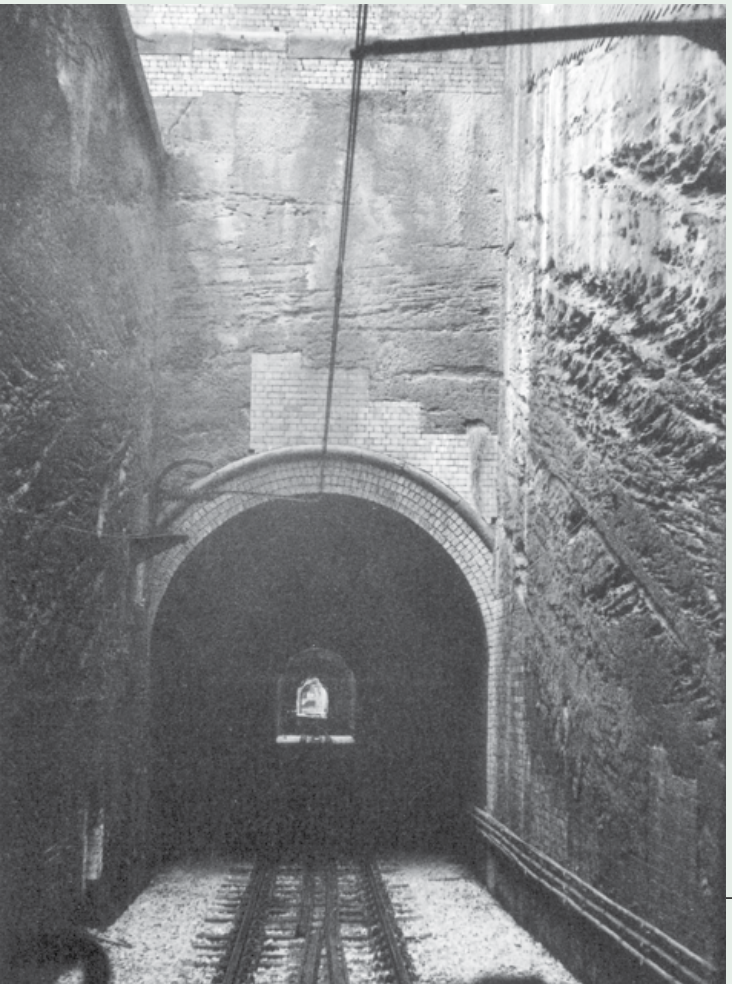
The view from the terminus shortly before the wires started to go up. The massive brickwork and girders on the right are an aberration – bedrock below and rusticated stonework above are the usual style throughout. Bricks are usually restricted to the arches and patches to cover faults in the rock. The single line tunnels on the left were an afterthought, to allow one of the four lines in the main Russell Street tunnel to be used as a shunting neck. (D. Ibbotson)

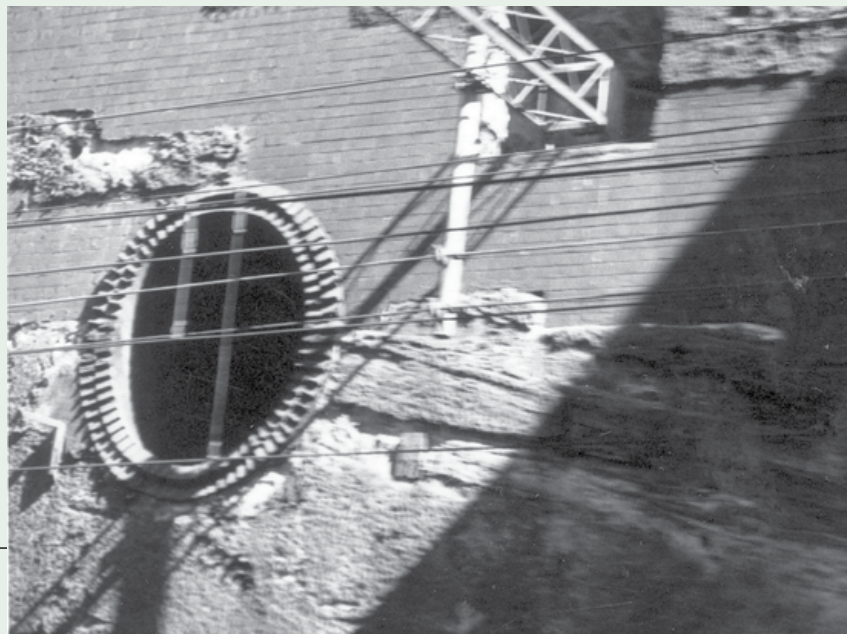
DOWN IN THE LIME STREET CUTTING

Owing to three of the four single tunnels at the west end being joined by single track cuttings, the only way for a passenger to see them properly is through the cab of a diesel multiple unit, when the design permits. We are looking back to Lime Street through the tunnel under St. Andrew Street and Gill Street.

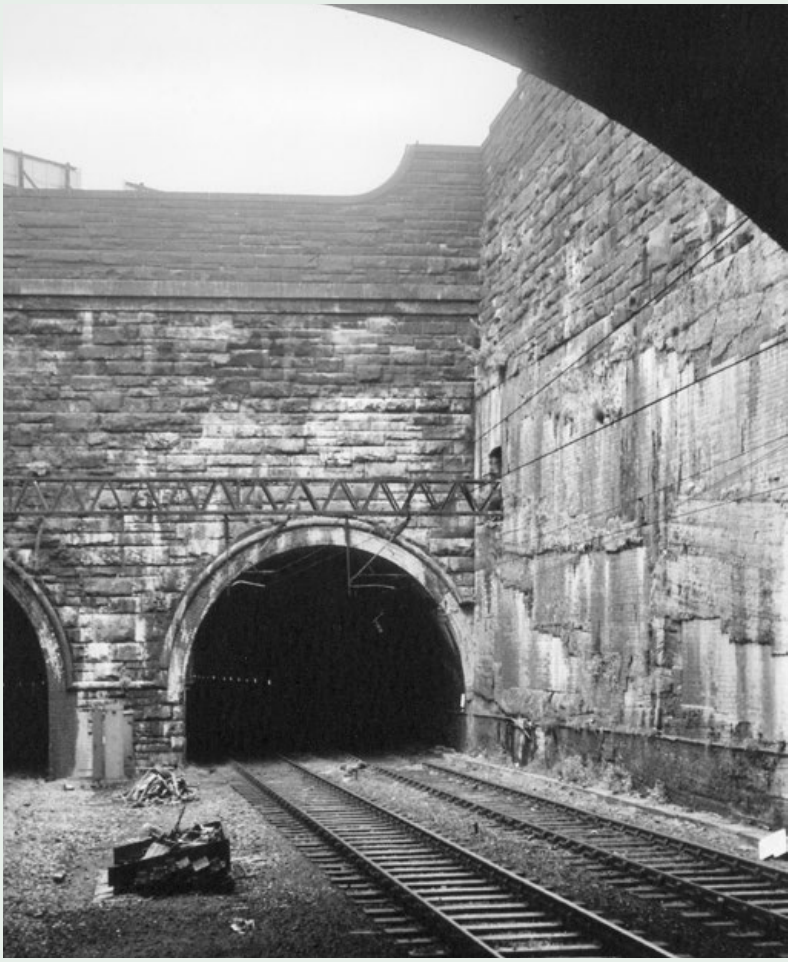


Lime Street station in Liverpool was opened in 1836, connected to Edge Hill by one long tunnel. In the 40 years to 1885 the tunnel was gradually cut back and the line widened until the splendid array of bridges and tunnels to be seen today was created. The cutting was in the news during March when the collapse of a section of wall meant the temporary closure of the station until repairs had been completed. **JOHN C. HUGHES** takes us into the cuttings and tunnels.

In 1903 George Whale began to introduce larger locomotives and the carriages were getting bigger as well. As some of these used the single line there was soon a rash of complaints about smoke in these tunnels. In 1908 three ventilation shafts were added to the longest of them – set at an angle so that they could vent into the higher tunnel alongside. In 1923, the newly-formed LMS decided to add five more of these openings. All the ones readily visible are from this batch. Some were given decorative brick lining, like this one, while others were just holes in the rock. (D. Ibbotson)



ABOVE: **This is the four-track line alongside the single tunnels. The train I am on has just come from the down fast using the crossing behind and is continuing to the shunting neck. Any rolling stock leaving this without permission will doubtless be stopped in its tracks by the catch points, which are clearly designed to keep the runaway off the running lines to either side. The vent on the left, between St. Andrew and Gill Streets, appears to be the one in the last picture. The five-track span in the distance is Brownlow Street bridge, now with the other side closed in as mentioned below.**



ABOVE, RIGHT: **The next pair of short tunnels runs under Crown Street. The University's platform covers the west end, but the east end here can still be seen. More evidence of Williamson's work is visible on the north side of the cutting. The height of the rock here is well over the tops of the tunnels, but evidently the ground was too far gone for patching so the whole face has been built up with stone.**

BELOW: **Three sections of the original tunnel of 1836 were left in place, requiring new tunnels alongside. These two are under the University and are not now visible from the train as the cutting at both ends has been closed in with concrete platforms. This is a pity as we have now arrived at the territory claimed by Joseph Williamson, the Mad King of Edge Hill. This admirable eccentric arranged for a maze of tunnels to be dug – to provide work for the unemployed, for the fun of it, or very possibly both. He was still at it in the 1830s, when he reputedly terrified the men digging the L&MR's tunnel by breaking an opening into the works – from below – and demanding to know who was entering his domain. An impression of the scale of his works is provided by the patching needed over the east end of these tunnels – and is that an arch in brick to the right? (For more information, look up 'Friends of Williamson's Tunnels.')** (D. Ibbotson`)

ABOVE: **This is the north side of the cutting showing the Crown Street tunnels and Smithdown Lane again. The section of wall at top right is the part that collapsed on 28th February this year. An engineer interviewed on television mentioned the need to watch out for unknown tunnels; I am not sure if the brick patches here are a sign of Williamson's work, but he was certainly active a little way to the west and north. There have been similar collapses along Olive Mount cutting and the Cheshire Line's Committee's route out of Liverpool; such incidents generally follow heavy rain and the latest slip is no exception. One does wonder if it is wise to allow all that greenery to push roots into the cutting walls – just a thought. It never used to happen.**

TOP, RIGHT: **The main point of interest in this view is the ghost of the 1836 tunnel on the north side of the cutting. It will be noticed that the curve of the roof starts quite low down; in fact some work had to be done in enlarging the surviving parts of this tunnel before tracks could be laid with the new standard gap of six feet between them. Going east, we have now passed Mason, Highgate and Kinglake Streets. The last was joined by Nevison Street just here – hence the generous squinch arch.** (D. Ibbotson)

RIGHT: **At last, another pre-electrification view. The cutting really did look better without wires and without weeds. We are looking west with Chatsworth Street bridge in the foreground.** (D. Ibbotson)

BOTTOM: **Looking east under Chatsworth Street at the last stretch before Edge Hill station, visible through the third fragment of the 1836 tunnel which still has its original stone surround at the east end. With another two bridges and three tunnels to go, Chatsworth Street's bridge plate is number 26. Eric Treacy was often to be found with his back to the wall between the centre tunnel and the single track tunnel just out of sight to the right. It was a safe place and convenient to reach, but this meant that his views often show the sewer suspended under Uxbridge Street bridge – the one such straight line in the whole cutting. Of course, his views of the cutting are often spoilt by trains getting in the way as he pressed the shutter!**