

# Traffic Working at Dover Marine Station

By T. W. E. ROCHE



Photo]

[A. R. Carpenter

Up "Golden Arrow," hauled by "Merchant Navy" 4-6-2 No. 35028, "Clan Line," leaving Dover Marine in April, 1954

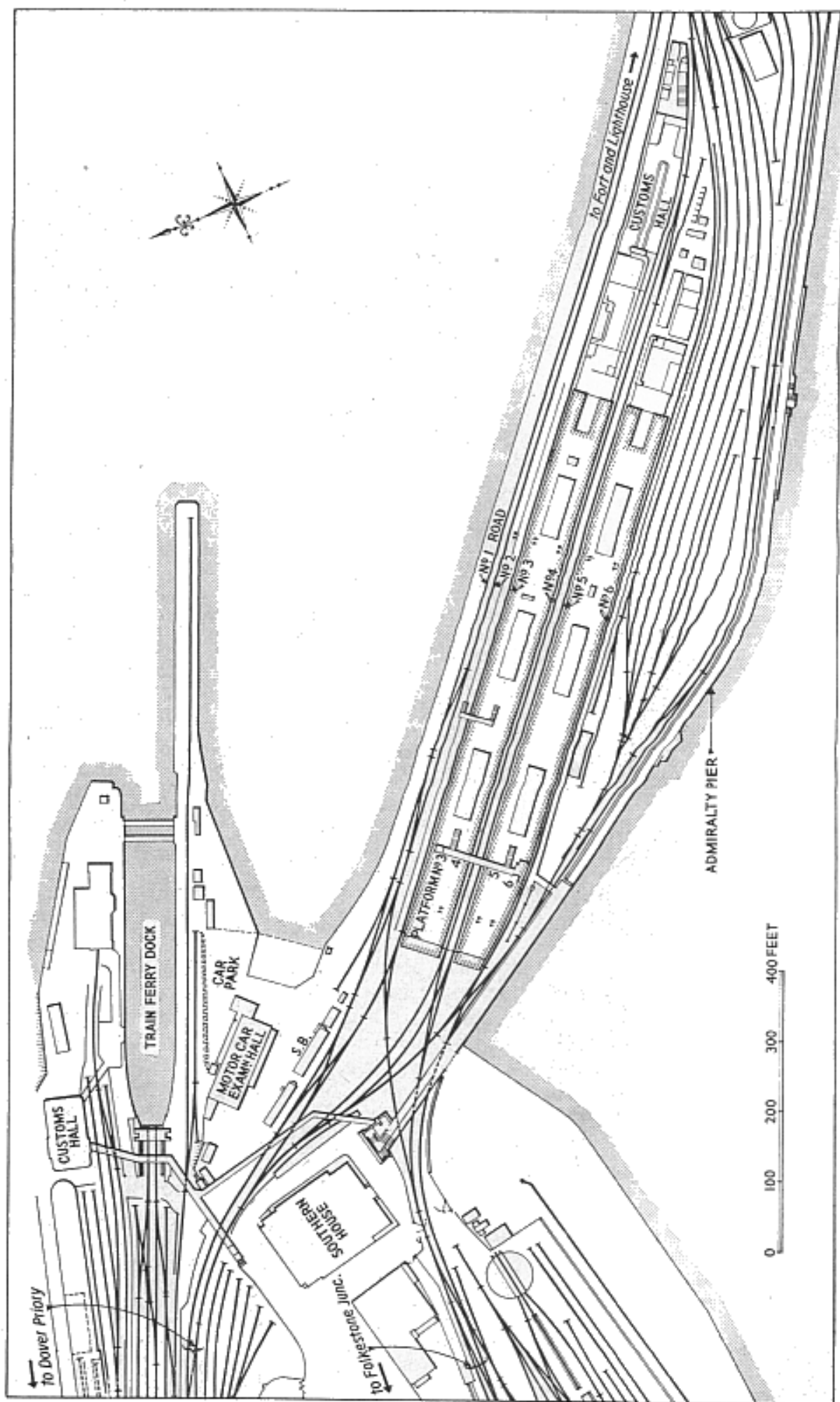
**A** HUNDRED years ago, on September 1, 1859, the South Eastern Railway Company reported that the Admiralty had agreed that trains might run on to the Admiralty Pier at Dover in connection with the cross-Channel packets. For the previous fifteen years, trains had terminated at Dover Town Station, opened on February 7, 1844, and situated near the present engine sheds; part of it, known as the "Military Platform," still remains.

It is a truism that the site of stations is conditioned by history and geography, but Dover Marine especially owes its fascinating and unusual layout to these two factors. It is at present in a most interesting stage in its development, being used partly by electric traction over the Chatham line and partly by steam over those through Tonbridge and Maidstone East. The South Eastern Railway reached Dover first, *via* Folke-

stone; the London, Chatham & Dover reached Dover Priory on July 22, 1861, and the Harbour Station (near the present Hawkesbury Street Junction Signalbox) on November 1, 1861.

From 1854 to 1862 the Dover-Calais mail contract was in the hands of a private individual, a Mr. Churchward, of Dover, but in 1862 the London, Chatham & Dover acquired the right, which was jointly enjoyed with the South Eastern as from June 20, 1863. A connecting curve on a very sharp radius was built from the South Eastern line at Dover Town to the L.C.D.R. line at Dover Harbour in 1874—this forms the base of the present "triangle." The Admiralty Pier, commenced in 1847, was completed in 1875; for some years there was a berth on the western side, very exposed except in easterly winds, which was used by cross-Channel vessels.

By the outbreak of the first world



Plan of Dover Marine Station and Train Ferry Dock, showing the recent alterations

war, the South Eastern & Chatham Railway boasted a 90-min. boat train service by the 4.30 p.m. from Charing Cross. Final work on Dover Marine Station, built on the widened Admiralty Pier, was still in progress at the outbreak of war, and the station was opened in December, 1914. Some 2,300 ft. of foreshore had been reclaimed, and the pier itself given a maximum width of 350 ft. The station was provided with two island platforms, 700 ft. long and 60 ft. wide. Originally, there was a customs hall only at the seaward end, but, with the institution of the Home Office control of aliens in 1920, this was sub-divided, and the two were rebuilt at the time of the second world war.

Inside the Marine Station are four running lines, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6, and on the quayside Nos. 1 and 2 roads, without platforms. There is a further running line, with storage sidings for rolling stock, on the southern, or seaward, side of the pier, behind the station. The eastern island platform is No. 3 and 4; Nos. 4 and 5 roads lie between it and the western platform, and No. 6 road is between that platform and the station wall. At the southern end is a crossing protected by steel lattice gates, as it is here that the flow of passengers takes place across the running lines to and from the immigration and customs halls, which are situated at the end of Nos. 3 and 4 platforms. Nos. 1 and 2 roads are flush with the quayside, and passengers must walk over them to reach the ships.

Engines running round down boat trains either return to the sheds by an unoccupied line through the station, or by the running line on the seaward side. The points for all roads are near the fort beyond the station, and a long siding extends the length of the pier to the lighthouse at the end. Every day a class "C" 0-6-0 may be seen marshalling stock there, literally "going to sea" and sometimes with spray breaking right over the top of the pier on to it!

In 1936, the Ferry Dock was opened and the Dunkirk-Dover train ferry service commenced. The dock lies some 100 yd. north-east of the northern portal of the Marine Station, and is connected to the Chatham line at Hawkesbury Street Junction. There are two running lines on to the link span, which is connected to the ferry's stern on arrival, and on

each side are a number of marshalling sidings. Class "C" 0-6-0s are permitted to work on to the train deck of the ferry vessel, which can accommodate 12 passenger vehicles or 40 laden wagons on four lines of rail.

As the junctions from the Ferry Dock face Chatham it is not possible to work stock direct on to the Folkestone line without reversal; in any case the "Night Ferry" is drawn clear of the junction at Hawkesbury Street and sent back over the eastern arm of the "triangle" into No. 3 platform at Dover Marine, where it is attached to the restaurant car and two coaches for second-class passengers, who have to make their own way from the Ferry Dock after passing the immigration control on board and customs in the Ferry Dock terminal building ashore. These controls are carried out at Victoria in respect of sleeping-car passengers. A covered way, sardonically dubbed *le couloir interminable* by French visitors, ran from the Ferry Dock close behind Dover Marine Signalbox, which is situated opposite the junction at the apex of the "triangle," to a point near the northern portal of the Marine Station; but it has been resited in the recent alterations.

Hawkesbury Street Junction Signalbox controls the roads to the Ferry Dock (where there is also a small box called Dover Ferry), the junction of the main line with the eastern arm of the triangle, and the branch leading to the Wellington, Granville and Eastern Docks. The 0-6-0s shunt through on to the lines beside the Wellington Dock, but are not allowed to the Eastern Docks. This fascinating line crosses the swing bridge leading to the Wellington Dock, and turns east on to the public road along the front. Trains using it travel at a walking pace preceded by a flagman. Formerly only small tank engines (usually Nos. 30084 or 31323) were allowed over it, but diesel 0-6-0s may now be seen. Though the Eastern Docks terminal, opened in 1953, serves motor-car traffic and car-carrier ships exclusively, there are several factory premises within the dock area and beyond them an oil storage depot, the berth for the Post Office cable ship and the Eastern Arm, at which deep-sea ships can discharge in an emergency, as at the time of the London dock strike in 1954.

Traffic at Dover Marine has developed far beyond anything envisaged when the station was built. The layout has become rather cramped, and prodigies of organisation are performed annually by all concerned to save complete saturation. The whole Southern Region port comes under the Divisional Shipping Manager, and the Stationmaster is officially designated his Traffic Assistant. It must be remembered, too, that heavy traffic totally unconnected with the Marine Station (main-line trains to Deal, Margate and Ramsgate) has to be worked down the base of the triangle only a stone's throw from the landward end of the Admiralty Pier. Formerly, many Chatham line trains terminated at Dover Marine, but with its increasing occupation, their number has dwindled. Those that do come through are available for staff, who otherwise have difficulty getting from one station to the other, because there is not even a direct bus service. One staff train runs into the station from Folkestone at 5.5 a.m., and another at 8.47 a.m., with a balancing working at 6.47 p.m. In steam-hauled days one ordinary express for the Chatham line, the 9.20 from Dover Priory, started (unadvertised) from the Marine at 9.10, generally behind a "Battle of Britain" or a "Schools."

A chronological survey of a summer's day gives some idea of the problems involved in terms of traffic working over a 24-hour period. At 4.30 a.m. the night service from Ostend arrives; the Belgian ships use either No. 1 Berth, nearest the town, or No. 3, near the seaward end of the customs hall. This service is always well patronised, and on a recent July Saturday carried no fewer than 1,300 alien passengers as well as British. The boat train is always duplicated or triplicated at weekends; the main train, of electric multiple-unit stock running *via* Chatham, is due away at 5.25, with relief booked paths at 5.50 and 6.5 a.m. The latter is still in Dover Marine Station when the Dunkirk train ferry enters the Ferry Dock; she will have 12 fully-laden sleeping cars from Calais and Brussels, one or two baggage wagons, and perhaps 200 "walking" passengers, including motorists in up to 25 cars on the main deck. The movements of the 0-6-0-hauling the sleepers off the ship echo like thunder.

With the restaurant car and second class coaches waiting in the station there will be 16 to 18 vehicles behind the two electric locomotives of the "E5000" series. In steam-hauled days, this arduous duty was generally allotted to a "Battle of Britain" 4-6-2, piloted by an "L1" 4-4-0, or even to two Pacifics, which gave a fine impression of power getting the heavy train away from the Marine Station. The "Night Ferry" now uses the Chatham route, leaving Dover at 7.20 and arriving at Victoria at 9.10. Up to 1956, great difficulties were experienced in north-easterly winds with the lock gates at Dunkirk, leading to delays or cancellation of the service, in which case an emergency service was run *via* Calais.

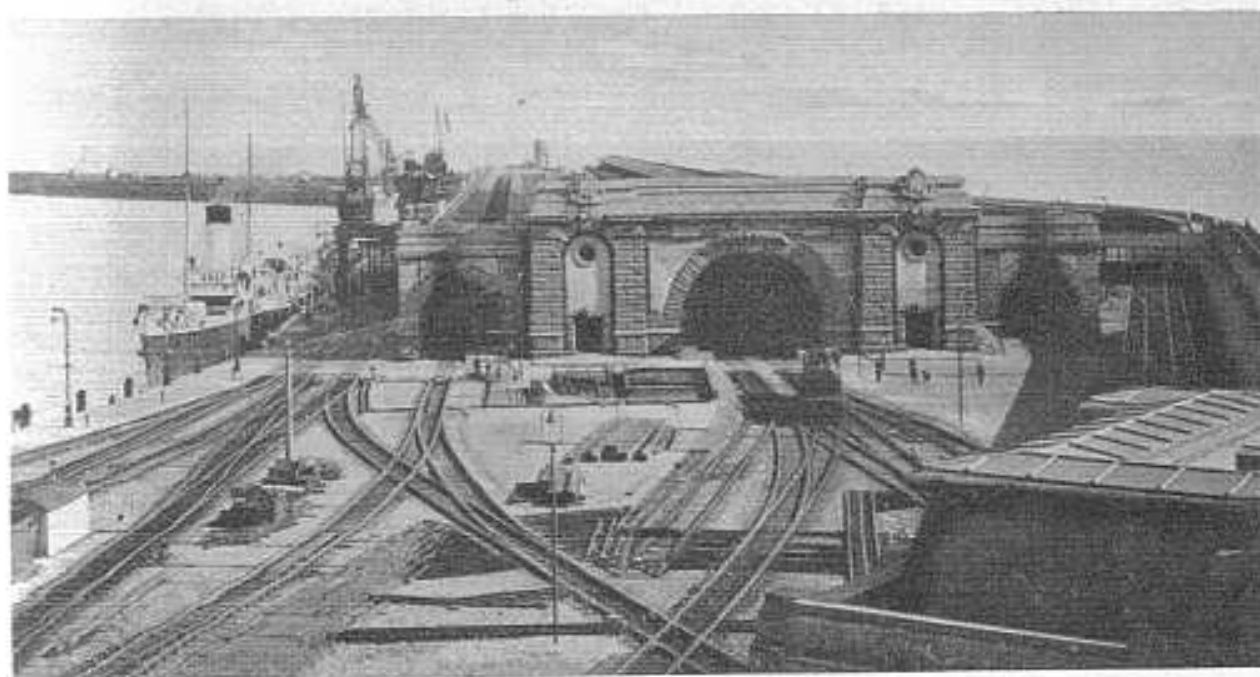
On Sundays, an extra service from Switzerland *via* Calais comes in at 7.50, but normally the next ship is the 8.30 from Ostend, which has a boat train timed away at 9.20 *via* Maidstone East. This is a most important departure, because the stock is essential for the composition of down boat trains later in the day. A late arrival of the ship, or an exceptionally large number of passengers, is therefore viewed with dismay by the Traffic Assistant's staff! By now the outward flood is already approaching, and the first down Ostend boat train (of which there may be four or five) will have arrived. The ship sails at 10.30. A continuous stream of down boat trains follows throughout the morning; at weekends, there is an extra Ostend sailing at 11.35 for passengers joining at Dover (including many who arrive by coach at the "Lord Warden" entrance). The next daily departure is the 12.20 for Ostend, for which the regular boat train is the 10 a.m. from Victoria, of electric multiple-unit stock *via* Chatham, due at Dover at 11.32. This service conveys passengers for the "Saphir" Trans-Europ Express for Cologne and Frankfurt, who disembark by a special gangway at Ostend.

Hard on the heels of the last Ostend boat train comes the first Calais train to connect with the sailing of the *Invicta* from Berth 2 directly opposite the platform end. There are two regular scheduled trains, 10.30 and 11 a.m. from Victoria, due at Dover at 12.12 and 12.32 respectively, both steam-hauled *via* Tonbridge. The latter was

formerly the "Golden Arrow" but this service has now been transferred to the 2 p.m. timing *via* Folkestone. However, the travelling public does not change its habits so readily, and the 11 a.m. remains extremely well patronised throughout the year. (It is, of course, 10 a.m. in winter.) This train arrives at No. 6 platform and, though Calais passengers thus have the longest walk inside the station, they are compensated by the shortest outside. Stock from this train is worked round empty to Folkestone to form the up 2.25 thence to London.

The *Invicta* sails at 1.5 p.m., but at weekends, before she does so, the relief inward Ostend ship arrives at 12.55, and

"Arrow" service, due alongside at 5.40. Stock for the "Golden Arrow" and the second Calais boat train is worked over from Folkestone Junction, generally by the train engine but sometimes by a 2-6-0, running tender first. A "Merchant Navy" or "West Country" is now usually the "Golden Arrow" engine—often No. 35028, *Clan Line*, or 34092, *City of Wells*—but for some years the duty was shared by the two "Britannias," 70004, *William Shakespeare*, and 70014, *Iron Duke*, and it is a matter of regret that these fine, spotless engines have been transferred away to the London Midland Region to meet pressing motive power needs. The "Golden Arrow"



The approach to Dover Marine Station, showing the original layout

a fresh flood of passengers pours ashore. The regular ship is due at 1.30 and between them they may carry nearly 4,000 passengers, of whom perhaps 1,500 will be aliens. The main electric boat train is due away at 2.25 *via* Chatham, and often improves on its arrival time of 4.14 at Victoria. There are additional paths for relief trains right up to 3.45, all steam-hauled. Already the next outward movement is upon Dover Marine, however; four or five boat trains may be required to cope with the outward load for the duplicated Ostend service, sailing at 4.50 and 5.15.

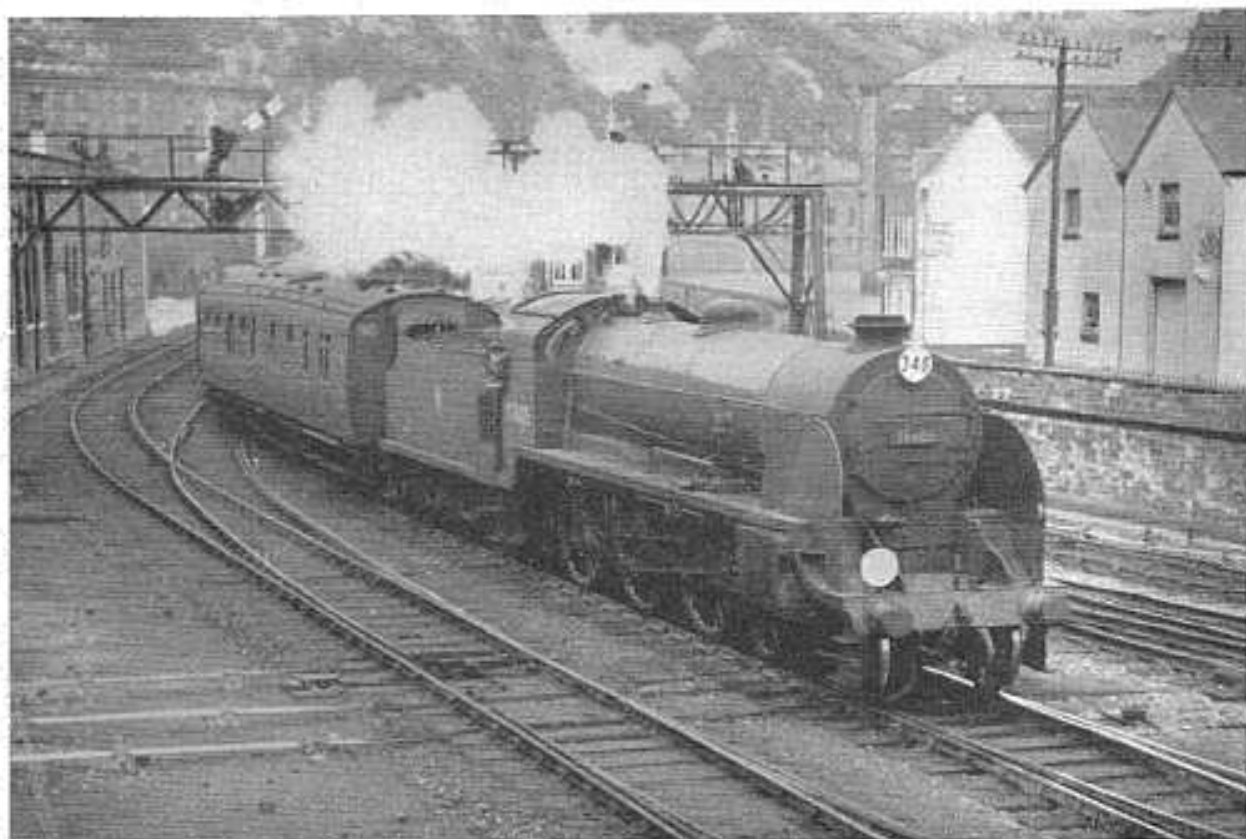
Barely has the latter cleared the harbour entrance before the *Invicta* approaches with the inward "Golden

Arrow" service, due alongside at 5.40 followed by the ordinary train from No. 4 at 6.30. If these are insufficient, a third train follows from No. 3 at 6.40, *via* Tonbridge on weekdays, and Maidstone at weekends.

The *Invicta* has just come alongside when the "day ferry" arrives from Dunkirk at the Ferry Dock, with no passenger coaches but a cargo of goods vehicles and motorists and their cars. The balancing working has left Dover at 12.25 p.m. The evening inward Ostend service arrives at the Admiralty Pier at 6.30 p.m. and this is generally duplicated at weekends by a ship arriving at 7. The normal boat train leaves at 7.10 (7.7 on Sundays) but, as the two ships

may account for 4,000 passengers, four or five trains may be run up to the last booked path at 8.20. On Saturdays two down trains *via* Maidstone then arrive with "agents' special" passengers for Switzerland, generally conveyed over to Boulogne by the *Invicta*. After this departure there is a lull—one can almost feel the weary station breathing thankfulness!—broken only by the car-sleeper departing at 10.25 from Platform 6 with cars off the car-ferry at the Eastern Docks, bound for Newcastle or Manchester on alternate days. But at 10 p.m. cars

exceptional traffic must be catered for at any time of year—as, for example, when 8,000 German football supporters arrived in December, 1954, or when an easterly gale causes Folkestone ships to be diverted to Dover. Liners, such as those of the Blue Star, Palm and Elder Dempster Lines, call in the Outer Harbour to land and embark passengers by the Dover Harbour Board's tender *Delphinus*, and these passengers must be accommodated on ordinary boat trains or, occasionally—as with the Clipper Line's cruising liner *Stella Polaris*, where



Photo]

[A. A. Sellman

Charing Cross train, with "King Arthur" class 4-6-0 locomotive No. 30805, "Sir Constantine," passing Hawkesbury Street Junction, Dover

have started embarking again at the Ferry Dock and at 11.40 the electric-hauled "Night Ferry" *via* Chatham arrives and the morning's process is reversed. The ship is due away at 12.30 a.m. and is followed at 1.45 by the night sailing for Ostend, for which the regular boat train arrives at 12.45 a.m., but frequently it is duplicated.

There is normally another lull from 1.45 to 4.30 a.m. till the daily round begins again, but it was into this brief span of night that in 1957 extra ships had to be fitted carrying thousands of scouts for the Centenary Jamboree. Such

numbers are as high as 200—on a special train. Everything must be taken in the stride.

When alterations to Dover Marine were made last February to accommodate the 12-coach electric multiple-unit sets, the station was closed completely for a week and all Admiralty Pier ships transferred to Folkestone. This conversion was described in *The Railway Magazine* for May, 1959. It included resiting some of the running lines at the London end, lengthening both platforms by 114 ft., and providing umbrella roofing, removing the covered way to

the Ferry Dock and resiting it.

Freight trains start from Dover Town Yard, adjacent to the engine shed on the site of Dover Town Station, but one electrically-hauled train, the 9.45 a.m. to Rotherhithe Road, starts from the Marine Station, where the balancing working terminates. Dover Shed (74C), on the level of Shakespeare Beach, just west of the Marine Station, supplies, in addition to boat train and docks duties, "C" 0-6-0s for the East Kent Light Railway coal trains between Tilmanstone Colliery and Shepherdswell. There are eight such workings on weekdays. Steam boat workings are in the hands of Bulleid Pacifics both rebuilt and in their original condition, and in some cases of standard class "5" 4-6-0s. "Schools" are used less frequently now, and very occasionally an "L1" may be pressed into service.

In conclusion, mention must be made of the ships. The British Railways Dover-Calais route is served by the

*Invicta*, 4,191 tons gross, built in 1940, for many years flagship of the late Captain Leonard Payne; by the *Maid of Orleans*, 3,777 tons, built in 1947; the *Canterbury*, 3,071 tons, the pre-war "Golden Arrow" vessel, and the *Isle of Thanet*, 2,789 tons, both built in 1929. The Dunkirk ferry service is maintained by two British and one French train ferry built in 1936, the *Shepperton Ferry*, the *Hampton Ferry* and *Twickenham Ferry*, all between 2,800 and 2,900 tons, and the newer French *St. Germain*, 3,094 tons, built in 1951. The newest ships using the Admiralty Pier are the Belgian mailships, the *Roi Leopold III*, the *Koningin Elisabeth* and the *Reine Astrid*, all of 3,794 tons, and built in 1956, 1957 and 1958 respectively. There are two older post-war ships, the *Koning Albert* and *Prince Philippe* of 3,701 tons and one pre-war ship, *Prins Albert* (the "Lucky Albert" of the Royal Navy), of 3,180 tons, built for the service in 1937.