

A Railway Recorder in Southern England

By R. A. H. WEIGHT



Photo]

[C. R. L. Coles

The Sussex coast-Birmingham through train, in which the author travelled from Hastings, passing Kensington (Olympia), headed by Southern Region "U1" class 2-6-0 locomotive No. 31894

DESPITE its extensive network of electrified lines, one of the strongest fascinations of the Southern Region for the railway enthusiast is the continued use of pre-grouping locomotives of many classes peculiar to its constituents, together with newer types. At Horsham, for instance, electric expresses come and go on the Bognor-Portsmouth-London service, as do suburban and cross-country multiple unit trains, but one could stand, last summer, by the side of the 69-year-old Stroudley 0-4-2 tank engine No. 2252, still painted in faded Southern Railway green (the last of the diminutive "D" class tanks in passenger service) before it moved off with its pull-and-push set to Guildford or Brighton. Only twelve years younger was the Class "D3" 0-4-4 tank engine, designed by Robert Billinton, which also was sharing these duties on the day of my visit with a Drummond Class "M7" tank engine of the same wheel arrangement, built in 1904, and now fitted for pull-and-push working.

What prodigies of stopping or semi-

fast work those engines used to perform, including non-stop runs between London and Woking, and journeys as far afield as Petersfield or Gosport. The small Brighton tanks, were no whit less versatile. In contrast, during the week that I was at Horsham, a new L.M.R. type 2-6-4 tank engine had worked on a Brighton-Horsham train, while running in from Brighton Works, soon after a London Chatham & Dover 0-4-4 tank engine, 50 years old and fitted for pull-and-push working, had been on the Steyning route following overhaul at Brighton. Another sharp contrast, on the Sunday, was the appearance of a Bulleid Class "Q1" 0-6-0, on an excursion to the coast. These engines, built in 1942, are some of the most powerful of their type in service.

Further south, just over the Hampshire border, alongside the 12-coach electric express from Waterloo, was a 75-year-old "Terrier," with one coach of composite, antique character, forming the Hayling Island branch train from Havant. Traffic was light that day. It is an interesting journey across the swing bridge over an

arm of the sea, which is only allowed to carry those smallest and most ancient of "main line" passenger tanks. Sometimes two run together hauling heavy holiday trains along the branch, which also sees some mixed trains. These tiny 0-6-0 tanks are stationed at Fratton.

Continuing in former L.B.S.C.R. territory, further to the north-east, amid the lovely wooded hill scenery on the borders of Sussex, Surrey and Kent, large L.M.R. type 2-6-4 tank engines, numbered from 42096 upwards, as new engines, now share the services on the subsidiary main and connecting lines through Oxted to Tunbridge Wells, Brighton and Eastbourne with engines built early in this century for the L.B.S.C.R. and the S.E.C.R. Typical random recordings last summer included representatives of the "E3", "E4" and "E5" class of 0-6-2 radial tank engines, which have respectively 4 ft. 6 in., 5 ft. and 5 ft. 6 in. driving wheels; the Class "J" 4-6-2 tank engine, named in earlier days, *Abergavenny*; Class "I3" Marsh 4-4-2 tank engines; and Class "E5x" rebuilt 0-6-2 tank engines, all of which are of Brighton origin. Of S.E.C.R. locomotives, there were noted "D" and "E" class Wainwright 4-4-0s in their original condition, and as Maunsell rebuilds; "H" class 0-4-4 tank engines (now pull-and-push fitted); and Maunsell Southern Railway Class "Q" 0-6-0s, and Class "U1" 3-cylinder 6-ft. Moguls. Every one of these engines was in passenger service, and exemplified varied locomotive practice during more than 50 years.

The Marsh Atlantics from Brighton and Newhaven sheds also figure in the list of regular power provided for some of the Uckfield or East Grinstead line trains to or from London. On busy days, they also may be seen bowling along the Brighton main line, north of Keymer Junction, with a relief Newhaven boat express, weighing, perhaps 400 tons, or with a through train to the Midlands from Brighton. Westward from Brighton, last summer, they deputised for Pacifics on regular through services to Bournemouth and Salisbury, and provided welcome relief steam power on the West Sussex electrified coast line.

It was interesting to observe the operation and formation of the through trains to and from the Midlands in Sussex, during the recent holiday season. The

main activity was at the week-ends, when traffic was heavy, and the number of services greater than had been seen for a good many years. Rolling stock comprised complete L.M.R., W.R. and S.R. sets, together with some combinations of any two, or all three, particularly on relief or excursion trains. The Birmingham (New Street) trains included restaurant cars and were composed of L.M.R. and Southern stock on alternate Saturdays. There also were similar Western and Southern Region arrangements.

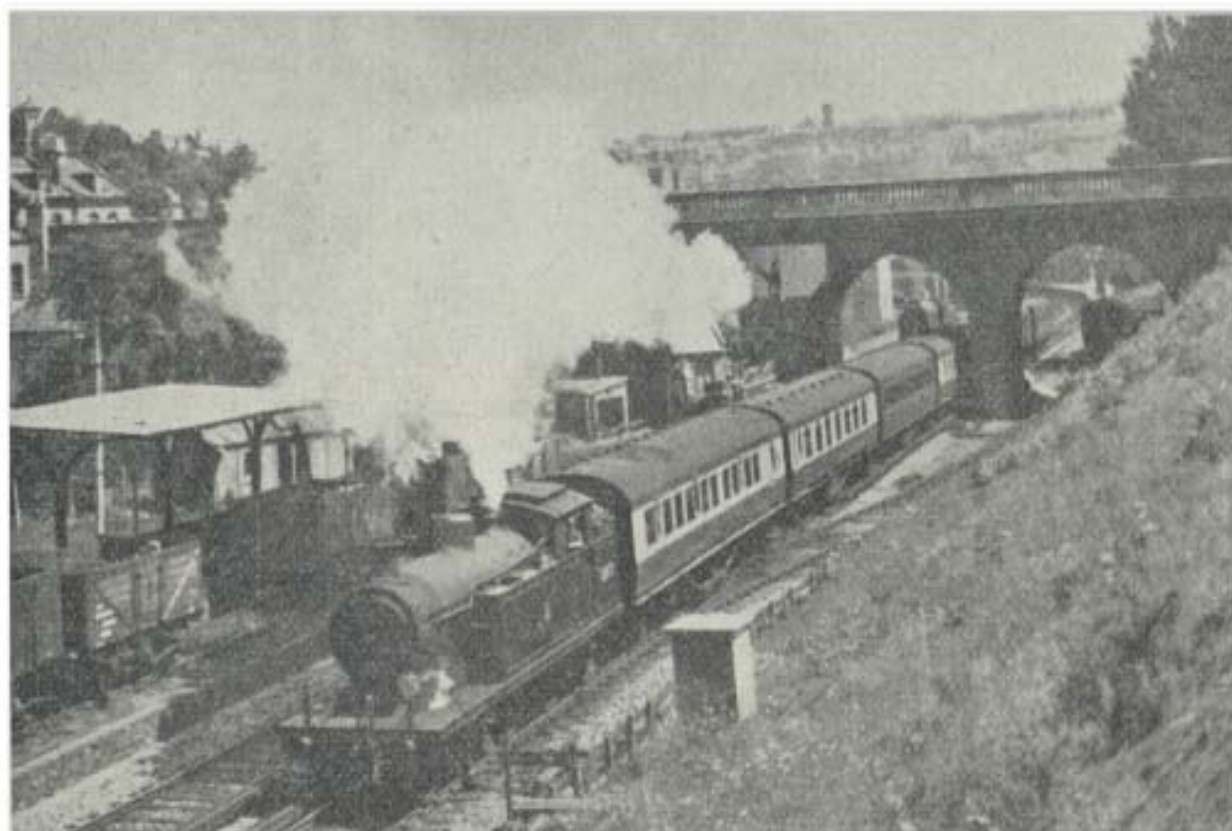
I had an interesting journey by the 10.45 a.m. from Hastings in a 10-coach L.M.R. dining car train, weighing 323 tons tare. We left Hastings behind the Class "I3" Marsh 4-4-2 tank engine No. 32077, which ran well by the sea beyond Bexhill, after some initial delays. The reversal at Eastbourne brought the new L.M.R. type 2-6-4 tank engine No. 42096 on to the other end of the train. Nearby was standing the L.B.S.C.R. 4-6-2 tank engine No. 32325 waiting to follow, as far as Brighton, with the Leicester train, which left Hastings behind a Class "Q1" 0-6-0. The new engine attained 60 m.p.h. near Glynde, and kept the scheduled time although it did not ascend Falmer bank quite as briskly as I had hoped. However, the minimum speed was 22 m.p.h., compared with less than 20 m.p.h., logged several times behind Maunsell or Brighton Moguls, or an "L" class 4-4-0, not always with so heavy a load. Approximately 3 miles up at about 1 in 88 is a stiff hurdle, following a severe slack through Lewes Station, particularly if the engine is not in the best of condition, or is manned by a crew more accustomed to freight or local work.

At Brighton the train filled. The next engine, after reversing in a terminus again, was not a "West Country" (as rostered) but a 6 ft. 3-cylinder Class "U1" 2-6-0, No. 31894, in latest lined livery. As the train was running late, a non-stop electric to Victoria preceded us. We suffered one severe initial check, but then all was well. It is a novel experience nowadays to travel on the Brighton main line in a steam-hauled express, while partaking of a good lunch. We touched 60 to 61 m.p.h. several times with a maximum of 65, and reached East Croydon in just over 50 min. After a brief stop, rapid acceleration up to

60 m.p.h. through the suburban area was cut short by a signal check at Balham, and a momentary stop on the extreme east side at Clapham Junction. We then passed under the main lines, and enjoyed a non-stop run over the fascinating West London Extension, and West London Railways, with many glimpses of other lines and locomotive depots. We had recovered 5 min. when we drew cautiously to a stand at Willesden Junction No. 1 platform, where a Class "5" L.M.R. 4-6-0 took over in rather leisurely fashion. On the following eight-coach Leicester

into Euston, and a Fowler 2-6-0 stopped at the station with a through excursion from Watford to Southend. From the bridge over the Western Region main line, I saw a "Castle" coming up, towards Paddington; and an Eastern Region Class "B1" 4-6-0, No. 61313, from Gorton (Manchester) was standing at Kensington (Olympia) as we passed through.

Back on Southern metals, Redhill Station, in Surrey, is an interesting place at busy times. It often is busy, and although it does not now deal with the



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[D. Ives

Through London Midland Region train to Stoke and Manchester leaving Hastings in June, 1950, hauled by former L.B.S.C.R. "I3" class 4-4-2 tank engine No. 32077

train, L.B.S.C.R. motive power had continued, as the 4-6-2 tank engine had been succeeded at Brighton by an Atlantic, No. 32424, *Beachy Head*, but its train had been delayed, and was late at Willesden. What a contrast this green 4-4-2 of yesteryear provided alongside a blue Stanier 4-6-2!

I had watched the southbound express from Birmingham (New Street) to Sussex which was taken over by a Class "U1" 2-6-0 at Mitre Bridge Junction, Willesden, from Class "5XP" 4-6-0, No. 45696, *Arctusa*. As we left Willesden Junction, an old Midland 0-6-0 was hauling empty stock

fast Brighton line traffic, which uses the Quarry avoiding line, many semi-fast and stopping electric trains call there. Some of these trains detach or attach portions for Reigate.

Thousands of mailbags are handled in conjunction with the adjoining Post Office Sorting Centre; and nearly all steam trains from the Tonbridge and Reading lines have to be reversed and re-engined in a very limited space. It is a focal point for much cross-country journeying. On a Saturday morning in July last, a loud-speaker announcement informed us that "the train now arriving

at No. 1 platform is for Birmingham (Snow Hill) only." It was from Margate only, and was booked non-stop to Redhill. The "Schools" class 4-4-0, No. 30914, *Eastbourne*, and its corridor train were in latest British Railways livery. A Western Region "4300" Mogul came on at the other end to work the train past Reading. There were several such Saturday turns last summer, all based on Reading. Next into No. 1 platform came a Reading train formed of one of the S.E.C.R. three-coach sets, which are ubiquitous on the Central and Eastern Sections of the Southern Region. This train was hauled by a Class "Q1" 0-6-0, and a Class "U" 6 ft. 2-cylinder 2-6-0, both of which were required for other workings. They ran off, then backed down the centre line to the shed, with *Eastbourne* attached to make an oddly assorted trio.

The night mails, and one other semi-fast service in each direction between London and the Kent Coast travel regularly via Redhill. These trains frequently are hauled by "King Arthur" or "Schools" class engines. Drummond L.S.W.R. 4-4-0s from Guildford, W.D. 2-8-0s, many Moguls, and old-stager tender and tank engines of Ashford or Brighton design may be seen there frequently; and "West Country" Pacifics are occasional visitors. There is also much variety in the style and age of the rolling stock.

The through service between Margate and Birkenhead reverses and changes engines at Redhill daily. Except at busy periods, when several trains are run, it attaches or detaches a Sussex portion there. The latter normally reverses three times on the Southern Region—at Redhill, Brighton, Eastbourne (when the final Sussex destination is Hastings) each time taking a fresh locomotive. This partly accounts for the extraordinary variety of engines (old and new) which share the steam workings on the Central Section. Last summer, these included a number of excursions (not always needing reversal) from the Western Region or northern lines of the L.M.R. or E.R. These trains usually were worked by Southern Region engines from Kensington or other frontier point.

There also were quite a number of electric excursion trains. Some ran regularly to and from London termini or main line suburban stations. Others followed more complicated routes, such as Brighton or Eastbourne to Windsor, reversing at Streatham; Brighton to Gravesend, reversing at London Bridge; from Reading or other Western Section stations to West Sussex resorts, reversing at Havant; or from Suburban lines *via*

Windmill Bridge Junction (Croydon), or Norwood Junction. Sunday evening relief trains included non-stop runs from Bexhill (Central) to East Croydon, and from Eastbourne to Croydon, and the non-stop Pullman train from Eastbourne to Victoria. The Newhaven boat express, hauled by an electric locomotive, was accelerated to a schedule of 68 min. for 57 miles, including several slowings. Some of the passing times were shewn in quarter minutes. I have logged many speeds of round about 70 m.p.h. when travelling in electric expresses through Sussex or Surrey.

On the Eastern Section lines in Kent, old engines have not been so much to the fore since the Stirling passenger locomotives were withdrawn. The few remaining examples of Stirling 0-6-0s (rebuilt) are chiefly on quiet branches or sidings. Unrebuilt Wainwright 4-4-0s are not so prominent on the main lines now, although they may still be seen, particularly at hop-picking time, or working from Tonbridge and Ashford. The class "D1" and "E1" rebuilt 4-4-0s are still doing excellent work, and share in the enormous summer Saturday traffic on the Chatham main line to Thanet. An innovation last summer was the rostering of an engine and train, usually with one footplate crew, on a number of weekend turns making a round trip, without reversing, from Victoria to Ramsgate, empty to Deal, and then (after an interval in the sidings) from Deal to Charing Cross, *via* Folkestone. "King Arthur" locomotives from Stewarts Lane shed worked these journeys and "Schools" class engines, stationed at Bricklayers Arms, made the round trip in the opposite direction.

A number of "L" class 4-4-0s and one or two "L1s," are still malachite green; the old local appearance has been maintained, in some cases, by retouching of the paint at Ashford Works. "Merchant Navy" Pacifics run in Kent now; their new blue livery looks strange in the Weald, but attractive. The dark green livery of some of the light Pacifics and "King Arthurs" is reminiscent of an S.E.C.R. phase, although the shade used at Eastleigh and Brighton seems decidedly darker than the Swindon style of green laid down. The number of Continental boat trains increased, and many extras were run.

Owing to loading-gauge restrictions, such luxuries as the new main-line corridor coaches could not be provided on the direct line from London to Hastings *via* Tunbridge Wells. The "School" class engines are still supreme on this route, and often give excellent performances over its difficult gradients.

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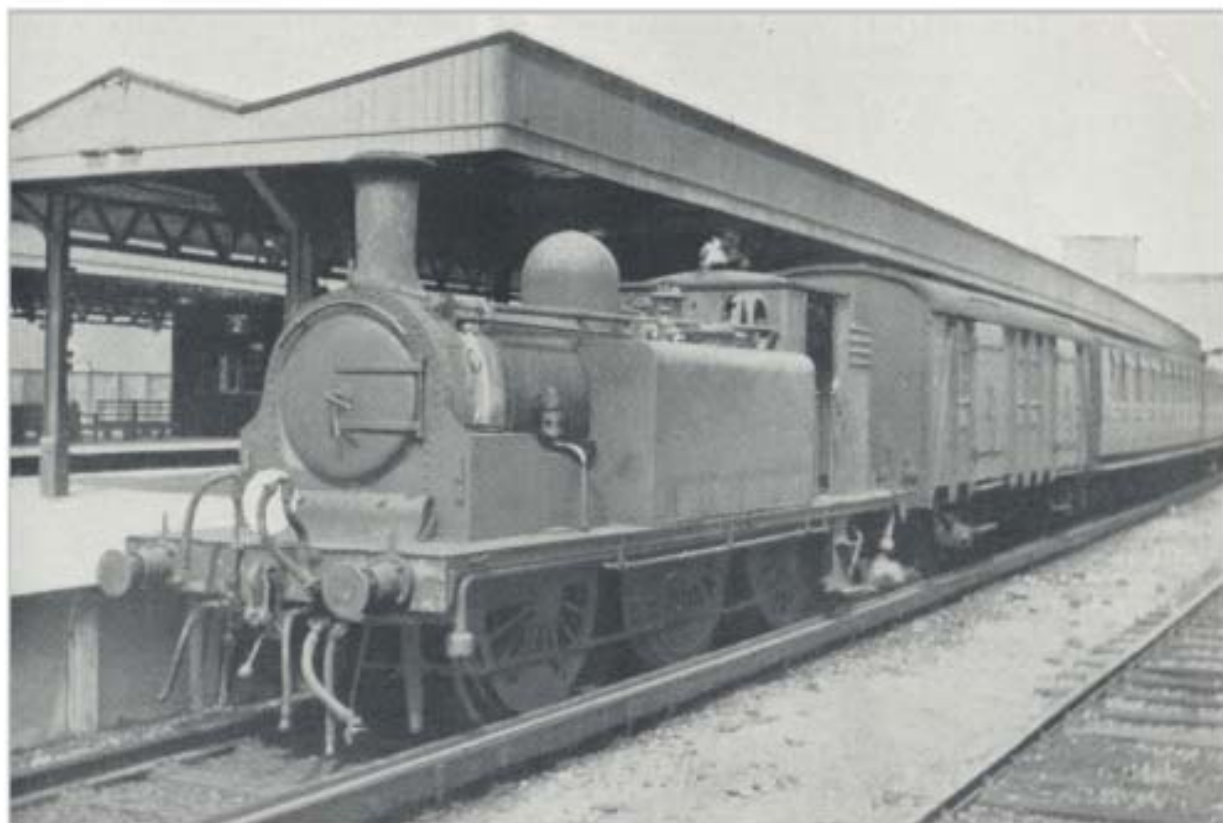
Hastings-Manchester (Saturdays only) through train passing Kensington (Olympia) on July 29, 1950, headed by former L.B.S.C.R. Marsh Atlantic No. 32426, "St. Alban's Head"



Photos]

[C. R. L. Coler

Southern Region "N" class 2-6-0 locomotive No. 31824 and London Midland Region Class "5" 4-6-0 No. 45233 at Willesden motive power depot



Photo]

[H. M. Madgwick

Stroudley "D1" class 0-4-2 tank locomotive, No. 2252, at Horsham with a Brighton train



Photo]

[R. Russell

Brighton "Terrier" 0-6-0 tank engine, No. 32677, at Havant, Southern Region, on a Hayling Island train