of the Falk's branch which was at that time part of the ICI company.

Movements of salt by rail over the branch ceased from 13 March 1967.

Winsford & Over station on 26 March 1960.

On 11 February 1968 the line was officially closed. It could well have been lifted by that date, as Winsford Junction signal box closed on that day.

During the 1970s the track bed of the branch was acquired by Cheshire County Council, who created a footpath and cycleway along much of its course. The route was named the Whitegate Way.

The station at Whitegate survived closure and has gone on to become a café and centre for the Whitegate Way.

Whitegate station seen on 14 August 2018. The station building houses a café which is open most days. A number of photos showing the line when it was open can be seen in the cafe. **Photo by Paul Wright**

Other surviving railway features along the route of the line that could still be seen in 2018 include overbridges, a plate layers hut, and most surprisingly of all, a short section of track at what had been the Newchurch level crossing. **Paul Wright**

A brick and concrete plate layers hut possibly dating from the 1940s can still be seen towards the northern end of the former CLC Winsford branch. **Photo by Paul Wright**

Dingle LOR Station

Dingle station seen from street level on 10 April 1955. **Photo by D J Norton**

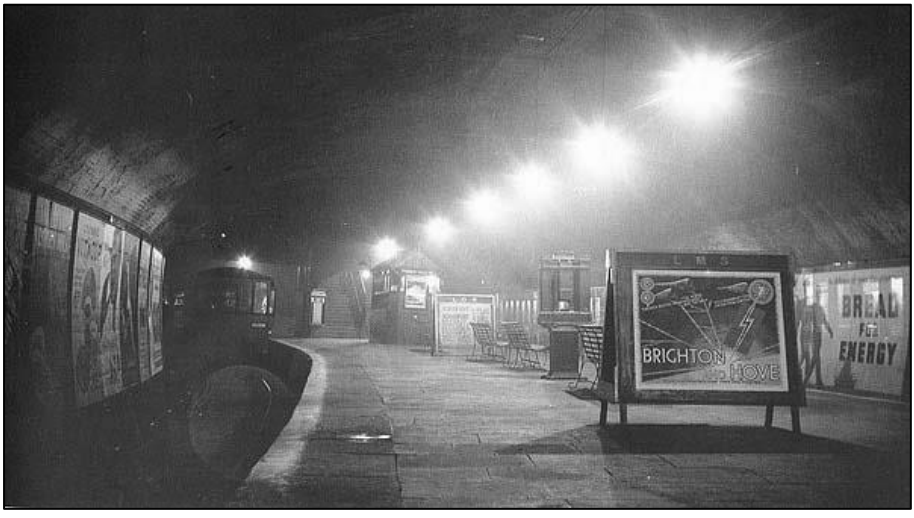
Dingle station was the southern terminus of the Liverpool Overhead Railway (LOR) which opened in stages between 4 February 1893 and 2 July 1905. In its final form the line was 6½ miles in length running, in the main, adjacent to the Liverpool Dock system on an elevated iron structure that carried the rails 16 ft above street level. From the start LOR train services were electric, using three-coach electric multiple units (EMUs) which drew their power from a live rail located in the centre of the track.

The line was an immediate success when it opened in 1893, and it was not long before the first extensions were planned. The 1893 southern terminus was at Herculaneum Dock, close to the residential area of Dingle, but inconveniently located for its residents. To serve Dingle, and thereby increase revenue, the LOR built the 'Liverpool Overhead Railway Southern Extension' which consisted of a short section of elevated line and a tunnel ½-mile in length, at the eastern end of which was Dingle station.

The Southern Extension and Dingle station opened on 21 December 1896. At street level the station was on the western side of Park Road, close to its junction with Dingle Lane. The station building was a three-storey brick structure, with a canopy extending over the pavement. On the ground floor were the ticket office, and a kiosk. On the first and second floors were offices. At the rear of the building, a pedestrian subway led down to platform level. Lined in yellow brick, the subway was divided into two by a handrail, and passengers descending to the platform were separated from those leaving the station. Within the subway were two sections with steps, but in the main, the subway was in the form of a ramp.

The subway connected into a large 163yd tunnel which connected to the double-

track Dingle Tunnel (through which the line ran to Herculaneum) at its western end, and to a short dead-end tunnel, 123ft in length, at its eastern end. The end-wall of the dead-end tunnel was of bare sandstone. It was left un-faced because the LOR had plans to build an extension further out into the Liverpool suburbs - which never materialised.



The gloomy underground platform at Dingle station seen in the 1930s. The platform to the left was used by arriving trains. An arrival can be seen in the distance. Once all of the passengers had disembarked the train would run forward into a dead end tunnel. It would then reverse and pull into the platform to the right which was used for departures.

From the point where the pedestrian subway entered the large tunnel passengers crossed a single line by an iron footbridge; this connected to a flight of stairs down to an island platform, 28ft wide and 170ft long. The curving platform had two faces and was provided with a ticket collector's hut and waiting shelters.

At the western end of the platform, just beyond the ramp, was a non-standard signal box built by the Railway Signal Company with a 23-lever frame. There were two sidings, one on either side of the main line to the west of the box, extending to the double-track portal of the Dingle tunnel. The sidings had buffer stops at the western end set into the large tunnel wall.

At the time of opening Dingle station had trains every few minutes to Seaforth Sands. Trains entered the station on the north platform face; passengers would disembark, and the train continued into the dead-end tunnel, east of the station. It would then reverse and run into the south platform face to become the next Seaforth Sands service.

Dingle not only had the railway line serving the underground station, but also a tram service operated along Park Road by the Liverpool Corporation Tramways Department. As a result of this, Dingle station became an interchange facility with many passengers changing between trams and trains. It took only twelve minutes from Dingle to Pier Head station in the city centre, close to the ferry terminals. However on 16 November 1898 Liverpool Corporation introduced electric trams to

the Dingle route. They were much quicker than the horse-drawn trams they replaced and, although not as fast as the LOR trains, they did run through the shopping district of the city, making them very convenient for the residents of Dingle. The introduction of the electric trams had an adverse effect on the station's passenger numbers.

The entrance to Dingle station seen on 10 April 1955. **Photo by D J Norton**

On 23 December 1901 an incoming train, the 5:00pm departure from Seaforth Sands, due to arrive at Dingle at 5:32pm caught fire owing to an electrical fault in the rear motor. The fault stopped the train in the tunnel 80 yd from the station. The driver, Robert Ashbee, tried to re-start the train, but this caused arcing which set fire to the wooden body of the rear coach. A strong westerly wind was blowing straight into the tunnel, and the draught fanned the flames. All three coaches of the train were quickly engulfed, and the train was completely ablaze within twelve minutes. There were 29 passengers on board, in addition to the driver and a guard, Charles Maloney. The driver and guard attempted to extinguish the fire in its early stages, but they were unsuccessful. The passengers were evacuated, effecting their escape along the track, then out via the station. Some passengers did not leave the station immediately but chose to linger and watch the fire, which they considered to be too far away from the station to cause them harm.

At platform level there were three LOR employees, Thomas Rendell (the station foreman), William Owen (a signalman) and J C O'Brien (a car cleaner). Rendell and O'Brien made their way towards the train to assist the driver and guard. Once it was clear that putting out the train fire was hopeless Rendell ran back to the platform and telephoned the booking office, asking that the current be switched off. This was done about ten minutes later, but it simply plunged the station into complete darkness, which did not help matters. By this time lethal, pungent smoke had started to fill the station. Realising what was happening the remaining people in the station attempted to flee. The last three to escape successfully were the signalman, William Owen, a boy called Gough and a Mr Stewart. All three passed out when they reached the booking hall. The driver, guard, foreman and car cleaner were all suffocated to

death, along with two passengers, Messrs Beadon and Bingham. The bodies of Rendell, Bingham and Beadon were later found at the foot of an air shaft at the east end of the station.

Despite the fact that the train was 80 yd away the fire managed to spread to the station. It did so by first taking hold of a stack of wooden sleepers and then leaping to a train stabled in one of the sidings; it spread from here to the station and completely burned it out. The fire brigade was summoned but there was nothing they could do as the access subway was filled with deadly smoke.

The fire had killed six people and resulted in the station being out of use for more than a year. In a Board of Trade Accident Report Lieutenant-Colonel H A York recommended that passenger stations in tunnels should have as little timber in their construction as possible: stone and iron should be used instead. In rebuilding the station the LOR followed this advice.

On 2 July 1905, the LOR opened a northern extension at Seaforth Sands which provided a connection to the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (LYR) network. From this date LOR trains had Seaforth & Litherland station, on the LYR Liverpool and Southport line, as their northern terminus. This provided an even greater range of interchange possibilities for passengers. The service continued to run at a high frequency. The LYR Liverpool & Southport line had been electrified in 1904 but used live rails set to the side of the track. To facilitate through-running the LOR moved its live rails to the same position.

On 2 February 1906 the LYR introduced a service between Dingle and Southport. To operate it the LYR built special lightweight EMUs designed for operation both on the LOR and LYR systems. By summer 1906 there was an hourly service. In the same year a service was also introduced between Dingle and Aintree Sefton Arms (on the LYR Liverpool and Preston line). The Aintree service was not a success and was discontinued in September 1908. Twice a year, however, the service ran for Jump Sunday and the Grand National horse races.

The Dingle and Southport service was withdrawn in August 1914 as it was not generating the receipts that the LYR had hoped for. Through tickets between Dingle and Southport were still sold, but passengers were required to change trains at Seaforth & Litherland.

By this time the LOR was carrying millions of passengers every year and many of them were passing through Dingle station. The line was used by dock labourers, sailors, shoppers, businessmen and also tourists. The LOR soon recognised that the commanding views from their trains of the dock estate and the ships within it were an attraction; they therefore provided day tickets allowing passengers to alight and board trains at any of the stations along the line, with unlimited travel. Locally the line became known as the ‘Ovee’ or the ‘Dockers’ Umbrella’. The latter name referred to the fact that dockers would walk under its structure in inclement weather to avoid the rain.

As a major Atlantic-facing seaport, Liverpool had been crucial to the war effort during the Great War, and the LOR had played its part by moving millions around the dock system. In the Second World War it was called upon to do so again, but in this

Looking north-west along the Dingle LOR tunnel on 10 July 2018. The western portal of the tunnel can be seen in the distance. **Photo by Doug Birmingham**

conflict Liverpool found itself directly in the firing line. Between December 1940 and January 1942 Liverpool was bombed by the German Luftwaffe; the worst periods of bombing were in December 1940 and May 1941. The LOR suffered badly and was hit many times, and some of its stations were destroyed. Being underground Dingle escaped unscathed, but during the period there was severe disruption to train services. Because it was an essential transport network for the docks the line was patched up each time it was damaged, and trains were reintroduced as quickly as possible. The last Grand National meet was in 1940, after which the race was suspended owing to the war, and it did not resume until 1947.

After the war the LOR was as busy as ever. There was a boom in trade at the docks, and the railway reaped the benefit. The Grand National was run again on 29 March 1947 - it was moved to a Saturday: before the war it had been run on a Friday - and trains operated between Dingle and Aintree Sefton Arms for the first time since 1940. They continued to do so for every Grand National until the LOR closed.

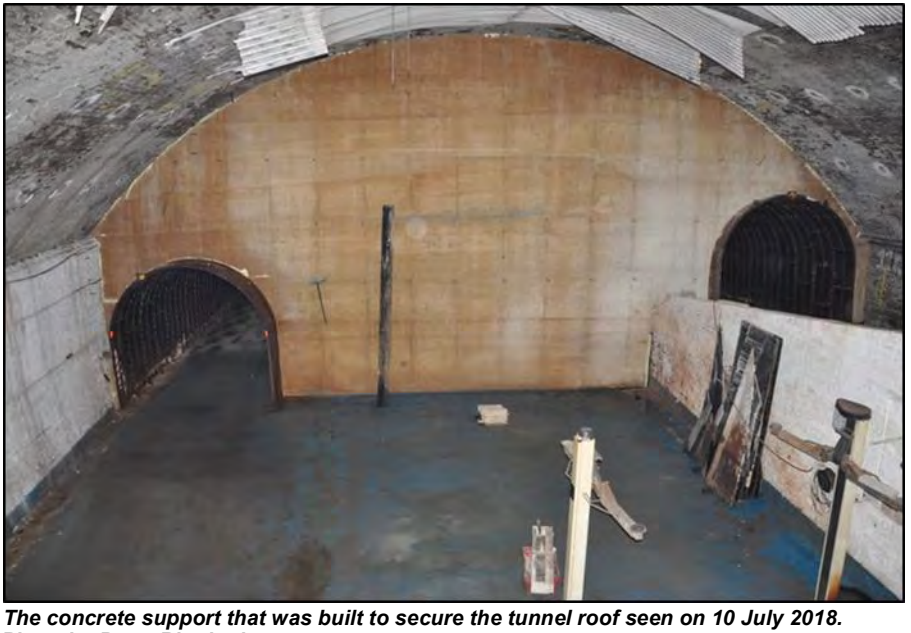
The railways of Great Britain were nationalised on 1 January 1948, but the LOR remained independent. In the early 1950s the LOR offered tickets to Pier Head from Dingle more cheaply than the corporation tramways; large posters were displayed on the station building advertising the fact. For the Grand National on the 26 March 1955 the LOR ran nine trains from Dingle to Aintree Sefton Arms and charged passengers one shilling single, or two shillings return. The first departure left Dingle at 11:25am and the last at 1:54pm. The journey took 37 minutes. There were seven return workings: the first arrival at Dingle was at 4:28pm and the last at 6:05pm.

In 1955 an engineering survey was carried out on the iron structure of the LOR. It

was discovered that the deck plates on which the tracks were mounted were severely corroded, owing both to the effects of the weather and of smoke from steam engines operated on a dock railway beneath the LOR. The plates needed to be replaced within a few years, and the cost was estimated at £2 million. The LOR did not have the funds to carry out the work and, although the line was still carrying millions of passengers every year, complete closure of the line was proposed. Suggestions were put forward for saving the line, including taking it into municipal ownership, but none were successful, and the line closed completely on Sunday 30 December 1956. The last departure from Dingle station was at 10:03pm. The last arrival pulled into the station just over half-an-hour later. It was full of passengers who had taken the opportunity to ride on the last train; they were slow to leave the station, preferring to linger in a vain attempt to prolong the life of the line. After they had finally dispersed the station inspector telephoned Seaforth Sands to ensure that the 10:03pm departure had arrived there. As soon as it was confirmed that it had, a switch was thrown. The live rails and signals ceased to have power, and the station lights went out.

At 8:45am the next day (Monday 31 December) the current was switched on and a staff train was run from Dingle to Seaforth Sands; a further service departed in the afternoon. Over the coming weeks trains were transferred from the southern end of the line to Seaforth. On 23 September 1957 demolition began, and the overhead structure was taken down; the process was complete by January 1958.

Dingle station, being on the underground section of the line, survived the demolition, although it had been quickly stripped of its rails. The station was sold to a Rope Manufacturer who used the underground part as a works. In the 1960s the site was taken over by a car repair company. They demolished the street level building and made alterations to the underground section, which included creating a ramp down



The concrete support that was built to secure the tunnel roof seen on 10 July 2018.
Photo by Doug Birmingham

Left: Electrical Signalling equipment from the Liverpool Overhead Railway can still be seen inside the Dingle Tunnel. This view was taken during the 8D Association visit of 10th July 2018. **Photo by Tony Foster**

to track level so that cars could be driven in.

In 1977 the station passed to Roscoe Engineering, who continued to use the site for car repairs, and were still using the station in March 2012. Nothing survived of the platform by this time, but the pedestrian subway was little altered, and evidence of the railway in the form of buffer-stops and the foundations of the signal box could still be seen.

On Tuesday 24 July 2012 Dingle made headline news when a section of the tunnel collapsed closing the garage and causing many local residents to be evacuated from their homes. An extremely wet period was believed to have disturbed infill material which in turn destabilised the tunnel roof which collapsed. The car repair garage was operational at the time but thankfully nobody was hurt and everybody was evacuated safely.

A period of uncertainty followed, during which Roscoe Engineering's insurance company and Liverpool City Council engineers debated the best solution for stabilising the tunnel. The houses above the station remained empty for four years. Eventually it was agreed that a massive concrete support would be constructed, to extend up to the foundations of the houses. The support was completed in 2016. Within the support there are two small tunnels which allow access to all parts of the station site.

Roscoe Engineering were unable to re-establish the business at Dingle station as the site had effectively become uninsurable. **Paul Wright**

From the Archive

Tue Brook signal box seen in August 1971. Tue Brook in located on the former LNWR Bootle branch. This box had opened on 20 December 1953 replacing an earlier one. Tue Brook signal box closed on Sunday 17 October 1976. Photo by John Mann

In this ICI publicity photograph from the 1950s their sidings at the rear of Tanhouse Lane passenger station are seen. **Photo from the Les Fifoot collection**

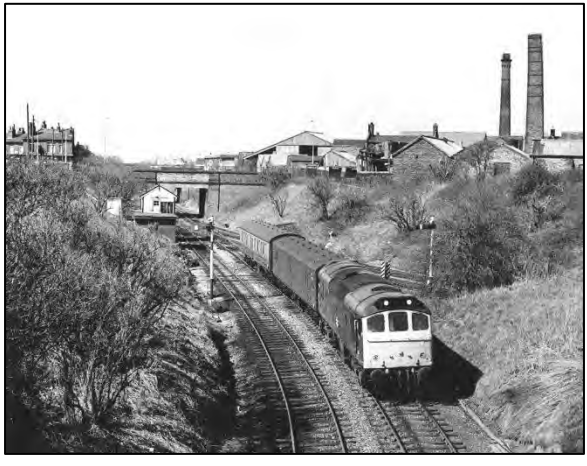
Events Programme

11.00 – Sunday 2 September 2018 – Visit to Warrington & District Model Engineering Society – Another opportunity to visit the fantastic miniature railway of the Warrington Model Engineers at Daresbury. The society will have a number of live steam locomotives in operation and 8D members will get the opportunity to be hauled by them. **Access is via a farm gate on the Chester Road in Daresbury Village. The gate is on the east side of the road to the south of Daresbury primary school**

10.00 – Saturday 6 October 2018 – The CLC between Hunts Cross and Liverpool Central – A guided tour of the line by train. By purchasing a £5 Merseytravel Saverway ticket members will be able to take a ride between Hunts Cross and Liverpool Central. Stops will be made at various stations along the way so that points of interest can be observed. Lunch will be in Ormskirk. Pail Wright will lead the tour. **Meet at the Hunts Cross station entrance**.

19.00 – Tuesday 16 October 2018 - More Liverpool Goods stations –An illustrated talk by Paul Wright following on from his talk about the goods stations of the Liverpool Dock Road. - **Select Security Stadium (Widnes Rugby Ground), Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**

19.00 – Tuesday 20 November 2018 – Ukraine by Train - An illustrated talk by Paul Wright. - **Select Security Stadium (Widnes Rugby Ground), Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes.**



'**Where is this' competition**? (Answers to pwright964@btinternet.com) **The March competition was correctly guessed by Rod Dixon and Arthur Turner. The location was Clubmoor.**

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