

Volume 111 : The Nationalised Railway

British Railways [Southern Region] 1948-67

Chapter 19: Introduction

Nationalisation of the Big Four Railways was probably inevitable, whether January 1st 1948 or later and irrespective of the colour of the Government. What effect this Nationalisation had on the development of passenger train services in Southern England is a matter for conjecture. Would the Southern Railway have proceeded with electrification earlier than British Railways did? Would Mr. Bulleid have dealt with the problems apparent in the operation of the Merchant Navy, West Country and Battle of Britain Class locomotives; particularly ease of maintenance? Would the Leader project have resulted in a truly reversible steam locomotive capable of hauling 400 tons trains? Would passenger train schedules have returned to pre-war standards sooner on the non-electrified routes and would they have improved further?

In practice, with the exception of electric services to Newhaven Harbour in May 1949, no major route electrification was commissioned until the Kent Coast in 1959, followed by the former South Eastern main line two years later and the Bournemouth route in 1967. The Merchant Navy Class Pacific's were rebuilt, commencing February 1956 and finishing with Nos.6 and 28 in October 1959. The first light Pacific was rebuilt in June 1957, the last one emerged from Eastleigh in June 1961. Sixty were rebuilt, 50 remained essentially in their original condition. The Leader project was abandoned, whilst the problems were considerable, aggravated by Bulleid's tendency to combine several unknowns rather than dealing with them one by one, the major handicap was the lack of a champion. The great man himself went off to the CIE in Eire to repeat the experiment with the additional challenge of burning turf.

Schedules took some time to approach pre War standards, the 80 minutes timing from Charing Cross to Folkestone was reintroduced in 1953, two hours to Bournemouth followed in 1957 [with a four minutes stop at Southampton included], the "Bournemouth Belle" became a two hours train from 1963. The Kent Coast Service, with the possible exception of certain Business trains, never reached pre War standards and Weymouth was never given a train to London equal to the pre war "Bournemouth Limited". On the plus side a new interval service was introduced on the Oxted, East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells West routes in 1955 with the Tonbridge to Brighton, Tunbridge Wells West to Eastborne and Brighton to Horsham services following later. The "Golden Arrow", Victoria to Dover schedule fell to 92 minutes. Overall however the timetable never quite attained the excellence of the immediate pre War years. Platform restrictions at the London Termini prohibited the use of longer trains despite the availability of more powerful locomotives. Yet the last two decades of steam operation, under the British Railway's regime witnessed at times locomotive performances superior to any seen previously.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Kent Coast Timetables 1951 and 1955

Invariably this super performance was not as a result of timetable requirements but through footplate crews either endeavouring to make up lost time resulting from out of course delays or enthusiastically utilising the power available. As the end of steam operation approached the number of crews keen to show what the locomotives were capable of, grew.

A comparison of weekday departures from London during the summers of 1951, 1955 and 1964 [for the Western Section only] indicates the demands placed on the steam fleet.

The Kent Coast in 1951 had 13 principal trains from Victoria with an additional one on Fridays, only four of these reached Margate within two hours. The quickest the 15.20, ran to the first stop at Whitstable in 70 minutes and reached Margate in 109 minutes after further stops at Herne Bay and Westgate. The 11.30, the "Kentish Belle", with stops at Faversham and Herne Bay took three minutes longer to Margate, the 08.30 and 10.10, with stops at Whitstable, Herne Bay and all stations afterwards arrived two and one minutes inside two hours. The Fridays only 19.26, with stops at Whitstable, Herne Bay and all stations after, reached Margate in 119 minutes. The best of the 35 minutes past the hour interval trains were the first and last of the day i.e. 08.35 and 21.35, Margate in 2 hours 5 minutes and 2 hours 6 minutes respectively. The morning train stopped at Bromley South, Chatham, Whitstable, Herne Bay and all subsequent stations, the evening one ran fast to Chatham, then Sittingborne, Faversham and all stations after.

There were Business ["Residentials"] trains from Cannon Street at 16.45, 17.15, 17.45 and 18.15, the first ran non stop to Faversham in 64 minutes, the second and fourth to Whitstable and the 17.45 to Chatham, respective overall times to Margate were 111, 98, 117 and 109 minutes. The 17.21 and 18.23 "Residentials" from Cannon Street were semi-fast trains to Dover, the first ran via Dartford and Strood, the second, first stop Rochester via Swanley.

There were 14 trains from Victoria In the summer of 1958, with an extra one on Fridays, the 19.08, which with stops at Whitstable and Herne Bay reached Margate in 101 minutes, the best time of the week. Three reached Margate inside two hours, the 08.35, with stops at Whitstable, Birchington and Westgate five minutes inside, the 11.35, the "Kentish Belle" with stops at Whitstable and Herne Bay also five minutes inside and the 15.20 which served all stations from Herne Bay to Margate was two minutes quicker. The best of the other interval services from Victoria was the 21.35 which with stops at Chatham, Sittingborne, Faversham and all stations after reached Margate in 125 minutes. The 14.35 ran to Dover via Canterbury.

The Business trains from Cannon Street left at 16.44, first stop Faversham in 67 minutes, 17.14 Whitstable in 76 minutes, 17.44 Chatham and 18.14 Whitstable in 67 minutes, overall times to Margate were 114, 101, 117 and 111 minutes. The semi-fast's to Dover left at 17.18 and 18.24 both first stop Rochester via Swanley.

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Southern Region, South Eastern Main Line Timetables, 1951 and 1958

The former South Eastern Main line Service in 1951 consisted of trains from Charing Cross at 09.15, 11.15, 13.15, 15.15, 16.15, 19.15 and 21.15. The 09.15, 11.15, 15.15 and 21.15 stopped at Waterloo, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Ashford, the 11.15 additionally at Headcorn. The 09.15 ran fast from Ashford to Shorncliffe and reached Folkestone in 106 minutes ex Charing Cross, the 11.15 with an extra stop at Sandling was five minutes slower, the 15.15 with a stop at Westenhanger was one minute slower than this. The 16.15 ex Charing Cross ran to Folkestone in 85 minutes including a stop at Waterloo, the 19.15 with a stop at Ashford was three minutes slower and the 13.15 with a third stop at Shorncliffe took 95 minutes. The Business trains from Cannon Street left at 17.00 and 18.18, the first ran fast to Ashford in 64 minutes and then with further stops at Sandling and Shorncliffe reached Folkestone in 91 minutes, the second stopped at Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, omitted the Sandling stops and required ten minutes longer.

There were trains from Charing Cross in 1958 at 09.08, 11.00, 13.08, 15.08, 16.10, 19.08, 21.08 and 22.05. The 09.08, 11.08, 15.08, 21.08 and 22.05 all stopped at Waterloo, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Ashford, times to Folkestone were: 94 minutes with an additional stop at Shorncliffe - 112 minutes with stops at Staplehurst before Ashford and all stations after - 111 minutes with stops at Westenhanger, Sandling and Shorncliffe - 112 minutes with stops at Paddock Wood, Sandling and Shorncliffe - 108 minutes with stops at London Bridge and Shorncliffe. The 13.08 and 16.10, "The Man of Kent", reached Folkestone in 95 minutes with stops at Waterloo, Ashford and Shorncliffe and 82 minutes with the one stop at Waterloo. [The pre War 80 minutes schedule reintroduced in 1953 was lengthened to 82 minutes for the electrification works]. The 19.08, with stops at London Bridge and Ashford took 90 minutes to Folkestone. The Business trains from Cannon Street, 16.56 and 18.21, reached Folkestone in 97 minutes with stops at Tonbridge, Ashford, Sandling and Shorncliffe and 101 minutes with an additional stop at Sevenoaks.

There were only two steam hauled semi-fast trains on the Central Section which ran south of South Croydon on the Brighton Main Line. The 03.23 ex London Bridge ran to Brighton in 84 minutes including stops at Redhill, Three Bridges and Haywards Heath [In 1958 the departure time was 03.20 and the overall time 82 minutes]. The 17.25 ex London Bridge to Reading via Redhill ran to Coulsdon South the first stop in 22 minutes.

The Oxted line service in 1951 was similar to that of many years previous whereas in 1958 it reflected the complete reorganisation commenced in 1955. There were 14 weekday departures in 1951 ex Victoria and ten ex London Bridge with two additional trains ex East Croydon. Three of these trains ran to Brighton via East Grinstead and Sheffield Park, the 08.03 and 12.03 ex Victoria and the 16.20 ex London Bridge, The 16.20 included a Tunbridge Wells West portion detached at East Croydon, whilst the main train ran fast to Oxted. The 19.42 ex London Bridge ran to Haywards Heath via East Grinstead and Horsted Keynes.

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Southern Region, Oxted Line Timetables 1951 and 1958

There were four trains in 1951, semi-fast to Eridge, 11.08 Victoria to Eastborne, 15.52 Victoria to Brighton, 16.40 London Bridge to Uckfield and 18.10 Victoria to Uckfield. Thirteen ran to Tunbridge Wells West, six via Edenbridge plus a portion from the 18.10 detached at East Croydon, seven via East Grinstead. The 16.50 Victoria to Brighton ran slow to Eridge. There was one Business train to Forest Row, two to East Grinstead. The last train of the day, 22.30 ex Victoria ran only as far as Oxted.

In 1958 the departure time from Victoria was at eight minutes past the hour from 09.08 to 15.08 inclusive, then 17.08 and from 19.08 to 22.08. All of these interval departures ran to Tunbridge Wells via East Grinstead, with a connecting service at Oxted to Tunbridge Wells via the shorter Edenbridge route. The early morning Tunbridge Wells West trains consisted of the 05.20 ex London Bridge via Edenbridge, the 06.28 ex Victoria and the 08.02 ex London Bridge both via East Grinstead. The interval semi-fast trains to Brighton and Eastborne via Eridge left Victoria at 10.38 and 15.50, [in later years changed to 15.38]. There were ten afternoon/evening Business trains, in addition to the 17.08, commencing with the 16.20 ex London Bridge and finishing with the 18.48. The 16.20 ran to East Grinstead, a portion for Tunbridge Wells West was detached at East Croydon, the main train ran fast to Oxted. [The 16.20 ceased to provide a through service to Brighton after the first closure of the Horsted Keynes to Culver Junction section]. The 16.40 ex London Bridge, semi-fast to Eridge inter alia, ran non stop from Edenbridge to Eridge and from Uckfield to Lewes [the logic of such was difficult to fathom]. The 16.49 ex Victoria stopped at every station from Sanderstead to Brighton except Falmer and included a portion for Tunbridge Wells which was detached at Ashurst. The 17.20 and 18.15 ex London Bridge ran to Tunbridge Wells via Edenbridge. The 18.10 Victoria to Brighton ran semi-fast to Eridge, it included a Tunbridge Wells portion detached at East Croydon which proceeded from there as a stopping service via Edenbridge. The 17.49 and 18.48 ex Victoria and the 17.38 and 18.31 ex London Bridge all ran to East Grinstead, the first continued to Groombridge, the 18.31 to Forest Row.

The Western Section in 1951 had trains from Waterloo to Bournemouth at 05.40, 08.20 [Mondays only], 08.30, 09.30, 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 13.30, 14.30 [Fridays only], 15.20, 16.20 [Fridays only], 16.35, 17.30, 18.20 [Fridays only], 18.30, 19.30 and 22.30 [the Mail]. The 10.30, 12.30 ["The Bournemouth Belle"], 14.30, 18.20 and 18.30 stopped only at Southampton and reached Bournemouth Central in 133, 130, 136, 134 and 131 minutes. The 10.30, 14.30 and 18.30 continued to Weymouth with stops at Poole, Wareham and Dorchester South, the overall times were 3 hours 17 minutes, 3 hours 27 minutes and 3 hours 13 minutes. Five other trains ran through to Weymouth: 05.40, 12 stops before Bournemouth, six after, Weymouth in 4 hours 27 minutes - 08.30 six before Bournemouth reached at 11.14, four after, Weymouth, 3 hours 54 minutes - 13.30, eight, Bournemouth 16.20, six after, Weymouth, 4 hours 3 minutes - 15.20 and 16.35, Winchester, Southampton and Brockenhurst, Bournemouth in 2 hours 20 minutes, 15.20 ten after Weymouth at 19.06 - the 16.35 three after Weymouth in 3 hours 20 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section Timetables 1951, 1958 and 1964

The 09.30, 11.30, 17.30 and 19.30 from Waterloo made ten, eight, 11 and seven stops before Bournemouth Central; the respective overall times were, 3 hours one minutes, 2 hours 52 minutes, 2 hours 56 minutes and 2 hours 54 minutes. The Mail [22.30 ex Waterloo] made lengthy stops and ran into and out of Southampton Terminus station.

Trains left Waterloo in 1958 at 05.40, 08.20 and then at half past the hour from 08.30 to 14.30, 15.20, 15.30, 16.35, 17.30, 18.20 [Fridays only], 18.30, 19.20 [Fridays only], 19.30 and 21.30 plus the Mail. Four, the 08.20, 10.30, 14.30 and 18.30 ran to Bournemouth Central in two hours including the Southampton stop. [The two hours schedules were introduced the previous year]. The 10.30 continued to Weymouth, [stops at Poole, Wareham and Dorchester South] reached in exactly three hours. The 14.30 with two further stops before Weymouth required an additional eight minutes and the 18.30 with the one additional stop at Wool four minutes more. On Fridays the 18.30 ran four minutes later after Southampton. The 12.30 ex Waterloo [the "Bournemouth Belle"] and the 18.20 reached Bournemouth Central in 2 hours 10 minutes and 2 hours 6 minutes including the stop at Southampton.

The 08.30, 15.20 and 16.35 ["Royal Wessex"] all included a portion for Weymouth. The 08.30 made seven stops before Bournemouth, one more than in 1951, but still reached there at 11.14 and with five further stops Weymouth in 3 hours 51 minutes. The 15.20 was three minutes slower overall than in 1951, the 16.35 ran to the same schedule as far as Bournemouth, overall times to Weymouth were 3 hours 49 minutes and 3 hours 20 minutes. The 09.30, 11.30 and 13.30 ran to Bournemouth Central in ten minutes less, three minutes less with one stop less and the same time, as in 1951, the 15.30 with ten stops reached the Central station in 2 hours 56 minutes, the 17.30, with one stop less was nine minutes quicker. The 19.20 with five stops reached the Central station in 2 hours 26 minutes, the 19.30 with four stops less than seven years previous was 11 minutes quicker overall and the 21.30 took 2 hours 35 minutes with seven stops en route.

During summer 1964, the last before the schedules were eased for electrification works there were departures from Waterloo at: 05.30, 08.30, and 08.35 – then on the half-hour from 09.30 to 15.30 - 15.35, 16.35, 17.30, 18.30, 19.30, 21.20 and 22.35 - on Fridays there were additional trains at 16.22 and 18.22 - Channel Islands Boat trains at 08.10, 19.20 [Fridays only], 19.45 [Wednesdays and Fridays only] and 21.15, [these previously ran from Paddington and were re-routed to Waterloo and the former South Western Main Line in November 1959]. Three trains ran from Waterloo to Bournemouth in two hours, the 08.30, 10.30 and 12.30 ["Bournemouth Belle"], including the Southampton stop, the 08.30 and 10.30 continued to Weymouth, reached after three further stops in 3 hours 5 minutes and three hours exactly. The 18.22 reached Bournemouth in 127 minutes including the Southampton stop. The 05.30, despite being moved forward from the longstanding 05.40 departure time, with two stops less before Bournemouth and two more afterwards, still arrived at Weymouth at the time honoured 10.07.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section Timetable, 1964

The 08.35 ex Waterloo reached Bournemouth Central, after six stops at 11.14 and with nine subsequent stops Weymouth in one minute under four hours. The 09.30 ran to the same schedule as in 1958, whereas the 11.30 with one stop omitted reached the Central station eight minutes earlier. The 13.30 ran to Weymouth in exactly four hours, it was seven minutes quicker to Bournemouth with one stop omitted and made six stops after. The 15.30 reached Bournemouth in six minutes less than the previous 15.20, arrival 15.44 and with ten stops after, Weymouth at 19.09, [one minute earlier than previously]. The 15.35 ran to Bournemouth Central in two minutes over three hours with 11 intermediate stops. The 16.35 [the "Royal Wessex"] still took 2 hours 20 minutes to the Central station and with an additional stop at Wool was four minutes slower to Weymouth. The 16.22 relief ran to Bournemouth in 2 hours 25 minutes with stops at Winchester, Southampton and Brockenhurst. The 17.30 with one stop less was four minutes quicker, whereas the 18.30 with an additional stop at Winchester was seven minutes slower. The 18.30 with four stops after Bournemouth reached Weymouth at 21.41. The 19.30, with three additional stops reached Bournemouth at 22.25 and continuing to Weymouth arrived there three minutes before Midnight after a further eight stops. The 21.20, with one less stop than the previous 21.30, was four minutes quicker to Bournemouth Central, 2 hours 31 minutes.

The Channel Islands Boat Trains ran to reasonably fast schedules. The 08.10 reached Bournemouth in 2 hours 10 minutes including stops at Basingstoke and Southampton and ran non stop from there to the Weymouth signal box, arrival 11.14. The 19.45 reached Bournemouth at 22.03 with the same two stops and the Weymouth signal box at 22.58, the Friday 19.20 made a stop at Southampton from 20.52 to 20.57, and then ran non stop to the Weymouth Box, reached at 22.28. The 21.15 took 2 hours 17 minutes to Bournemouth including the two stops and after a three minutes stop reached the Weymouth box at 00.25, where as with the others locomotives were changed, and the quayside at 00.50.

The evolution of the Southern Region Timetable from 1948 to 1967 reflected social changes. For instance the characteristics of the annual holiday changed, initially more people were able to travel on days other than Saturday, then they owned motor cars and finally they went abroad. Another change was the demise of the five and a half days week leading to the withdrawal of Saturday morning and mid-day Business trains.

Chapter: 20 Kent Coast Services

The Kent Coast Services, under the Nationalised enterprise, operated for 11 years with steam haulage. The schedules never seriously challenged the larger locomotives and perhaps inevitably punctuality, other than on the Business services was poor. The Chatham section had always been difficult to work, many speed restrictions, junctions and adverse gradients, but somehow the spirit of the old LC & D seemed to have been completely lost.

The "Thanet Belle" Pullman train commenced operation on the last day of May 1948; it consisted of ten Pullman coaches on the first day with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.21C170. The "Belle" never had a demanding schedule and was often hauled by smaller locomotives, including Maunsell 2-6-0's. Motive Power always seemed to be in short supply on the Chatham Section, particularly at peak periods. A specific shortage in 1948, aggravated by the recent withdrawal of the rebuilt Stirling 4-4-0s led to the transfer of four, T9 Class 4-4-0's from the Western Section to Gillingham motive power depot. Yet in the following winter period, such was the annual fluctuation, there was only one main line passenger duty for a Maunsell rebuilt D1 Class 4-4-0.

The introduction of the Bulleid 4-6-2's on the Kent Coast met with the same mixed reactions as elsewhere on the Southern. The primary difficulty was one of availability, out on the road they performed well, albeit with a high coal consumption. A.J.Baker who was, and had been for many years, a regular traveller on both the Chatham section and the former South Eastern Main Line, wrote to Trains Illustrated magazine in 1950, after some particularly critical comments about the new locomotives. He had travelled some 5,000 miles behind members of the Class over the last few years and had experienced no breakdowns. The main Kent Coast trains were normally entrusted to either West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's or King Arthur Class 4-6-0's. At summer weekends traffic was such that virtually any Class of available locomotive was called upon, increasingly train formations were restricted, so that Maunsell inside cylinder 4-4-0's or the various 2-6-0's could maintain the schedules, a lowest common denominator performance criteria.

The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's were largely replaced in 1955 by new Standard Class Five 4-6-0's. These had 6 feet 2 inches diameter coupled wheels with two outside cylinders, [19 inches diameter by 28 inches stroke]. The boiler working pressure was 225 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 2,008 square feet, [1,479 square feet in the tubes, 171 square feet in the firebox and 358 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 28.7 square feet and the locomotive weighed 76 tons, the tender another 50 tons approximately [depending on the type of Standard tender]. The smaller Standard Class 4 4-6-0's also appeared. These had 5 feet 8 inches diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, [18 inches diameter by 28 inches stroke]. The boiler working pressure was 225 pounds per square inch with a total heating area of 1,702 square feet.

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Southern Region, performance from Bromley South to Chatham

The Class 4 4-6-0 had [1,301 square feet in the boiler tubes, 143 square feet in the firebox and 258 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 26.7 square feet and the locomotive weighed 68 tons, the tender another 45 tons [depending on type]. Although the design was supposedly intended for similar duties to the 2-6-4 Tank's, but over a longer distance such as the Central Wales line, the Southern Region tried them on various major trains, including the Saturday "Thanet [Kentish] Belle". They regularly worked the 17.05 ex Ramsgate and returned on the 21.35 ex Victoria.

The most stimulating locomotive performance occurred over the 23.4 miles between Bromley South and Chatham. There are details of some 70 journeys in the various Magazines and Society Journals of the period.

Four runs timed by Mr. A.J.Baker in the immediate post Nationalisation period, three behind Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35025 afford a view of normal Pacific performance. Loads ranged from 275 to 385 tons, overall times from Bromley South to Chatham from 28 minutes 36 seconds to 30 minutes 1 second, 27¼ to 29 minutes Net. [schedule 32 or 33 minutes, passing times Bickley Junction five minutes, Swanley 11 and Sole Street 21]. Number 34037 made the best time to Sole Street with 275 tons, 18 minutes 22 seconds. Speeds were 35 miles per hour at Bickey Junction, 64 at St. Mary Cray, 60 at Swanley, 77 at Farningham Road and 55 minimum at Sole Street. The Merchant Navy with 325 tons was 26 seconds slower with 36, 66, 58, 78 and 57 miles per hour. Number 34039 with 305 tons reached 66 miles per hour at St. Mary Cray before a PWR slack at Swanley, 75 at Farningham Road, 55 minimum at Sole Street and 84 maximum after Cuxton Road before the Rochester Bridge, the best Net. Number 34035 with 385 tons made the slowest start, Bickley, 6 minutes 2 seconds with an attained speed of only 28 miles per hour, after this with 65, 58, 82 and 56 it passed Sole Street in 20 minutes 6 seconds. [Ref.1]

Mr. C.M.Furst timed West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34101, in April 1952 with eight coaches on the 08.35 ex Victoria. It ran Bromley to Chatham in 28 minutes 16 seconds, 27½ minutes Net with 36, 66, 61, 83 and 61 miles per hour at the five locations and passed Cuxton Road signal Box, 20.0 miles, in 22 minutes 10 seconds. [Ref.2]

C.J.Allen published four logs in 1955, all behind Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066, loads were 320 tons twice and 355 tons twice. Driver Gingell on the first occasion attained 31 miles per hour at Bickley Junction, 69 at St. Mary Cray, passed Swanley at 60 in 9 minutes 51 seconds and Farningham Road at 89. There was a PWR slack to 22 miles per hour, Sole Street was passed at 42, Cuxton Road at 79 and the stop at Chatham effected in 28 minutes 6 seconds. Without the PWR he could have passed Sole Street in 17 minutes and reached Chatham in 25½ minutes. Driver Wing with the same load, slowed to 30 miles per hour for the PWR and reached Chatham, after a signal check, in 31 minutes 37 seconds, 27½ minutes Net, speeds at the five locations were 32, 68, 56, 77 and 34 miles per hour.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance from Bromley to Chatham

Driver George with an extra coach and no checks reached Chatham in 28 minutes 35 seconds with 31, 68, 61, 80 and 52 miles per hour. Driver King, with the same load was actually 3 minutes 20 seconds slower due to signal checks to 26 miles per hour at Fawkham Junction and before Chatham, the Net tie was similar, speeds were 34, 68, 62, 81 and 51 miles per hour. [Ref.3]

Driver Gingell's tour de force with a Pacific on the 08.35 ex Victoria was probably with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34065 and 355 tons, Bromley South to Chatham in 28 minutes 36 seconds, this included a signal check and a signal stop. Gingell, a real enthusiast, loved both the driving and the appreciation accorded his efforts by others, whether his boss at Stewarts Lane or the admirers at the platform end. On this occasion speeds were 33, 71, 64, 88 and 66 miles per hour; he passed Swanley in 9 minutes 36 seconds, Cuxton Road Signal Box in 20 minutes 4 seconds at 82 [the W.T.T. gave 26½ minutes], the time from Bickley to Cuxton Road was 15 minutes 19 seconds. The inevitable signal checks followed. [Ref.4] A.J.Baker recorded a journey behind Driver George when the time from Bickley to Cuxton Road was 15 minutes 51 seconds, a run described many times. Essentially through a bad start, aggravated by crossing from Local to Through line, slipping etc. it took ten minutes to pass Bickley. Driver George apparently so embarrassed by this feeble start was determined to make amends. The results were 70 miles per hour at St. Mary Cray, 63 at Swanley and 90 maximum at Farningham Road. Sole Street was passed at 71 with a minimum before of 66 at Fawkham and Chatham reached in 32½ minutes after two signal checks.

The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's could be hustled along between Bromley and Chatham, particularly with Gingell and No.30768, sometimes referred to as the pride of Stewarts Lane. Gingell, probably not the best driver at Stewarts Lane but definitely the most willing, drove hard and fast regardless of the schedule. He was of a breed, wonderful for enthusiasts, not so good for coal economy, some firemen complained about the added workload, good for passengers who liked punctual arrivals. R.H.N.Harvey [his "Guvnor" at Stewarts Lane] has written of him with considerable admiration and affection.

A.J.Baker recorded a good King Arthur performance in 1951, not with Gingell. Number 30763 with 315 tons ran Bromley South to Chatham in 29 minutes 22 seconds, 28¾ minutes Net. Speeds were 28, 63, 52, 78 and 52 miles per hour, Sole Street was passed in 20 minutes 12 seconds from the start. Gingell some three years later, with No.30768 passed Sole Street in 17 minutes 31 seconds, only 33 seconds slower than his effort with No.34065, although the load was 35 tons less. Speeds at the same spots were 31, 67, 60, 83 and 62 miles per hour, there were signal checks after Sole Street, although Chatham was still reached in 27 minutes 48 seconds. The Net time was two minutes less, the time from Bickley to Sole Street 12 minutes 53 seconds, his time with 34065 12 minutes 13 seconds and Driver George's 12 minutes 32 seconds.

R.I.Nelson published a detailed footplate account of an experience with Gingell and No.30768.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance from Bromley to Chatham

Gingell was on his best behaviour, there was probably an Inspector on the footplate, and limited himself to full Regulator and 25 percent cut off between Swanley and Sole Street. The time from Bromley South to Chatham was 28³/₄ minutes, the maximum 83 miles per hour at Farningham Road and the minimum afterwards 57 at Sole Street. [Ref.5] The full log is interesting as an indication of how a King Arthur could comfortably maintain the schedules. The train was the 11.35 ex Victoria, actual running time from Victoria to Ramsgate 122 minutes 18 seconds with 12 stops, [to Margate 108 minutes 55 seconds with nine stops], schedule running time to Ramsgate 131¹/₂ minutes [117 minutes to Margate], the load ten coaches, 335 tons Tare, 355 tons Gross.

A.J.Baker observed a similar performance with Gingell and another King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30800. The train, one coach lighter 320 tons Tare, passed Bickley Junction in 5 minutes 20 seconds, eight seconds ahead and Sole Street in 19 minutes 25 seconds, two seconds ahead. It passed Rochester Bridge Junction in 25 minutes 49 seconds, two seconds ahead and reached Chatham after a PWR slack in 29 minutes 49 seconds [Ref.6]

Performance beyond Chatham was often of a stopping train nature, although the 08.35 ex Victoria ran non stop from Chatham to Whitstable. C.M.Furst timed King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30801 on the August Bank Holiday of 1951 with 330 tons. There was a long signal stop after Bromley South; it took 11 minutes 34 seconds to pass Bickley Junction, attained 77 miles per hour at Farningham Road, fell to 58 at Sole Street and reached Chatham in 35 minutes 25 seconds. From the restart No.30801 attained 79 miles per hour at Sittingborne, passed MP50, 15.7 miles, in 18 minutes 14 seconds at 64 before signals intervened. Whitstable was ultimately reached in 33 minutes 49 seconds; Rainham to MP50, 11.1 miles was run in 9 minutes 50 seconds.

The Schools Class 4-4-0.s regularly hauled Kent Coast trains but there are few available performance records other than on the Cannon Street "Residentials". There was a period, when with so many Bulleid Pacifics out of service at Ramsgate Depot, the Schools virtually monopolised the Ramsgate rosters, there were complaints about bad timekeeping which perhaps explains the paucity of information. A.J.Baker travelled behind Schools No.30915 with 320 tons. Bickley Junction was passed in 5 minutes 34 seconds from the Bromley start at 28 miles per hour and the time from there to Sole Street was 13 minutes 54 seconds, speeds were 64 miles per hour at St. Mary Cray, 83 at Farningham Road and 65 at Sole Street. The time from Bickley to Cuxton Road Signal Box was 17¹/₄ minutes and Chatham was reached, after a signal check in 29 minutes 7 seconds, 28¹/₄ minutes Net.

The Standard Class 5 4-6-0's introduced on the Kent Coast Services in 1955 were quickly accepted by the footplate crews. Norman Harvey published in 1956 details of 14 journeys [timed by S.A.W.Harvey and himself] made from 28th January to 27th April 1956 [five Down and nine Up] which indicated they were more than capable of maintaining the schedules in force with trains up to 350 tons weight.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance Bromley South to Chatham

Number 73080 with 310 tons on the 15.35 ex Victoria had an overall running time to Herne Bay of 84 minutes 48 seconds, 82 minutes Net, schedule 96 minutes with seven stops. Number 73089 with 350 tons ran to Ramsgate in 118 minutes 44 seconds running time, 116½ minutes Net, schedule 130 minutes. Driver Langridge, on the 21st April had No.73087 with 320 tons and ran from Bromley South to Chatham in 28¾ minutes. Speeds were 84 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 50 at Fawkham and 64 at Sole Street. The locomotive driven on the first valve with cut off 25 percent lengthened to 30 percent on the final adverse stretch to Sole Street. Four days later No.73089, with the same load and the redoubtable Gingell passed Swanley almost one and a half minutes quicker, 9 minutes 45 seconds, after attaining 68 miles per hour at St. Mary Cray. Subsequent speeds were 85 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 64 at Sole Street after 63 minimum at Fawkham and 80 at Cuxton Road, passed in 20 minutes 58 seconds. Bickley Junction to Sole Street took 13 minutes 5 seconds, to Cuxton Road 16 minutes 16 seconds, Chatham was reached after a signal check in 28 minutes, 26½ minutes Net.

Some three months earlier, February 4th to be precise, Driver Gingell had Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73080 with 310 tons plus Norman Harvey's encouragement/exhortation. The time to Swanley was 15 seconds less than with No.73087. Speeds were 44 miles per hour at Bickley Junction, 70 at St. Mary Cray, 61 at Swanley, 86 at Farningham Road and on the rise to Sole Street varied in the range 75, 78, 68, 72 and 69. The station was passed in 17 minutes 11 seconds, the time from Bickley Junction 12 minutes 44 seconds, with a signal check afterwards Chatham was still reached in 27 minutes 11 seconds, 25¾ minutes Net. R.A..H.Weight, on the 28th April timed No.73089, with 290 tons, when Cuxton Road was passed in 20 minutes exactly, a similar level of performance.

The years 1955 and 1956 undoubtedly represented the high water mark of post war performance on the Kent Coast, the subsequent electrification works induced a certain lethargy amongst the footplate crews.

The Standard Class 4 4-6-0's were at times, as noted previously used during the final period of steam operation. P.R.Wallis made a series of farewell footplate journeys shortly before the inauguration of electrification. Two of his experiences were with the 15.35 ex Victoria, on the first occasion with No.75069 and ten coaches, 337 tons Tare/ 360 tons Gross, the journey was characterised by the crew's continuous struggle to maintain adequate boiler pressure, it seldom exceeded 200 pounds per square inch, after Birchington it was only 140. Time was lost on the initial stage from Victoria to Bromley South, partly because of a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Shortlands and partly through a laborious climb of the gradient up to Sydenham Hill, boiler pressure fell to 140 pounds per square inch. The Class 4 started well from Bromley, Bickley passed in four and a half minutes before further PWR slacks resulted in a time of 15 minutes 50 seconds to Swanley. Speed 32 miles per hour there, increased to 64 at Farningham Road, fell to 50 at Sole Street and finally touched 72 at Cuxton Road.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance Bromley South to Chatham

The W.T.T. allowed 21 minutes from Swanley pass to Chatham stop, the actual time was 20¼ minutes, the locomotive was driven hard to maintain schedule with this ten-coach train after the slow speed through Swanley. The cylinders may well have been taking too much steam aggravating the boiler pressure problem. Schedules for the successive start to stop stages to Sittingborne, Faversham and Whitstable were 14, 11 and ten minutes, actual performance, 2 minutes 50 seconds lost through a PWR slack on the first, one and a quarter and one minute gained respectively on the next two. Ramsgate was ultimately reached three minutes late, which bearing in mind the steaming problems and the heavy load for a Class 4 confirms the generosity of the schedule.

The other Wallis experience, with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73081 and 360 tons also gave a time from Swanley to Chatham of 20 minutes 25 seconds, the respective speeds were 40, 70, 52 and 78 miles per hour. Overall the run was badly delayed by signal checks and PWR slacks with Birchington, where Wallis alighted reached 19½ minutes late. Wallis in total made four return trips between the Kent Coast and Victoria or Cannon Street, apart from the two already noted the actual arrivals were five to ten minutes late on three occasions, ten to 15 late twice and 23½ late once.

The author had a few experiences in 1957 and 1958, characterised by frequent checks and a general lethargy. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34109 for instance with 320 tons, on the 13.52 from Bromley ran to the next stop at Faversham in 65½ minutes compared with a generous schedule of 61 minutes, in October 1957. Checks consisted of signals to 15 miles per hour after Farningham Road, a slight check before Cuxton Road, a PWR slack to 10 miles per hour before Newington and finally a stop for signals before Faversham. The maximum, at Sittingborne, was only 68 miles per hour. Twelve months later a Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30939, with 295 tons on the 11.35 ex Victoria had an actual running time from Bromley South to Faversham of 70 minutes 17 seconds with stops at Chatham, Gillingham, Sittingborne and Teynham, schedule 67 minutes. There were three PWR slacks and a signal check at Swanley, the maximum at Farningham Road, 71 miles per hour. The commencement of electric trains must have come as a merciful release to regular travellers on the route.

Undoubtedly as has already been suggested, in addition to Driver Gingell's personal crusade to put steam locomotive performance in Kent on the map, performance and punctuality in 1955 and 1956 was reasonable. Reasonable in National terms but arguably better than it had ever been during the life of the former London Chatham and Dover Main Line. The brief flowering was arrested by the commencement of the civil works associated with the forthcoming electrification. Somehow the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's continued to bring out the best in footplate crews whereas loss of time with the Schools Class 4-4-0's was the norm. The 08.35 ex Victoria normally hauled by a Standard Class 5 immediately before the introduction of the electric services was noted consistently on time at Whitstable.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance Bromley to Chatham

The performance of the various inside cylinder 4-4-0 locomotives attracted considerable attention during the 1950's. The favourite summer Saturday trains were the 11.50 Victoria to Dover and the 14.02 Dover to Victoria. The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's were seldom observed on the longer non stop runs but S.A.W.Harvey timed D1 No.31487 on the last 1953 summer Saturday 13.50 ex Victoria, [schedule to Herne Bay non stop 94 minutes, 66.45 miles via the Catford loop]. It arrived a few seconds late; Net time was reckoned at 86 minutes, the load 300 tons. A performance not too far removed from what was expected of the locomotives on the Margate non stop's in the 1920's.

E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31504, on the 31st August 1953 with the normal 275 tons on the 11.50 ex Victoria attained 30 miles per hour on the 1/90 before Bickley. The 11.50 stopped at Swanley and from the restart No.31504 reached 67 miles per hour at Farningham Road, fell to 55 at Sole Street and touched 76 at Cuxton Road. On another occasion a D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31743 ran the initial 18.5 miles to Swanley via the Catford loop in 29¼ minutes [schedule 32 minutes] it reached 52 miles per hour at Nunhead and 32 at Bickley Junction. Speeds Swanley were 66 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 53 at Fawkham, 54 at Sole Street, 9.5 miles, passed in 11 minutes 8 seconds and 73 at Cuxton Road Signal Box, 14 minutes 39 seconds. Full Regulator and 35 percent cut off leaving Swanley, lengthened to 45 percent from Farningham Road to Sole Street, the observer S.A.W.Harvey, the driver Gingell.

Comparison journeys noted include one by Driver Patrick on 2nd June 1956 with E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31504 and 270 tons. Farningham Road passed in 4 minutes 14 seconds from Swanley at 70 miles per hour, Sole Street in 10 minutes 40 seconds and 78 maximum before Chatham. Driver Gingell with a D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31067 and 275 tons improved on these times, by five seconds to Farningham Road, 15 seconds to Sole Street and passed Cuxton Road Signal Box, 13.5 miles from Swanley, at 83 in two seconds under 14 minutes. This probably the best performance achieved by a D1 or an E1 Class 4-4-0 on this train, was beaten on 7th April 1956 by Gingell with an L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31755 and 270 tons. He reached 72 miles per hour at Farningham Road, passed Sole Street in 10 minutes 14 seconds at 60 and Cuxton Road Signal Box in 13 minutes 35 seconds, a gain on schedule to this point of four and a half minutes.

The 11.50 ex Victoria, commencing with the winter timetable of 1956 omitted the Swanley stop. An E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31019 with 275 tons ran from Victoria to Chatham in 47 minutes 32 seconds. Nunhead was passed in ten minutes exactly after a slight signal check at Brixton, there were further checks, a PWR slack before Catford, a signal check after Bromley despite which it was five minutes early past Swanley, 28 minutes 5 seconds. The E1 reached 80 miles per hour at Farningham Road, fell to 56 at Longfield siding, passed Sole Street at 60 and Cuxton Road at 80. The train was 11½ minutes early at Rochester Bridge, 43 minutes 5 seconds from Victoria and after signal checks the Chatham arrival was still nine and a half minutes ahead of schedule, the Net time 42½ minutes. [Ref.7]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Strange locomotives on the Kent Coast

R.H.N.Hardy accompanied Driver Gingell on this day, by this time he had moved away from Stewarts Lane to a new position on the Eastern Region of British Railways and was enjoying a day out with his old friend. He wrote later how Gingell inadvertently dropped the lever into full gear as they passed Farningham Road at 80 miles per hour. He [Hardy] then had to replace the fire that had disappeared up the chimney frantically with all the large lumps of coal he could find. As he noted they still reached 80 miles per hour at Cuxton Road. [Ref.6] The schedule of the 11.50 was certainly generous, for instance Driver Stuckey with D1 No.31145 and the normal train was delayed by PWR slacks at Bickley Junction, Swanley and Fawkham but still arrived at Chatham two minutes early. The maximum at Cuxton Road was only 68 miles per hour yet he gained five minutes between Bickley Junction and Chatham.

Other locomotive types that appeared on the Kent Coast services included Britannia Class 4-6-2's and Thompson B1 Class 4-6-0's, during one short period. The two Britannia's allocated to Stewarts Lane depot usually worked Boat Trains. However in 1953 an incident on the 24th April between Salisbury and Exeter led to the withdrawal from service for axle inspections of all the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's by May 12th and commencement of inspection of the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's by the 18th. To overcome the acute motive power shortage B1 Class 4-6-0's were transferred to the Eastern Section of the Southern Region, by May 17th/18th there were 14 of them in service and at the same time some Britannia's, including No.70020, normally allocated to Longsight.

The Britannia Class 4-6-2 had six feet two inches diameter driving wheels and two outside cylinders, [20 inches diameter by 28 inches stroke]. The boiler working pressure was 250 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 3,151 square feet [2,264 square feet in the boiler tubes, 210 square feet in the firebox and 677 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 42 square feet and the locomotive weighed 94 tons, the tender another 49 tons. The B1 Class 4-6-0 had six feet two inches diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, [20 inches diameter by 26 inches stroke]. The boiler working pressure was 225 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 2,005 square feet [1,493 square feet in the boiler tubes, 168 square feet in the firebox and 344 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 27.9 square feet and the locomotive weighed 71 tons, the tender another 52 tons.

The B1 Class 4-6-0's after transfer to the Southern immediately worked Kent Coast trains including the 08.35 Victoria to Birchington [Kent Coast services were interrupted between January 31st and May 4th due to major flood damage] via Faversham, Canterbury, Ramsgate and Margate. They also regularly hauled the 11.35 Victoria to Ramsgate and the 17.05 return. Opinion as to the effectiveness of the B1's varied. P.R.Wallis reported that drivers, particularly from Stewarts Lane were very lukewarm [perhaps the normal NIMBY reaction] and A.Endersby stated trains hauled by them were invariably late on arrival at Whitstable where they then had difficulty in starting from the Down platform [Driver non-familiarity perhaps].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Maunsell 2-6-0's on the Kent Coast

R.H.N.Hardy said the B1's were faster up the banks than the King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, as free running on the level or downhill with ten-coach trains and lighter on coal and water than either the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's or the King Arthur's. Whatever else they were some 20 years newer than the King Arthur's and based on subsequent experiences with the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's on this route should have been eminently suitable.

The Maunsell 2-6-0's of all types were extensively used on the Kent Coast, particularly on Summer Saturdays. R.H.N.Hardy stated that an N Class 2-6-0 could cope with the weekend Ramsgate trains provided care was applied both to the selection of the locomotive and the driver. The U Class 2-6-0's he considered more difficult to drive to schedule, the coal had to be spread carefully on the fire grate whereas with the N's all that was required was to place the coal inside the fire-hole door, from where it looked after itself. The U1 Class 2-6-0's were not so popular, Hardy preferred to use them for Stewarts Lane Central Section rosters [Relief Newhaven Boat Trains, Lingfield race meeting specials and inter Regional services for instance]. The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's he considered "one of the finest little locomotives ever to run on any Railway". [Ref.9]

Certainly at times the U1 Class 2-6-0's appeared to struggle with heavy trains. Number 31906 for example, with an 11 coach excursion from Tring to Margate left Willesden at 10.32 and Kensington at 10.42. Water was taken at Faversham at 12.18 [a five minutes stop] and Whitstable was passed 30 minutes late, the Margate arrival scheduled for 13.04. The Saturdays only 12.20 Ramsgate to Victoria in 1955 was hauled by U1's on three consecutive weeks and arrived late at Victoria every time, on the 4th Saturday Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73087 appeared. Yet in 1956 the 08.25 Ramsgate to Victoria, Margate to Victoria in 102 minutes including stops at Herne Bay and Whitstable was a U or U1 Class 2-6-0 roster, a suitable place at which to review locomotive performance in the Up direction.

Details of journeys in the Up direction between Chatham and Bromley South with Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's are comparatively rare. The schedules were easy, typically 36 minutes for the 23.4 miles, with 16 minutes allowed to Sole Street, at the top of the long 1/100 adverse gradient.

C.M.Furst timed West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34101 with eight coaches, when after a slack to 18 miles per hour for a PWR speed rose to 38 on the 1/100. Number 34096 with 315 tons on the Sunday 08.15 ex Ramsgate varied between 43 and 36 miles per hour on the 1/100, it accelerated from 36 to 38 on the upper section of the climb. It reached 75 miles per hour at Farningham Road, passed St. Mary Cray in 25¼ minutes and stopped at Bromley South in 30 minutes 52 seconds, 28½ minutes Net. Speeds could be somewhat faster on the downhill sections. Driver Gingell with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066 and 345 tons passed Sole Street at 33 miles per hour and touched 92 at Farningham Road. He was four and a half minutes early past Swanley, 21 minutes 25 seconds from the Chatham start.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on Up Kent Coast trains

He stopped at Bromley in 30 minutes 9 seconds after a signal check, 28 minutes Net, schedule 35 minutes. The ascent to Sole Street could be taken very gently, Driver George for instance passed Cuxton Road in 6 minutes 6 seconds, allowed speed to fall to 25 miles per hour and passed the summit [schedule 16 minutes] one minute 40 seconds to the good.

A.J.Baker a regular traveller on the route quoted four runs in the period 1952 to 1957, 350/360 tons on three and 390 tons on the fourth, average speeds from Cuxton Road to Sole Street were 41, 40, 39 and 34.3 miles per hour. If the EDHP is calculated on 90 percent of these speeds to allow for the easier stretch past Cuxton Road, the figures are 1,270-1,320, 1,240-1,290, 1,200-1,250 and 1,140-1,190, locomotives were 34092, 34102, 34070 and 34091. [Ref.10]. Numbers 34101 and 34096 developed 1,060-1,110 and 1,200-1,250 at Sole Street. These climbs were made by Bulleid light Pacifics in their original condition, the absence of any performance near the full potential of the Class probably reflects footplate crew concerns re the locomotives propensities to slip, particularly on the exposed climb to Sole Street.

The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's mainly replaced by the Standard Class 4-6-0's from 1955 onwards on the weekday trains could maintain schedule. Number 30768, with 370 tons on the 19.45 ex Ramsgate, starting from Chatham, attained 35 miles per hour at Cuxton Road, fell to 30 at Sole Street passed in 14 minutes 29 seconds and reached Bromley South in 33 minutes after a long signal check. The maximum at Farningham Road was 84 miles per hour, the EDHP between Cuxton Road and Sole Street 1,050-1,100.

Day to day performances of the King Arthur Class 4-6-0's appeared variable. C.J.Allen in 1954, returning from Broadstairs, on the 19.45 ex Ramsgate noted a ten minutes late arrival at Victoria, some of the lost time attributable to the locomotive. Number 30795, with a ten coach train on 22nd September 1956 ran from Faversham to Bromley South in 54 minutes 5 seconds, schedule 63 minutes. The same locomotive in 1958, shortly before electrification, with the Saturday "Kentish Belle" left Ramsgate three minutes late and with speed in the 70's before Chatham and a competent climb was on time at Sole Street. A PWR slack at St. Mary Cray, followed by signal checks at Penge and West Dulwich resulted in an arrival five minutes late at Victoria. The "Kentish Belle", allowed 2 hours 10 minutes from Ramsgate to Victoria was not tightly timed but the ten Pullman Coaches were heavy. [The afternoon Down train that day was hauled by U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31891].

Schools Class 4-4-0 performance was also variable [how much due to the poor condition of the locomotives and how much through crew lethargy is as ever difficult to assess]. Number 30917 on the 10th July, with ten coaches passed Sole Street at 24 miles per hour and reached 84 at Farningham Road. Driver Gingell with No.30922 and 275 tons passed Sole Street in 12 minutes 42 seconds at 42 miles per hour, attained 84 at Farningham Road passed Swanley in 21 minutes 5 seconds and reached Bromley South in 33 minutes 6 seconds, 30 minutes Net.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Schools Class 4-4-0 Up performance on the Kent Coast P.R.Wallis travelled on the footplate of Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30911 with a light 240 tons train on the 08.22 Ramsgate to Victoria. Speeds were 39 miles per hour at Cuxton Road and 34 at Sole Street; the train was one minute early at Sole Street [schedule from Whitstable 44½ minutes], delays afterwards resulted in Victoria reached 21 minutes late. A personal record gave a similar level of performance, No.30908 on the last Saturday in October 1957 with 290 tons on the 14.58 from Faversham maintained the 63 minutes non stop schedule to Bromley South without exceeding 63 miles per hour, 55 minutes Net. Swanley was passed in 47¾ minutes including a PWR. slack to 16 miles per hour at Newington after 35 at Cuxton Road and 30 at Sole Street.

Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30937, with Driver Gingell and the light train developed 1,090-1,140EDHP at Sole Street. Driver Deacon demonstrated what a School's could do on a final steam fling on the 12th June 1959. Number 30938 with 350 tons attained 48 miles per hour at Cuxton Road and fell away to 41 at Sole Street, passed in 11 minutes 29 seconds from the Chatham start. The maximum at Farningham Road was 83 miles per hour and with signal checks costing three minutes, the stop at Bromley South was made in 30 minutes 39 seconds. The average from Cuxton Road to Sole Street was 44.3 miles per hour, which suggests an EDHP of 1,320-1,370, a fitting performance to mark the end of regular steam haulage on the Kent Coast trains and by a 4-4-0, albeit one larger than many 4-6-0's.

Performances recorded with the Standard Class Five 4-6-0's were if anything more outstanding in the Up direction than those already reviewed in the Down. Norman Harvey as noted detailed runs nine timed in the early months of 1956, all the Net running times were within or well within the schedules. Number 73089 for instance on the 13.10 ex Ramsgate with 310 tons achieved an actual running time of 54¾ minutes, 46½ minutes Net, from Gillingham to Victoria. The same locomotive, some six weeks later, the 25th April, with 260 tons on the 19.45 ex Ramsgate produced an actual running time of 83 minutes 56 seconds from Birchington to Bromley South, 80½ minutes Net, schedule 96 minutes.

C.J.Allen visited Broadstairs one Saturday afternoon in January 1956 for a meeting and returned to London on the 19.45 ex Ramsgate, 19.52 from Broadstairs. As he said at the time "all stations to Faversham and it was not until after Sittingborne that I awoke to the fact that the running was becoming distinctly lively". From the Chatham start speed fell from 42 miles per hour on the easier stretch past Cuxton Road to 39 at Sole Street. There was then a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour which was followed by 85 at Farningham Road, Swanley passed in 22 minutes 31 seconds, after which signals checks led to a time to Bromley South of 35 minutes 17 seconds. The locomotive was Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73089 with seven coaches plus two vans, 275 tons Gross. Driver Hicknott on the 14th April, with No.73086 and 260 tons on the 19.45 reached 40 miles per hour at Sole Street and 90 at Farningham Road, passed in 17 minutes 5 seconds from Chatham. Norman Harvey was at pains to emphasise Hicknott was unaware he was being timed.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Standard Class 5 4-6-0 Up performance on the Kent Coast

Driver Gingell produced some notable power outputs with the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's. The 19.45 ex Ramsgate on the 9th July made up to 375 tons with No.73083 ran from Birchington to Chatham in a running time of 59 minutes 14 seconds, including a PWR slack before Teynham and a signal check before Gillingham, schedule 61 minutes with seven stops. Maxima were; 70 miles per hour before Herne Bay, 64 before Faversham and 70 at Rainham. Sole Street was passed in 12½ minutes from the Chatham start and after 82 miles per hour at Farningham Road, Swanley in 21 minutes 5 seconds and St. Mary Cray in 23 minutes 25 seconds at 78. Boiler pressure at the commencement of the climb to Sole Street was around 210 pounds per square inch, Regulator full open, the cut off initially 35 to 41 percent lengthened later to 45 to 50 percent. Steam chest pressure at Cuxton Road was 200 pounds per square inch falling to 180 at Sole Street. [Ref.11] Some four months previous Gingell with No.73089 and 310 tons passed Cuxton Road signal box in 5 minutes 25 seconds and with the controls challengingly set at full Regulator and 47 percent cut off sustained 48 miles per hour on the 1/100. Another Gingell effort timed by both Norman Harvey and B.I.Natham, involved No.73086 with 360 tons. The time to Cuxton Road was 5 minutes 49 seconds where speed was 44 miles per hour; it then rose further to 48 before falling to 42 at the summit, the average from Cuxton Road to Sole Street, passed in 10 minutes 59 seconds, was 46. Subsequent progress was lively, 94 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 70 at Swanley and 78 at St. Mary Cray, Bickley Junction was passed in 22 minutes 40 seconds and Bromley South reached in 26 minutes 37 seconds after a signal check.

The 19.45 ex Ramsgate at times loaded lightly, on the 27th April only 165 tons. Driver Gingell with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73087 averaged 51½ miles per hour between Cuxton Road and Sole Street with an attained 60 on the 1/100. The reward for this enterprise was a five minutes stop for signals at Fawkham. Gingell presumably remembering the adage that you cannot keep a good man down then reached 80 miles per hour at Farningham Road, fell to 73 at Swanley and attained 82 at St. Mary Cray. The time from Chatham to Bromley South, including the five minutes stop was three seconds less than 34 minutes, probably 24 minutes Net.

Normal day to day running did not aspire to such lofty heights; the timetable did not require it. A.J.Baker and H.Maybank travelled behind Standard Class 5 4-6-0's Nos.73085 and 73086 with 395 and 350 tons, Drivers were Messrs Metters and Wing, times to Sole Street from the Chatham start were 16 minutes 41 seconds and 14 minutes 21 seconds, speeds at the summit 26 and 28 miles per hour, maxima at Farningham Road 80 and 84 miles per hour. On the first occasion Bromley South was reached in 33 minutes 32 seconds, on the second the time to Farningham Road was 20 minutes 56 seconds before signal delays. Number 73081 with nine coaches, shortly before electrification [on a 83 minutes non stop schedule Whitstable to Victoria] was eight and a half minutes early at St. Mary Cray. It passed Sole Street at 46 miles per hour, attained 80 several times and ultimately reached Victoria 30 seconds ahead of schedule following a string of signal checks.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Standard 5 Class 4-6-0 power outputs on Sole Street Bank

The EDHP developed by the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's over the four miles between Cuxton Road and Sole Street are illuminating: Numbers 73089 and 73086, with 275 and 260 tons on the 19.45 ex Ramsgate developed 1,100-1,1150 and 1,090-1,1140 - No.73087 when it attained 60 miles per hour on the 1/100, 1,270-1,320 - No.73083 with 375 tons 1,440-1,490 - 73088 when travelling at 54 miles per hour on the 1/100, 1,450-1,500 - Nos.73089 and 73086 with 310 and 360 tons 1,490-1,540 and 1,480-1,530. The use of EDHP as a criterion of power output will always favour locomotives hauling heavy trains since it includes no allowance for the energy involved in moving the locomotive, merely a value for the work done against gravity i.e. climbing the gradient. It is likely that in absolute power terms [IHP] the highest outputs were by No.73085 with 240 tons and No.73089 with 310 tons.

Standard Class 4 4-6-0's, as noted already, occasionally hauled Kent Coast trains, the Maunsell 2-6-0's particularly on Summer Saturdays regularly. As an indication of how essential they were, on August 4th 1951, 38 steam hauled trains observed at Farningham Road featured seven West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's, seven King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, six Schools Class 4-4-0's, four two cylinder 4-4-0's and 12 2-6-0's.

Driver Gingell in 1956 with N Class 2-6-0 No.31843 and 370 tons lost two and a half minutes from Sittingborne to Gillingham [schedule 13 minutes and kept the time from there to Chatham [schedule four minutes]. After the Chatham restart the N attained 32 miles per hour at Cuxton Road, fell to 30 at Sole Street, reached 68 at Fawkham before a PWR slack and 63 at St. Mary Cray. The EDHP between Cuxton Road and Sole Street was 1,000-1,050.

Two journeys behind Maunsell 2-6-0's shortly before electrification probably represent their day to day performance. U1 Class three cylinder 2-6-0 No.31900 with 325 tons lost 55 seconds on an 83 minutes non stop schedule from Margate to Bromley South. It passed Faversham in 27 minutes 40 seconds [schedule 29 minutes] after 64 miles per hour maximum before Herne Bay, lost time between Faversham and Chatham and ran from there to Bromley South in 32½ minutes. Speeds were 34 miles per hour at Cuxton Road, 30 at Sole Street, 69 at Farningham Road and 68 at St. Mary Cray. An N Class 2-6-0 No.31411 with 350 tons ran from Margate to Whitstable in 24¼ minutes including a PWR slack. From the restart to Bromley South [schedule 76 minutes] it lost five and a half minutes. There was a PWR slack before Sittingborne, a signal check at Chatham and another after Sole Street passed at 23 miles per hour. The UI developed an EDHP of 900-950 at Sole Street, the N some 200 less.

The performances of the inside cylinder 4-4-0's, as in the Down direction attracted attention, as noted a particular favourite being the 14.02 Dover to Victoria. S.A.W.Harvey first sampled this in 1955, inevitably with Driver Gingell, an E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31504 with 280 tons. The running time for the initial start to stop stages from Faversham to Teynham, to Sittingborne, to Gillingham and to Chatham was 30 minutes 27 seconds for the 17.7 miles.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Inside Cylinder 4-4-0 Up performance on the Kent Coast
Swanley was passed in 24 minutes 5 seconds from Chatham with 29 miles per hour at Sole Street, 76 at Farningham Road and 58 through the station. Bromley South was reached in 35 minutes 3 seconds after a PWR slack and a signal check, 31½ minutes Net. The continuation from Bromley South to Victoria took 17¾ minutes. Subsequently three further journeys involved D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31145, driven by Langridge, E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31067 and D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31749. Speeds at Sole Street were 30, 22 and 32 miles per hour, Nos.31067 and 31145 attained 77 and 79 at Farningham Road, No.31067 reached Bromley South in 37 minutes 25 seconds after signal checks. Number 31749 made the best climb, Rochester Bridge passed in 3 minutes 6 seconds and the 6.1 miles from there to Sole Street run in 10 minutes exactly. Matters were taken very gently after that, Bromley South reached in 33 minutes 55 seconds, 32 minutes Net.

The following year, 7th April 1956, D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31247 with the normal 275 tons load attained 34 miles per hour at Cuxton Road, accelerated to 38 on the easier stretch and passed Sole Street at 34. The maximum at Farningham Road was 79 miles per hour, the time to Bromley South after various checks 37 minutes 14 seconds, 32 minutes Net.

The likely ultimate performance for a D1 or E1 Class 4-4-0 was achieved on the 22nd September by Driver Gingell with R.H.N.Hardy in attendance. The 13 minutes schedule from Sittingborne to Gillingham was kept with 38 seconds to spare [No.31247 earlier in the year lost 52 seconds on this stage] with 67 miles per hour at Rainham. The Gillingham to Chatham section took three and three quarter minutes, the continuation to Bromley South 33 minutes 57 seconds including a stop for signals before Swanley lasting five minutes. The time to Sole Street was 11 minutes 50 seconds where speed was 44 miles per hour and the maximum afterwards 86 or 87 at Farningham Road. The final stage to Victoria was run in 18¾ minutes with various out of course checks, before that Sydenham Hill, 5.15 miles was passed at 54 miles per hour in 6 minutes 49 seconds from the Bromley start. [Ref.12]

The L1 Class 4-4-0's hauled the 14.02 ex Dover in 1957 and 1958 and produced some excellent performances. Number 31788, driven by George, passed Sole Street at 22 miles per hour and reached 68 at Farningham Road. Number 31755 passed Sole Street in 12 minutes 47 seconds at 33 miles per hour and Swanley in 22 minutes 29 seconds, after a maximum of 75 at Farningham Road, following delays it reached Bromley South in 32 minutes 52 seconds, 30 to 31 minutes Net. Number 31789 with the normal load, was 20 seconds slower to Sole Street, it fell to 32 miles per hour on the 1/100 before accelerating to 33, then passed Farningham Road in 20 minutes 18 seconds at 72 miles per hour and with signal checks reached Bromley South in 33 minutes 53 seconds, 31½ minutes Net. The best performance was with No.31788 and Driver Patrick. He passed Sole Street in 11 minutes 55 seconds at 42 miles per hour and Swanley in 21¾ minutes after a maximum of 75 at Farningham Road. There was then a PWR slack and a signal check, Bromley was reached in 32 minutes 55 seconds, 30 minutes Net.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, inside cylinder 4-4-0 power output on Sole Street Bank

The EDHP developed by the inside cylinder 4-4-0's in ascending order at Sole Street was; E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31067 - 570-620, L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31788 - 640-690, E1 No.31504 - 740-790, D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31749 - 825-875, L1 No.31755 - 860-910, L1 No.31789, 860-910, D1 No.31145 - 870-920, L1 No.31788 - 1,090-1,140, D1 No.31145 - 1,110-1,160. The Rochester Bridge to Sole Street time on the last two runs in each case was 8 minutes 50 seconds. R.H.N.Hardy wrote of No.31145's performance in eulogistic terms "perhaps the finest work ever from these amazing little locomotives" and "one of the finest little locomotives ever to run on any Railway" [Ref.13]

The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's were used extensively on scheduled excursions. E1 No.31067 on the 31st July with 290 tons on the 19.40 return from Sheerness attained 27 miles per hour at Cuxton Road and fell to 22 at Sole Street. This level of performance recovered two minutes of a late start between Chatham and Swanley before signal checks delayed it further, actual time to the stop at Bromley was 37 minutes 25 seconds, 34½ minutes Net.

The previous year, 1954, the 10.50 Victoria to Sheerness and the 19.40 return were diagrammed for a Q Class 0-6-0. Number 30537, on the 29th August reached 68 miles per hour after Sole Street in the Down direction and in the Up, with the usual 290 tons passed Cuxton Road at 26 miles per hour and Sole Street at 24, 600-650EDHP. [Ref.14]

The use of 0-6-0's on passenger services was not limited to excursions, C.J.Allen when he travelled to Broadstairs in 1954 was taken to Faversham punctually on the 14.35 ex Victoria by a West Country 4-6-2, which continued to Dover with the main train. The Ramsgate portion made up to eight coaches had a C Class 0-6-0 which lost eight minutes to Broadstairs. A different experience came the way of P.R.Wallis some four years later, when the King Arthur Class 4-6-0 continued to Dover and an L Class 4-4-0 had nine coaches to Ramsgate and despite being described as in poor condition attained 69 miles per hour after the Herne Bay stop. The L's continued on Main line duties until the demise of steam, on the 30th August 1958 the Saturday 15.06 all Pullman "Kentish Belle" was entrusted to No.31766, built at Ashford in 1914.

Although the Kent Coast route and the former South Eastern Main Line are being considered separately there was considerable inter working between the two routes. There were in addition to the depot rosters involving both routes such as Ramsgate duty No.470 in 1952, the Saturday "Rounders". Battersea depot in 1950 for instance had four duties, the 07.45, 08.35, 09.50 and 11.50 Victoria to Ramsgate via Chatham, which continued as the 12.20, 13.00, 14.16 and 15.48 Ramsgate to Charing Cross via Deal. The locomotives usually were N15 King Arthur Class 4-6-0's. Bricklayers Arms had six similar duties, the 08.15, 09.05, 10.15, 11.04, 11.55 and 12.34 Charing Cross to Deal continued from there to Ramsgate where with the same locomotive at the head they formed the 13.30, 14.15, 15.15, 15.43, 16.58 and 18.35 to Victoria via Chatham. Bricklayers Arms usually allocated Schools Class 4-4-0's to these duties.

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Southern Region, locomotive variety on the Kent Coast

Ramsgate Duty No.470 consisted of; 07.20 to Cannon Street - 11.15 Charing Cross to Ramsgate via Tonbridge and Deal - 17.05 Ramsgate to Victoria ["Kentish Belle"] -21.35 Victoria to Ramsgate - a daily mileage of 350 to 360.

The Kent Coast electrification stage 1 was initiated as a complete scheme on 15TH June 1959 with some steam hauled trains remaining, particularly to Dover. The last regular steam hauled Victoria to Dover Boat train ran on March 25th 1961, with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34077 and arrived at Dover three quarters of a minute early despite five out of course checks en route, three PWR slacks and two signal checks.

Steam locomotive performance on the Chatham route during the British Railway's regime was a veritable curate's egg; it had probably been the same since the first days of the East Kent Railway some hundred years previous. There were outstanding locomotive performances, a D1 Class 4-4-0 arguably developed the highest horse power ever recorded for the Class, some 50 years after it was originally built and 34 years after it was rebuilt. Similarly Standard Class 5 4-6-0's developed the highest horsepower noted for a 4-6-0 on the Southern Railway [and Southern Region], higher than the best recorded with a Lord Nelson. These were definitely the pinnacles of locomotive performance, there was much indifferent working. Passengers benefited in 1955 and 56 when punctuality was reasonable, although in terms of speed schedules were not equal to those of the Southern Railway pre War let alone those of the SE&C. Locomotive reliability improved despite the increasing problem of staffing at the depots [growing affluence in the South East did not encourage people to seek employment in dirty locomotive sheds].

On the busiest Summer Saturday almost every available locomotive was diagrammed for service and surprisingly punctuality was reasonable. The variety, as a result of the all hands to the pumps approach, was considerable. During the last Summer of steam operation, 1958, the following Classes were observed at Whitstable from 10.00 to 17.00 on the 26th July, 9th August and 13th September;- Standard Class 5 4-6-0's five off, two off and three off on the three days - Standard Class 4 4-6-0 two on the first Saturday one on the second - Various Maunsell 2-6-0's 28, 25 and 20 - Schools Class 4-4-0's 15, 12 and 14 - D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's four, six and two - L and L1 Class 4-4-0's one and three on the first two Saturdays - Rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country 4-6-2's two, six and three - Unrebuilt 4-6-2's four, two and one - King Arthur Class 4-6-0's six, seven and five.

The rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's began to appear at the very end of steam operation on the Kent Coast. The Standard Class 5 4-6-0's were undoubtedly the best locomotives employed on the route in terms of reliability and power related to size, although one suspects that if the rebuilt West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's had been introduced earlier it might have been different. The nervousness by footplate crews concerning slipping and the maintenance problems at the depots with the Pacific's in their original condition were much ameliorated with the rebuilt locomotives.

Chapter 21: The South Eastern Main Line and the Hastings Branch.

R.H.N.Hardy wrote "without doubt the former South Eastern Main Line via Tonbridge was one of the most difficult and exciting roads I have ever experienced".[Ref.13] Thanks to A.J.Baker, a regular traveller and meticulous recorder over the route there is a very full picture of locomotive performance on the Folkestone Express's. He, for instance travelled 232 times on the 09.15 ex Charing Cross to Ashford from June 1946 to February 1952. The 09.15, was a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 duty after the War, then a Schools Class 4-4-0 until November 1956 and finally a Ramsgate based 4-6-2, all usually with 380 tons Gross. He recorded 119 runs behind with Schools fitted with Lemaitre exhausts and double chimneys, 54 with originals and 59 by King Arthur's, [two only, No.798, 30 times and No.799, 29 times]. The scheduled running time from 1946 between Waterloo and Ashford was 75½ minutes, later reduced by three minutes, split times 31½ minutes to Sevenoaks the first stop, ten minutes to Tonbridge the next and 31 minutes to Ashford.

The two King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, whilst running to the slower schedule, seldom produced a performance of any merit. The average running time for No.798 was 73¾ minutes with a best Net time of 68¾ minutes, figures for No.799 were 75 and 69¾ minutes, respective maxima were 75 and 73 miles per hour. The maximum pre-war line speed, 85 miles per hour was restored for the winter Timetable of 1946. Number 30799 attained 73 miles per hour in 1950 when it ran from Tonbridge to Ashford in 27 minutes 55 seconds.

The best Net running time for a Schools Class 4-4-0 was 63¾ minutes by No.30934. [Baker listed average times to show that the Schools Class 4-4-0's with the multiple blast pipe arrangements performed better. This in practice did not confirm the view being promoted by many that the locomotives with the modified arrangements were definitely more powerful, only that perhaps they were more powerful or maybe driven harder. The author has always believed that the crews misled by the sound of the somewhat muffled exhaust put more steam to the cylinders]. Seventeen Schools' were recorded on the 09.15. The best average performance was by No.30920, five runs, average time 68 minutes 51 seconds, best Net 65½ minutes. The most frequently encountered was No.30934, average 69 minutes 49 seconds. The best single chimney No.30928, noted on 19 occasions, average 70 minutes 24 seconds, best 68 minutes, highest speed 84 miles per hour by No.30931. [Ref.15]

It is interesting to review some of the individual performances over the years. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30938 in 1950 passed Knockholt at a minimum of 42 miles per hour, the maximum before Tonbridge was 78 and ran Tonbridge to Ashford in 26 minutes 11 seconds with 77 maximum. Number 30931 ran from Waterloo to Sevenoaks in 29 minutes 58 seconds, 28 minutes Net, with 57 miles per hour at Orpington and 46 at Knockholt. It reached 81 before Tonbridge and took 28 minutes 28 seconds from there to Ashford.[Ref.15]

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Southern Region, Schools Class 4-4-0's on the 09.15 Down

Some 15 months later Schools Class 4-4-0's Nos.30931, 30920 and 30934 ran from Tonbridge to Ashford in 27 minutes 41 seconds including a signal check, 26 minutes 30 seconds and 27 minutes 17 seconds, maxima were 84, 76 and 74 miles per hour.

R.I.Nelson rode on Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30932 in 1953 with Driver Jakes. Five minutes were lost to Sevenoaks through signal checks, 46 miles per hour at Orpington and 36 at Knockholt with full Regulator and 22 or 26 percent cut off. The maximum before Tonbridge was 86 miles per hour and from the Tonbridge restart Headcorn, 15.7 miles, was passed in 16¼ minutes with 80 before the station. Boiler pressure was 210 pounds per square inch, steam chest 195 pounds per square inch and cut off 24 percent. [At Paddock Wood boiler pressure 220, steam chest 195 and cut off 22%]. Eighty miles per hour on the level with 380 tons by a 4-4-0 was received excitedly at the time. It appears the cylinders may have marginally taken steam in advance of the sustainable boiler evaporation rate. Following a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour after Headcorn, Ashford was reached in 29 minutes 51 seconds. [Ref.16]. Driver Collins in 1954, with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30939 ran to Sevenoaks in 27 minutes 46 seconds including a signal check before New Cross. New Cross to Knockholt took 14 minutes 5 seconds, 1,220-1,270 average EDHP, the minimum at Knockholt was 50 miles per hour after 58 maximum at Orpington. A minute was lost to Tonbridge through signals after 81 miles per hour. He continued to Ashford in one second less than 26 minutes including a slight signal check before the station, maximum on the level at Headcorn was 83 miles per hour. The three Net times were 27, nine and a quarter and 25¼ minutes, average Net speeds 47, 48 and 63 miles per hour, the total Net time of 61½ minutes well inside the fastest non stop timing.

The 09.15 ex Charing Cross was frequently checked leaving London, but five records exist with Schools Class 4-4-0's when Chislehurst to Knockholt [average gradient 1/177] average exceeded 50 miles per hour. Locomotives, [all Lemaitre exhausts and large chimney] dates and average speeds were; 30931, 16th June 1949, 50.9 miles per hour - 30901, 29th December, 50.35 - 30930, 29th June 1950, 51.3 - 30933, 1st May 1953, 52.1 - 30938, 12th November 1953, 50 exactly. Drivers were Messrs Johnson, Jakes, Collins, Melville and King, average EDHP, 1,250-1,300, 1,230-1,280, 1,270-1,320, 1,300-1,350 and 1,225-1,275. [The minima at Knockholt were 46, 49, 47, 48 and 52 miles per hour. It has been suggested that No.30938 developed the highest power output at Knockholt with a performance considerably greater than the other four, the author is not convinced.] [Ref.17]

The ability of the Schools Class 4-4-0's to produce 1,300 EDHP for some minutes i.e. c.46 EDHP per square foot of grate area compares with the inside cylinder 4-4-0's, built or rebuilt under Maunsell's aegis. [Nos.31788 and 31145 climbing to Sole Street developed 48 and 47 EDHP per square foot and the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's, Nos.73089 and 73086, 53 EDHP per square foot]. Locomotive performance on both the former LC&D and South Eastern Main Lines at times reached high levels in the 1950's.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Folkestone 80 minutes non stop's

The 80 minutes pre-war schedules including Waterloo stop from Charing Cross to Folkestone were restored in 1953. A.J.Baker recorded a run in 1949 when the allowance was 85 minutes and Schools Class 4-4-0 No.914 with 11 coaches ran from Waterloo to Folkestone in an actual time of 81 minutes 10 seconds, 76¼ minutes Net. The 16.15 through various out of course checks was four and a quarter minutes late at Tonbridge, schedule 37½ minutes and recovered the lost time without exceeding 72 miles per hour. [Ref.18]

C.J.Allen recorded Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30923 four years later with 350 tons, minima at Elmstead and Knockholt were 28 and 35 miles per hour, maximum after Tonbridge only 64, Folkestone arrival eight and a quarter minutes late, 81½ minutes Net, five minutes attributable to the locomotive.

Another A.J.Baker record shows what could be done. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30919 with 395 tons on the "Man of Kent" ran to Waterloo from Charing Cross in 2 minutes 51 seconds and on to Folkestone in 73¾ minutes including a PWR slack to 47 miles per hour at Headcorn. This required 58 miles per hour at New Cross, 45 at Elmstead, 60 at Orpington and 51 at Knockholt. [New Cross to Knockholt took 13 minutes 48 seconds, 1,300-1,350EDHP]. Speed reached 74 miles per hour at Dunton Green, fell to 59 at Sevenoaks and touched 82 before braking for the Tonbridge curve. The station was passed almost three and a half minutes early, 32 minutes 40 seconds from Waterloo and afterwards speeds were moderate, 77 miles per hour before Headcorn, 68 at Ashford after recovering from the Headcorn check, 58 minimum at Westenhanger and no higher than 64 before the Folkestone. 71¾ minutes Net and with 80 miles per hour running between Tonbridge and Ashford it could have been as low as 71 minutes.

The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's although regularly rostered to the Folkestone non stop's immediately post Nationalisation seldom appeared after the reintroduction of the 80 minutes schedule. Number 30799, with the Down "Man of Kent" on 1ST April 1954, was noted running two minutes late at Dover. Number 30804 on another occasion with 300 tons on the 19.15 ex Charing Cross passed Tonbridge in 36¼ minutes from Waterloo and reached Folkestone in 76¼ minutes.

The Bulleid West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's seldom improved on the best Schools Class 4-4-0 performances. Before the accelerations there was little incentive, a typical run in March 1952 saw the Waterloo to Folkestone stage completed in 80 minutes 10 seconds. In the later 1950's the increase in PWR slacks associated with electrification works seemed to induce a general sense of ennui amongst footplate crews. There were occasions however when fast running occurred. On 2nd July 1954 No.34073 with 355 tons on the "Man of Kent" ran to Folkestone in 79 minutes 27 seconds from Waterloo, including a stop for signals, 69½ minutes Net. This equates to the best Net times noted by A.J.Baker behind 4-6-2's hauling ten coaches. The train finally arrived at Ramsgate 40 seconds late because of a PWR slack before the station.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Inside Cylinder 4-4-0's on the South Eastern Main Line

There were times when the West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's hauled light loads resulting in some surprising speeds uphill. R.A.H.Weight in 1952 noted No.34086 with 245 tons on the 19.15 ex Charing Cross run from Waterloo to Ashford in 63½ minutes including signal checks and a PWR slack. Speed fell only from 60 miles per hour at Orpington to 58 at Knockholt, the maximum later at Headcorn was 79. More typical was a personal experience with the 13.15 ex Charing Cross on 7th June 1958 with 330 tons. Sevenoaks was reached on time, Hildenborough passed in 7 minutes 21 seconds from the restart at 75 miles per hour and Tonbridge after a signal check in 10 minutes 52 seconds. Paddock Wood was passed in 7 minutes 59 seconds at 66 miles per hour from the Tonbridge start and without exceeding 73 the stop at Ashford effected in 28 minutes 23 seconds. It was a normal performance, but a novelty, the first personal experience with a rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2, No.34014.

The opposite end of the spectrum with respect to locomotives and train weights were the summer Saturday trains to the New Romney Branch. The 11.30 ex Charing Cross in 1954 loaded to two four-sets plus one other coach, the 14.15 had one six-coach set, one birdcage set and one or two additional coaches. The 14.15 split at Ashford, the six-set continuing to Folkestone the rest proceeding to New Romney. Both trains were usually entrusted to an L Class 4-4-0 as far as Ashford.

S.A.W.Harvey sampled the 14.15 when L Class 4-4-0 No.31774 had 11 coaches, 358 tons Tare/ 390 tons Gross. The L ran to Ashford in 84 minutes 18 seconds from Charing Cross, 68 minutes Net. There was a signal check before London Bridge, speed then fell to 34 miles per hour at Elmstead before a signal check to 25 at Orpington. With a clear road after Knockholt, the 37.3 miles to Chart Signal Box were run in 37 minutes 7 seconds. It reached 80 miles per hour at Hildenborough, took the curve at Tonbridge at 45, passed Paddock Wood at 70, varied between 68 and 62 afterwards before it fell to 56 on the rise to Chart. There was a stop of three and a half minutes for signals before it was able to enter Ashford station.

The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's regularly hauled the early morning semi-fast from Holborn Viaduct to Ramsgate via Tonbridge and Dover, this was a light train, normally 150 to 200 tons Gross. An E1 No.31504 with 150 tons and Driver Todd ran from Orpington to Sevenoaks in 13 minutes with 34 miles per hour at Knockholt and 70 before Sevenoaks. The maximum before the next stop at Tonbridge was 76 miles per hour. Chart was passed in 25¾ minutes from the restart with 70 miles per hour reached at Paddock Wood before signals delayed the arrival at Ashford. The locomotive was credited with an eight minutes gain on schedule to Folkestone. D1 No.31773 on the same train on 13th March 1960 with four coaches and four vans ran from Tonbridge to Ashford in 32¼ minutes. A year later D1 No.31749 with 180 tons ran from London Bridge to Orpington in 19½ minutes. From Tonbridge, after a maximum of 73 miles per hour, it passed Chart Signal Box in 24 minutes 49 seconds and reached Ashford in 32 minutes 4 seconds after a signal stop.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Standard Classes on the South East Main Line

It is surprising that of the four Down trains diagrammed for steam haulage, apart from Boat Trains, in the winter timetable of 1960 the 07.24 was one of them, still with a D1 Class 4-4-0, particularly as it started from London Bridge not Holborn Viaduct. The other three were: 09.10 Charing Cross to Ramsgate - 18.21 Cannon Street to Ramsgate - 22.50 Charing Cross to Dover.

The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's at times handled heavier trains, particularly relief's. D1 No.31739 on the 15.08 ex Charing Cross with 290 tons, delayed by signal checks initially, passed New Cross at only 30 miles per hour, reached 44, fell to 41 at Elmstead Woods before a PWR slack at Chislehurst reduced it to 10. The recovery was good, 46 miles per hour at Orpington and 43 minimum at Knockholt, if sustained on the 1/120, 1,030-1,080EDHP. After 68 miles per hour at Dunton Green, Sevenoaks the first stop was reached in 35 minutes 27 seconds from Waterloo. Tonbridge to Ashford took one second over the even half-hour with a maximum of 69 miles per hour.

Nationalisation brought London Midland Region 2-6-4 Tank No.42199 to the Ashford area; it was tested from Victoria on 23rd April 1948. A Class W 2-6-4 Tank No.31918 ran between Ashford and Tonbridge in both directions on May 18th. [The W's introduced in 1932 were a Tank version of the N1 Class] Number 31918, with its 5 feet 6 inches diameter coupled wheels, ran from Ashford to Tonbridge in 27 minutes with a six coach train and returned in 55 seconds more. The result not surprisingly, [it was usually employed on cross London freight traffic] was it ran hot. London Midland designed 2-6-4 Tank's were subsequently allocated to the Southern Region in considerable numbers, in 1951 there were 12 weekday duties from Ramsgate, Dover and Ashford depots. The routes included Ramsgate to Maidstone East via Canterbury or Dover and Ashford to Hastings. They had 5 feet 9 inches diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, 19 5/8 inches diameter by 26 inches stroke. Boiler working pressure was 200 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 1,596 square feet [1,223 square feet in the boiler tubes, 143 square feet in the firebox and 230 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 26.7 square feet and the locomotive weighed 88 tons.

Standard Class 5 4-6-0's appeared occasionally on the Folkestone services. .

The Schools Class 4-4-0's, in the Up direction as in the Down could maintain schedule with the heaviest trains. A.J.Baker in 1950 travelling behind No.30916 with 310 tons noted an arrival at Waterloo in 84 minutes 57 seconds from Folkestone. Ashford was passed in 17 minutes 19 seconds at 80 miles per hour and Tonbridge in 41 minutes 25 seconds. There was a PWR slack before Sevenoaks and signal checks before New Cross, 77½ minutes Net. C.J.Allen, six months later published details of two journeys with 345 ton trains and Schools Nos.30913 and 30929. Overall times from Folkestone to Waterloo were 82 minutes 34 seconds and 87 minutes 29 seconds, Net times 80 and 75 minutes. Ashford was passed in 18 minutes 5 seconds on the first occasion and Tonbridge three quarters of a minute early, 42 minutes 19 seconds, after 75 miles per hour maximum before.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Schools performance between Ashford and Tonbridge Number 30913 was on time at Knockholt, 62 minutes 3 seconds, after 33 miles per hour at Sevenoaks Tunnel and 38 at Knockholt. Number 30929 was one minute and three quarters quicker to Paddock Wood with 52 and 75 miles per hour at Sandling and before Paddock Wood. It was stopped for signals for three and a half minutes before Tonbridge and then ran Tonbridge to Knockholt in 17 minutes 50 seconds with minima of 36 and 49 miles per hour at Sevenoaks Tunnel and Knockholt. This easy working represented an average EDHP of 750-800. Number 30929, in July 1954 with 350 tons passed Tonbridge in 41 minutes 5 seconds from Folkestone, following which it was delayed badly and reached London 20 minutes late, 75¾ minutes Net.

Schools Class 4-4-0's for many years hauled the afternoon Margate to Charing Cross via Dover and Redhill, Ashford left at 16.55, the return working of the 09.15 ex Charing Cross. Three runs timed by A.J.Baker and published in 1951 involved No's 30933, 30929 and 30920, with 235, 250 and 325 tons respectively. They passed Paddock Wood in 20 minutes 28 seconds at 83 miles per hour, 22 minutes 7 seconds at 70 [following a PWR slack to 50] and 22 minutes 2 seconds after 76 maximum. Actual start to stop times Ashford to Tonbridge: 30 minutes 12 seconds following a signal stop, 28 minutes 17 seconds and 31¾ minutes after a stop, 26, 26 and 27¾ minutes Net.

Later, if anything performances were even livelier. The writer travelled three times; at the end of April 1956 No.30934 with 210 tons, ran from Ashford to Tonbridge in 30 minutes 14 seconds including a PWR slack to 40 miles per hour at Headcorn and a signal check before Tonbridge. Number 30924 on 7th June 1958 with 295 tons passed Headcorn in 11 minutes 46 seconds at 89 to 90 miles per hour before a distant signal was sighted resulting in a brief easing. The time to Paddock Wood, despite the easing was 20 minutes 17 seconds with speeds in the middle 70's. Tonbridge was reached in 30 minutes 20 seconds after signal stop lasting one and a half minutes. Number 30933 some three months later with 290 tons was driven somewhat circumspectly, there was a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Stapleford, signal checks before Tonbridge, the overall time 35 minutes 51 seconds and the maximum only 65 miles per hour. The Ashford to Tonbridge schedule was 32 minutes.

D.W.Winkworth in his book on the School Class 4-4-0's tabulated A.J.Baker's best runs from Ashford to Tonbridge with the 16.55, i.e. 30926, with 265 tons passed Headcorn in 12 minutes 7 seconds at 82 miles per hour and Paddock Wood in 22½ minutes after a PWR slack - 30919 with 310 tons passed Headcorn in 12 minutes 26 seconds at 82 miles per hour, Paddock Wood in 20 minutes 26 seconds and with only a PWR slack reached Tonbridge in 26½ minutes. In the opposite direction on the 09.15 ex Charing Cross Nos.30926 with 400 tons and 30931 with 390 tons ran the course in 25 minutes 46 seconds and 25 minutes 18 seconds.

The 17.11 from Ashford followed the 16.55 and for many years ran non stop to Waterloo in 65 minutes, [later eased to 66½ minutes when electrification works commenced].

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Southern Region, Schools, Arthur's and Fives on the SE Mail line

Three Schools Class 4-4-0 performances, two timed by A.J.Baker, one by Norman Harvey produced similar results. Number 30916, with 390 tons passed Paddock Wood in 21 minutes 14 seconds after 81 miles per hour maximum, reached 42 following the Tonbridge slack, fell to 36 at Sevenoaks Tunnel, touched 65 at Dunton Green and fell to 52 at Knockholt. Tonbridge to Knockholt took 17 minutes 56 seconds, 840-890EDHP, and with 74 miles per hour after reached Waterloo in 63 minutes 3 seconds, 62¼ minutes with two slight signal checks. Number 30914 with 395 tons passed Paddock Wood in 21 minutes 2 seconds with 82 and 81 miles per hour reached at Headcorn and before Paddock Wood. There was a stop at Tonbridge in 28 minutes 13 seconds and Knockholt was passed in 20 minutes 32 seconds from the restart, with 34 miles per hour leaving Tonbridge, 32 at Sevenoaks Tunnel, 37 by Sevenoaks station, 67 at Dunton Green and 50 at Knockholt. There was a signal check to 35 miles per hour, the maximum afterwards 71, Tonbridge start to Waterloo took 40 minutes 33 seconds, overall 69 minutes 33 seconds from Ashford, 62 minutes Net. At Sevenoaks Tunnel 975-1,025EDHP, the performance between Sevenoaks and Knockholt significantly better than that of No.30916 reflecting the late running. Number 30933 with 395 tons, delayed through a PWR slack and signals after leaving Ashford was eight minutes late at Tonbridge, reduced to four at Hither Green. Speeds were 50 miles per hour after Tonbridge, 37 at Sevenoaks Tunnel, 68 at Dunton Green, 52 at Knockholt, 76 maximum at Hither Green, following which further checks resulted in a five and a half minutes late arrival, 62 minutes Net.

The Schools Class 4-4-0's ran 400 ton trains at 53 to 54 miles per hour average over the 55.3 miles from Ashford to Waterloo.

King Arthur Class 4-6-0 performance seldom shone, two examples are probably typical. Number 30799 in 1950 with only 250 tons and Driver Jakes passed Hither Green in 69¼ minutes [schedule 71 minutes, 85 minutes Folkestone to Charing Cross], before signal checks delayed proceedings. Four years later No.30769 on the 15.48 Saturday Deal to Charing Cross ran Folkestone to Waterloo in 77 minutes 55 seconds, following a late start, with ten ex L&SW coaches, 340 tons Gross. Driver Brewer passed Ashford reached 51 miles per hour at Sandling, 61 at Westenhanger and 79 maximum before Tonbridge. Passing times were Ashford, 16 minutes 13 seconds and Tonbridge 39 minutes 25 seconds. Tonbridge to Knockholt took 19 minutes 2 seconds with 39 miles per hour minima at Sevenoaks Tunnel and Knockholt, with signal checks before Hither Green and London Bridge, 75 minutes Net.

Driver Jakes with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73081 ran well on the 12.40 Margate to Charing Cross albeit with only 260 tons. There were signal checks after the Folkestone start, Ashford was passed two and a half minutes late which with a PWR slack was four minutes at Tonbridge. From there the Class 5 accelerated to 50 miles per hour, maintained 40 on the 1/120, accelerated to 42 in Sevenoaks Tunnel, reached 65 at Dunton Green, fell to 38 at Knockholt and after 82 maximum stopped at Waterloo to time. The Class 5 developed 1,010-1,060EDHP before Sevenoaks Tunnel.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Pacific performance between Folkestone and Waterloo

It is hardly surprising that with schedules maintained comfortably by Class 5 locomotives, West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 performances at times appeared tame, the original 85 minutes Folkestone to Charing Cross was a particularly poor challenge for them.

Four journeys, one timed by E.W.Maybank, three by A.J.Baker, published by C.J.Allen illustrate the point. Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34083 with only 210 tons passed Tonbridge four and a half minutes early without exceeding 77 miles per hour and with two signal checks afterwards stopped at Waterloo in 81 minutes 12 seconds, as per schedule, 72 minutes Net. Number 34056 with 340 tons ran Folkestone to Waterloo in 82 minutes 3 seconds including signal checks before Ashford and New Cross and a PWR slack at Headcorn, the maximum before Tonbridge was 80 miles per hour, from there to Knockholt a gentle 19 minutes 44 seconds. Number 34075 with 345 tons took 81 minutes 4 seconds including a PWR slack, signal checks between Ashford and Tonbridge and between New Cross and Waterloo. Tonbridge to Knockholt took 17 minutes 38 seconds, the maximum before New Cross was 73 miles per hour. The Net time on both these runs with ten-coach trains was 74½ minutes, achieved by very different performances. Number 34077 with 385 tons reached Waterloo in 83 minutes 19 seconds with signal checks before Tonbridge and New Cross, the maximum before Tonbridge was 77 miles per hour, Knockholt was passed 18 minutes 55 seconds later. Numbers 34077 and 34088 developed 790-840EDHP between Tonbridge and Knockholt [Ref.19]

The 80 minutes schedule offered the 4-6-2's more of a challenge. Driver Moody of Ramsgate depot with Battle of Britain Class No.34082 and 340 tons gained one and three quarter minutes between Ashford and Waterloo. He was 80 seconds late at Ashford [17 minutes 51 seconds, as a result of signal checks] and only 25 at Tonbridge, after 80 miles per hour maximum. From there to Knockholt took 16 minutes 32 seconds, 875-925 average EDHP.

Two years later, [by which time the afternoon train stopped at Ashford and left as noted previously at 17.11 with 65 minutes allowed to Waterloo] A.J.Baker recorded three more runs that showed the 4-6-2's punching their weight. West Country No.34098 driven by Card with 350 tons, passed Tonbridge in 24 minutes 54 seconds, [schedule 27 minutes], after 85 miles per hour maximum and reached Waterloo after easy running and a signal check 24 seconds within schedule, 62½ minutes Net. Driver Moore with Battle of Britain No.34080 and 420 tons ran closely to schedule, 27 minutes 6 seconds to Tonbridge, 77 miles per hour maximum and 18 minutes 49 seconds from there to Knockholt. Signal checks approaching London resulted in a one and a half minutes late arrival at Waterloo.

What a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 could do was demonstrated by Driver Card after leaving Ashford ten minutes late with 11 coaches, 395 tons Gross and No.34087. He passed Tonbridge in 24 minutes 36 seconds at a rather adventurous 48 miles per hour after a maximum of 83 before.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Pacific performance between Folkestone and Waterloo Tonbridge to Knockholt was run in a rather surprising 14 minutes 16 seconds, 60 miles per hour after Tonbridge, 47 entering Sevenoaks Tunnel, 73 at Dunton Green and 57 minimum at Knockholt. After 81 miles per hour at Hither Green and signals after London Bridge he reached Waterloo in 55 minutes 3 seconds, 54¼ minutes Net. [1,570-1,620EDHP entering Sevenoaks Tunnel, 1,475-1,525 average Tonbridge to Knockholt. It was unusually, continuously driven vigorously from Tonbridge to Knockholt rather than easing the controls at Sevenoaks, hence the speed at Dunton Green. [Ref.20] This run, published in 1955 set the standard for assessing 4-6-2 performance on the route.

Two performances on the Folkestone Waterloo 76 minutes schedule in 1958 approached Driver Card's. Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34086 with 385 tons took 74 minutes 28 seconds, including PWR slacks between Ashford and Paddock Wood and before New Cross. Ashford was passed in 15 minutes 34 seconds, Tonbridge despite the slack a minute early, in 38 minutes 37 seconds, the maximum was 87 miles per hour, and the Tonbridge to Knockholt time was 16 minutes 37 seconds. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34016 with 400 tons passed Tonbridge in 38 minutes exactly after 84 miles per hour and then ran on to Orpington in another 18 minutes exactly [Card was 87 seconds faster]. The Rebuilt West Country entered Sevenoaks Tunnel at 44 miles per hour, reached 61 at Dunton Green and fell to 51 at Knockholt. Net times on both of these runs were 70 to 71 minutes.

The eased schedules for electrification works [66½ minutes] affected some footplate enthusiasms but not all. Norman Harvey published three runs made in 1959/1960 with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34012 and 34016 and unmodified No.34035, all with 350 tons, actual times from Ashford to Waterloo were 61 minutes 44 seconds, 74 minutes 40 seconds and 68 minutes 26 seconds. Driver Todd with No.34012 passed Tonbridge one and a half minutes early, 25 minutes 35 seconds after 86 miles per hour maximum. The boiler pressure initially 220 pounds per square inch, 195 in the steam chest, dropped to 185 at Paddock Wood, rallied after the Tonbridge slack to 210 and then fell to 160 at Knockholt, [full Regulator and 25 percent cut off]. Speeds were 52 miles per hour entering Sevenoaks Tunnel, [1,400-1,450 EDHP], 68 at Dunton Green and 40 at Knockholt, the time from Tonbridge to Knockholt 14 minutes 50 seconds. He was within two seconds of Driver Card's time to Sevenoaks after a more meticulous observation of the Tonbridge slack before the steaming difficulties took effect.

West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34016 and 34035 made quicker starts, Paddock Wood in 19 minutes 57 seconds and 18 minutes 33 seconds, maxima 88 and 86 miles per hour. Number 34016 after a PWR slack accelerated from 30 to 42 miles per hour on the 1/120 to Sevenoaks Tunnel. There were more checks after London Bridge Number 34035 passed Paddock Wood at 82 miles per hour, was then checked to walking pace and with steady running afterwards passed London Bridge a quarter of a minute early, 63 minutes 17 seconds, before a signal check led to a two minutes late arrival at Waterloo.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Pacific performance between Folkestone and Waterloo

A.F.Mercer observed rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34014 in 1959 with 350 tons approach Driver Card's standard. It left Ashford 11½ minutes late [schedule 66½ minutes to Waterloo] the only check an initial PWR slack. It reached 87 miles per hour before Tonbridge, passed in 24 minutes 21 seconds, took 14 minutes 49 seconds from there to Knockholt, [average 1,025-1,075EDHP], with 44 at Sevenoaks Tunnel, [1,330-1,380EDHP], 70 at Dunton Green and 55 minimum at Knockholt. A.J.Baker noted unmodified West Country, No.34036 with 375 tons keep time exactly [including PWR slack to 30 miles per hour at Marden, another to 20 plus two signal checks after Knockholt] with 85 miles per hour maximum before Paddock Wood and 15 minutes 50 seconds Tonbridge to Knockholt. Ashford to Waterloo Net times were 56¼ and 57½ minutes. [Ref.21]

Three records at the end of steam on the 17.10 from Ashford with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's and 350, 360 and 360 tons gave actual times to Waterloo of 75 minutes 34 seconds, 69 minutes 58 seconds and 64 minutes 38 seconds, 62¼, 64½ and 63 minutes Net respectively, a performance level redolent of a decade previous, not five years before. [Ref.22]. The 4-6-2's, whether rebuilt or not had ten to fifteen percent in hand on the Folkestone/Ashford/ Waterloo schedules, the Schools Class 4-4-0's five to seven and a half percent, passengers were not served as well as these figures might imply. J.M.Harcourt-Webster a regular traveller on the 12.40 ex Margate, 14.14 from Folkestone noted he had never arrived at Charing Cross, to time; motive power was usually a Bricklayers Arms based Schools. H.W. who often travelled on a Friday, observed that adding the three coaches to the seven coaches from Margate at Folkestone inevitably led to a late departure. Some three years later the late running of the Folkestone expresses was blamed on slow and parcels trains routed in front of them.

Maunsell 2-6-0's appeared less on scheduled South Eastern Main Line passenger trains than on the ex LC&D route. A U1 Class 2-6-0 often hauled the Summer Saturday 14.28 New Romney to Charing Cross via Maidstone East. Number 31909 in 1956 with nine coaches was noted running the 6.4 miles downhill from Lenham to Bearstead in 6 minutes 6 seconds with a maximum of 69 miles per hour.

The 2-6-0's regularly hauled excursions emanating from both North and South of the Thames to the various resorts. Some examples include U1 Class No.31907 in 1950 nominally booked non stop from Kensington to Ramsgate via Maidstone, Ashford and Canterbury West with 350 tons. In practice it stopped at Maidstone to take water. U1 No.31905 on the 14th May with 330 tons ran from Kensington to Hastings via Maidstone East, Ashford and Rye. On the return it had an H Class 0-4-4 Tank, as assistance, up the 1/60 from Hastings to Ore. Number.31900 on 7th June 1952 and again two years later had a Hither Green to Margate excursion routed via Ashford and back via the Chatham route. There were nine extra trains from Dover and Folkestone to London, over the Easter period in 1952, including one booked non stop from Ashford to London via Maidstone East hauled by a U1.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, D1's and E1's on the South East Main Line

The inside cylinder 4-4-0's appeared regularly on the South Eastern Main Line, often with the 18.14 Sunday Folkestone Charing Cross. D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31739 with 325 tons gained one minute Tonbridge to the next stop at Sevenoaks [schedule 15 minutes]. It reached 39 miles per hour on the initial easy stretch and fell to 31 at the entrance to Sevenoaks Tunnel; the actual time over the 7.4 miles was 13 minutes 52 seconds. From the restart it attained 45 miles per hour at Dunton Green, fell to 39 at Knockholt, passed in 9 minutes 19 seconds and after 70 maximum at Hither Green was through New Cross in 20 minutes 18 seconds. It reached London Bridge after a slight check in 25 minutes 18 seconds [schedule 30 minutes]. On another occasion No.31735 with 350 tons lost two and a quarter minutes to Sevenoaks with speed falling to 28 miles per hour at Sevenoaks Tunnel. The restart was better, 44 miles per hour at Dunton Green and 37 minimum at Knockholt passed in a time 13 seconds slower than No.31739; London Bridge was reached in 29 minutes 9 seconds after a PWR slack to 30 and 65 maximum.

The D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's continued in passenger revenue service until the South Eastern Main Line was electrified. The last Cranbrook school special, before the closure of the Hawkhurst branch, concurrent with inauguration of full electric services, six coaches plus a van had D No.31749.

The driver of E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31507 on the 19.24 Ramsgate to Holborn Viaduct on the 2nd June 1961 indulged in some farewell to steam exploits. The load as normal was a featherweight formation, 110 tons on this particular night. The 4.0 uphill miles from Charing to Lenham were run in 6¼ minutes with speed reaching 57 miles per hour, [the average gradient between the two stations is 1/296, with over half a mile of 1/198 after Charing and almost one mile at 1/100 immediately before Lenham]. Later 44 miles per hour was maintained up the gradients before Wrotham. [1/100, 1/101½ and 1/132], the maximum on the Otford to Swanley sector was 68 before Eynsford and St. Mary Cray, 2.6 miles, was passed in 3 minutes 58 seconds from the Swanley start. A good time was undoubtedly had by one and all.

Although there were comparatively few weekday trains over the South Eastern Main Line, the frequency increased considerably on Summer Saturdays. There were 200 trains scheduled to stop, pass through or depart from Ashford station in August 1954 commencing with the 05.32 on the Saturday through to 02.07 on Sunday. The basic weekday Down service of nine trains was increased to 23 including two to New Romney. These two accepted, they were all rostered for Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 or Schools Class 4-4-0 haulage. On one Saturday the New Romney trains were brought into Ashford by L Class 4-4-0's Nos.31764 and 31778 with N Class 2-6-0 No.31862 taking the six coaches portion, departure 14.15 forward to Folkestone. The 13.37 Charing Cross to Deal had Schools No.30911 and the 15.15 to Ramsgate Battle of Britain No.34077 with a ten-coach set. The 08.44 that morning left behind L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31754, so much for the best laid plans of mice and men. Eighteen different Classes of locomotive were seen at Ashford that particular Saturday.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Hastings Branch

The local passenger services were worked by a variety of locomotives, the three mid afternoon departures to Maidstone consisting of five, six and three coaches featured an H Class 0-4-4 Tank, a Q Class 0-6-0 and an LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank. The 14.34 and 15.36 ex Maidstone, each consisting of three coaches, arrived behind an L Class 4-4-0 and a 2-6-4 Tank. The same L left on the 16.18 local to Tonbridge with E Class 4-4-0 No.31166 on the 18.40, three coaches and three coaches plus two vans respectively. Eleven coaches on the Charing Cross to New Romney train, three on the Ashford to Tonbridge Local, a day in the life of a 40 year old Wainwright/Surtees 4-4-0.

The Hastings Branch

The Hastings service in the decade of British Railways steam operation, before the introduction of Diesel Multiple Units reflected closely the Southern Railway regime of the early 1930's. The Schools Class 4-4-0's remained very much in charge of the passenger trains to and from London. A run timed by Norman Harvey on the 09.25 ex Charing Cross in July 1948 represented a level of performance above the norm and timetable demands. Schools No.30939, with 11 coaches, 375 tons Gross attained 61 miles per hour at New Cross, fell to 49 at Elmstead and passed Orpington in 14 minutes 57 seconds from the London Bridge start at 64. Not surprisingly, this led to a signal stop at Knockholt, Sevenoaks was reached one and a half minutes early [schedule 29 minutes]. Eighty miles per hour was attained before the next stop at Tonbridge and 36 maintained up the 1/95 before Tunbridge Wells Central [1,300-1,350 EDHP between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and at least 1,250-1,300 at Orpington].

Punctuality on the Hastings line was good; St. Leonards depot for instance in 1949 had the best figure on the Southern Region, slightly better than Exmouth Junction and far ahead of any other in the South East. The loss of time was assessed at 2.01 minutes per 1,000 miles travelled.

Although the Schools Class 4-4-0's hauled many trains the L and L1 Class 4-4-0's still appeared regularly. Norman Harvey observed L1 No.31788, with 245 tons in June 1949. It reached 54 miles per hour at New Cross from the London Bridge start and fell to only 45 at Elmstead Woods before signal checks between Chislehurst and Knockholt. The locomotive maintained schedule until the checks and with 68 miles per hour at Dunton Green was six minutes late at Sevenoaks, passed in 35 minutes 55 seconds at 50 miles per hour. It reached 77 miles per hour before the Tonbridge slack, a maximum of 41 after and stopped at Tunbridge Wells in 53 minutes 35 seconds, three and a half minutes late, 47 minutes Net. The three and a half minutes late start from Tunbridge Wells was all regained by Battle passed at 48 miles per hour. Intervening speeds were 48 miles per hour at Wadhurst, 76 maximum at Etchingham, 72 at Robertsbridge, 50 minimum afterwards and a final maximum of 65. The final time to West St. Leonards, after a signal stop, was 35½ minutes, a gain on schedule from Tunbridge Wells of one and a half minutes, 33 minutes Net. [Ref.26]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, inside cylinder 4-4-0's on the Hastings Branch

The closure of Bopeep Tunnel from the end of November 1949 to early June 1950 severely disorganised the Hastings Service. All London trains ran to or from Bexhill West, the normally underused large branch Terminus became a vibrant over occupied station. Two morning Business trains, the normal 06.58 and 07.27 ex Hastings started from West St. Leonards at 07.04 and 07.30.

The 18.35 Up Excursion, on Sunday 18th June, two weeks after the reopening of Bopeep tunnel, with L Class 4-4-0 No.31764 and 300 tons ran Crowhurst to Tunbridge Wells in 30½ minutes [schedule 32 minutes]. It passed Battle in 4 minutes 57 seconds at 52 miles per hour, increased to 66 afterwards before a signal check caused a reduction to 50. The 6.0 miles from Battle to Robertsbridge took exactly six minutes with 70 miles per hour at the latter. Subsequent speeds were 65 miles per hour at Etchingham, 31 at Wadhurst, passed in 24 minutes 17 seconds and 53 at Frant. [Ref.27] The 11.10 ex Hastings, part of St. Leonards duty No.400, [previously the preserve of the two Superheated E Class 4-4-0's], still on occasions in 1953 had an L Class 4-4-0 and included: 15.25 Charing Cross to Wadhurst - 16.56 Wadhurst to Tonbridge, locomotive tender first - 20.44 Tonbridge to Hastings.

A year later, July 25th, R.A.H.Weight encountered L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31756 with 275 tons on the 16.20 Charing Cross to Hastings. The Orpington to Tunbridge Wells, the next stop, schedule was kept with a minute to spare. Speeds were 32 miles per hour at Knockholt, 73 at Dunton Green, 69 at Hildenborough and 31 before Tunbridge Wells. From the restart Wadhurst was passed in 9 minutes 37 seconds at 38 miles per hour and with a maximum of 73 at Etchingham, the Robertbridge stop effected 50 seconds early, [schedule 21 minutes]. One minute and a half was dropped on to Battle [schedule nine minutes], with 32 miles per hour attained on the 1/100. The four minutes schedule from there to Crowhurst was kept.

The cascade effect, as locomotives are withdrawn from service larger ones replace them on secondary duties, normally in 1957 produced a Schools Class 4-4-0 on the 15.35 Charing Cross to Wadhurst. Number 30925 with 260 tons after a check to 15 miles per hour at Grove Park for a PWR slack accelerated to 56 at Orpington, fell to 50 at Knockholt and with 78 at Dunton Green reached Sevenoaks on time. The train, reduced to three coaches at Tonbridge, was then taken to High Brooms, the next stop in 6 minutes 20 seconds, schedule eight minutes, after attaining 47 miles per hour.

Schedules between Tunbridge Wells and Crowhurst could be cut significantly. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30924 with 300 tons on the Saturday 15.35 ex Charing Cross ran the distance in 28 minutes 9 seconds, schedule 34 minutes. It passed Wadhurst in 9 minutes 10 seconds, Etchingham at 76 miles per hour and Battle in 24 minutes 55 seconds at 55. Driver Cummmings in October 1955 with 30934 and 310 tons passed Wadhurst in the same time, was six seconds ahead at Battle and stopped at Crowhurst in 27¾ minutes. The locomotive was driven with full Regulator and 30 percent cut off to Frant, the first valve from there to Battle.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, End of steam on the Hastings Branch

B.I.Nathan recorded No.30926 with 310 tons. Driver Baldock passed Wadhurst in 8 minutes 34 seconds at 43 miles per hour, Etchingam in 16 minutes 14 seconds at 79, Battle in 23 minutes 54 seconds at 47 [four minutes early] and reached Crowhurst in 27 minutes 2 seconds.

A footplate record by R.I.Nelson on the 19.10 ex Hastings with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30906 and 275 tons furnishes details of the locomotive working required to maintain schedule in the Up direction. The initial stages to Warrior Square and West St. Leonards were run to schedule, 72 seconds was lost to Crowhurst [schedule six minutes] despite full Regulator and 32 percent cut off, with 34 miles per hour attained. The 11 minutes to the next stop Robertsbridge was kept, to be pedantic six seconds were lost, first valve with 30 percent cut off, maximum 68 miles per hour. The 23 minutes from there to Tunbridge Wells was kept with nine seconds to spare, including a PWR slack to 25 miles per hour after Etchingam, 52 miles per hour before the check with full Regulator and 30 percent cut off. Nine and a quarter minutes were lost from Tunbridge Wells to Sevenoaks the next stop, schedule 22 minutes, through persistent signal checks. Two minutes 23 seconds was recovered from Sevenoaks to London Bridge, schedule 33 minutes, Knockholt passed in 8 minutes 4 seconds at 46 miles per hour from the start after 51 at Dunton Green, full Regulator and 30 percent cut off.

A somewhat quicker run between Tonbridge and London Bridge was timed by F.S.Bond, the extra ingredient a second Schools Class 4-4-0. Numbers 30924 and 30908, with 310 tons, passed Sevenoaks in ten and a half minutes from Tonbridge, schedule 15 minutes with 53 miles per hour leaving Tonbridge, 47 entering Sevenoaks Tunnel, 53 in the tunnel and 67 at Dunton Green and 60 minimum at Knockholt. After 76 miles per hour maximum New Cross, 24.7 miles, was passed in 26 minutes 48 seconds, schedule 36 minutes and Waterloo reached after a signal check, in 35 minutes 4 seconds, ten minutes less than schedule. [Ref.28] R.A.H.Weight timed on 12th July 1956, Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30906 with only five coaches on the 15.20 ex Hastings. It cut the 37 minutes schedule from West St. Leonards to Tunbridge Wells by four minutes, 33 minutes 4 seconds actual, speeds were 71 miles per hour at Battle, 68 at Etchingam and 43 minimum at Wadhurst.

Introduction of Diesel units to the Hastings service commenced early 1957 and was virtually complete by the end of year. There were a few steam duties after this date plus relief's at peak times. The 16.20 Charing Cross to Hastings, on the 17th February 1958 for example, with School Class 4-4-0 No.30934 ran within a minute of schedule at all points. The 15.58 relief from Charing Cross on 26th March involved No.30927, with eight coaches. Maxima were 76 miles per hour at Hildenborough and 78 before Etchingam. The last steam trains between London and Hastings ran in 1961, the 05.45 ex London Bridge was diagrammed for diesel haulage commencing with the 1961 winter Timetable, the Westerham Branch closed on the 28th October. The only steam hauled trains remaining were between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, bound for Brighton, often with a Schools'.

Chapter 22 Central Section

The major steam hauled passenger service on the Central Section on the 1st January 1948 was that operated over the Oxted line and associated routes, the trains constituted a rather incongruous group of rosters. Three key events can be identified during the 15 years of steam operation under British Railways auspices, the introduction of the 2-6-4 Tank's, the interval timetable introduced in 1955 and 1956 and problems with the 18.10 ex Victoria.

The Oxted line Service in 1948 involved an eclectic collection of locomotives. Many London to Brighton trains were handled by 2-6-0's, increasingly the three cylinder U1 Class 2-6-0's rather than the N Class 2-6-0's. A Newhaven based 4-4-2 roster included the 08.21 Lewes to London Bridge and the 17.40 return. The Q Class 0-6-0's hauled some trains, Three Bridges depot regularly provided one for the 08.21 Forest Row to London Bridge and the 18.48 London Bridge to Haywards Heath via Oxted and Horsted Keynes, Tunbridge Wells had two return workings to London for Q's. The I1X Class 4-4-2 Tank's, used extensively until the end of 1947 by Three Bridges and Tunbridge Wells' depots were displaced on many duties by I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank's after completion of the bridge repairs at Rowfant; there were also three allocated to Eastborne. The I3's, in the 1948-1950 period probably worked as hard if not harder than ever before, the 07.06 ex Tunbridge Wells for instance loaded to seven heavy coaches, the 07.47 to eight. Similarly the 16.40 London Bridge to Uckfield and the 17.20 to Tunbridge Wells consisted of eight and seven coaches respectively.

Other locomotives used included D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's from Battersea depot on two workings, a U1 Class 2-6-0 from Redhill on the 09.28 Tunbridge Wells West to Victoria and the 17.50 return. The smaller tank locomotives still found work, a D1 Class 0-4-2 regularly hauled the 18.36 East Croydon to Tunbridge Wells West, No.2253 was a frequent performer, on at least one occasion it maintained schedule with five coaches. H Class 0-4-4 Tank's handled some London to Tunbridge Wells' trains, the 10.53 ex Tunbridge Wells was one such. The 19.42 London Bridge to Haywards Heath at times featured an E4 or E5 Class 0-6-2 Tank.

Whilst the various depots sometimes appeared to mainly use smaller older locomotives, at other times the larger locomotives predominated, thus one morning the 08.18 ex Uckfield and the 08.21 ex Lewes to London were both hauled by H2 Class 4-4-2's, Nos.2425 and 2421. Later in the year an H1 Class 4-4-2 was regularly used on the 08.18 and the return 18.10. Others noted included L Class 4-4-0 No.1764 or D Class 4-4-0 No.1740 on Tunbridge Wells' duties, a West Country Class 4-6-2 on the 16.50 Victoria to Brighton and Q1 Class 0-6-0's. The 08.35 Sunday excursion from Tonbridge to Eastborne and the 19.05 return was taken by a D No.1732 on the first Sunday in July, on the next two Q1's Nos.C26 and 33035.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, New motive power for the Oxted Lines

It was evident the Oxted line service needed additional motive power, the fascinating [for the enthusiast] mix of locomotives was hardly efficient, neither the arrival of the Leaders or electrification appeared imminent. One of the earliest locomotive trials by the new Nationalised regime involved London Midland Region Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's Nos.42198 and 42199 on various Central and Eastern Section duties. Number 42199, hauled a six coach train non stop from Victoria to Tunbridge Wells and back on April 19th 1948, 54 minutes Down, three minutes longer back. A W Class 2-6-4 Tank was also tested over the same route on May 13th. Number 42198, worked Tunbridge Wells duty No.663 from the 4th to the 16th June and with five coaches was noted running from Victoria to East Croydon in 14 minutes 57 seconds.

The motive power situation on the Oxted lines in 1949 was much as it was the previous year. 13 Class 4-4-2 Tank's replaced the Q Class 0-6-0's at Tunbridge Wells on some return workings to London in April. At the same time the 11.08 ex Victoria reverted to its former self, a through train to Eastborne via Heathfield, with coaches for Brighton detached at Eridge. An I3 No.32028 was a regular performer in the first few weeks after the change, later in the year J Class 4-6-2 Tank No.2326. A welcome addition to the locomotive stock at this time was H1 Class 4-4-2 No.32037, fresh from a General overhaul at Brighton, which was regularly used on the 06.58 Brighton to London Bridge via Eridge. The use of Q1 Class 0-6-0's continued, No.33026 was noted running a Victoria to Tunbridge Wells West train to the first stop at East Croydon in the somewhat surprising time of 13 minutes. A new type to the route were the Austerity 2-8-0 Class, Nos.77205 on the 29th July, 90552 on the 5th August and 90164 on 26th August, on the 15.28 Haywards Heath to London Bridge via Horsted Keynes and Oxted.

The continuing motive power shortage ensured unusual locomotive workings: T9 Class 4-4-0 on the 19.55 Tunbridge Wells to Eastborne - C2X Class 0-6-0 No.2554 on the 11.08 ex Victoria, not surprisingly it lost time - D Class 0-4-2 tank No.2215 regularly handled Tunbridge Wells duty No.668, on at least one occasion with six coaches on the 13.55 Tunbridge Wells West to Brighton and return. It was surprising the 2-6-0's were not used on the steep gradients of the Eridge to Eastborne line, an exception was the 16.02 relief Victoria to Eastborne on the 20th September, U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31891.

The first significant change in motive power post Nationalisation was the introduction of the LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's in 1950, Nos.42096 to 42106 built at Brighton Works. They replaced the I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank's at Tunbridge Wells and although the older locomotives continued in service this event heralded the start of the final phase of steam on the Oxted Lines. Typical smaller locomotive use included H Class 0-4-4 Tank No.31182 and E5 Class 0-6-2 tank No.32585 on the 19.42 London Bridge to Haywards Heath. At the other end of the power scale a Brighton based West Country Class 4-6-2 was rostered to the 06.58 Brighton to Victoria, in practice Brighton depot, always short of serviceable locomotives, usually provided less glamorous motive power, a 4-6-2 occasionally graced the 16.50 Down.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Introduction of the 2-6-2 & 2-6-4 Tank's on the Oxted Lines

The LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's were reasonably well received at Tunbridge Wells depot, their performance initially good, they were noted climbing the gradient from Lewes to Falmer well, indeed a regular traveller on the Tonbridge to Brighton route observed that the time from Lewes to Falmer was the shortest he had noted for a long time.

The first 2-6-4 to work over the Eridge to Eastborne line was LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42096 on the 7th August 1950. This route necessitated double heading at times; a ten coach train from High Brooms to Eastborne had D Class 4-4-0 No.31733 and a Q1 Class 0-6-0 No.33033, a Ramblers excursion to Heathfield U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31904 and 2-6-4 Tank No.42105 as pilot from Oxted onwards. On other routes in East Sussex Tests carried out with the LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's with eight or nine coaches indicated they could maintain time with such loads. The H2 Class 4-4-2's still featured regularly, the 17.40 ex London Bridge was a normal duty. D.A. Locke travelled on this train ten times and noted that the London Bridge to East Croydon Net time on six of the runs with seven coaches was 13 1/8 minutes. [Ref.29]

Ten Standard Class 2-6-4 Tank's, Nos.80010-80019, built at Brighton Works in 1951 were allocated to Tunbridge Wells West depot. They had 5 feet 8 inches diameter driving wheels and two outside cylinders, 18 inches diameter by 28 inches stroke. The boiler working pressure was 225 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 1,606 square feet [1,223 square feet in the boiler tubes, 143 square feet in the firebox and 240 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 26.7 square feet and the locomotive weighed 87 tons. The LM Tank's by comparison had 5 feet 9 inches diameter wheels, 19 5/8 inches diameter by 26 inches stroke cylinders, 200 pounds per square inch operating pressure and a total heating area of 1,696 square feet.

Their introduction led to the rapid demise of the I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank's, the Eastborne ones ceased working to London on January 15th, in practice their rapid withdrawal caused problems. D and E Class 4-4-0's were borrowed from other depots at least twice in May, I1X Class 4-4-2 Tank No.32002 hauled the Eastborne to Redhill via Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge train and an E5 Class 0-6-2 Tank on the 20th June had five coaches on the 19.33 Tunbridge Wells West to Brighton. The I3's still appeared at times during the summer. Numbers.32086 and 32091 were seen at London Bridge during July. Number 32086 hauled six coaches on the 19.33 Tunbridge Wells West to Brighton and No.32075 revived memories of former glories when it regained 17 minutes with five coaches on the 13.08 Tunbridge Wells West to London Bridge.

Another new Class appeared, LM Class 2 2-6-2 Tank, No.41291 was allocated to Eastborne. These locomotives had 5 feet diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, 16 inches stroke by 24 inches diameter. The boiler working pressure was 200 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 1.160 square feet [925 square feet in the boiler tubes, 101 square feet in the firebox and 134 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 17½ square feet and the locomotive weighed 63¼ tons.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Troubles with the 2-6-4 Tank's on the Oxted Lines

The new L.M Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's honeymoon period was finished by 1952. The general consensus of opinion amongst footplate crews was; they wouldn't steam, they were often out of service and generally not fit for purpose. Yet inevitably at times of such reactions, excellent performances on the road were observed. F.S.Bond noted No.42104 with 170 tons attain 40 miles per hour on the 1/80 gradient between Eridge and Crowborough. Time was lost at the Buxted stop whilst a horse box was detached from the train reducing the load to 158 tons. In an attempt to make up the lost time later 49 miles per hour was attained on the 1/88 between Lewes and Falmer. On another occasion a LM 2-6-2 Tank with 205 tons reached 35½ miles per hour on the same gradient. The 2-6-4 developed 875-925EDHP climbing to Crowborough and 960-1,010EDHP up to Falmer, the 2-6-2 put out 740-790EDHP. Nearer to London a LM 2-6-4 with six coaches on the 14.30 ex Victoria attained 64 miles per hour at Streatham Common before signal checks from the preceding 14.28 electric semi-fast to Brighton intervened.

The L.M and Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's were ubiquitous on the Oxted lines by 1952, even on excursions. A nine coach special from Tunbridge Wells West to Bexhill via the Heathfield line on 24th August was taken by L.M 2-6-4's Nos. 42090 and 42102. Four weeks later a Ramblers Excursion to Heathfield, the empty stock continued to Polegate had a U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31906 with Standard 2-6-4 No.80010 as pilot from Oxted. The old order still survived though, an 11 coach excursion from High Brooms to Brighton via Uckfield featured U1 No.31891 with D Class 4-4-0 No.31496 as pilot. The smaller older locomotives now appeared only after a locomotive failure, as for instance when H Class 0-4-4 Tank No.31517 took over the seven coach 17.40 ex London Bridge at East Croydon.

There were by 1953 regular reports of a shortage of 2-6-4 Tank's and when they were in service of lost time being booked against them. Sometimes this was attributable to heavier than normal trains, although losses of 30 and 17 minutes between Victoria and Eridge with the 15.52 in January 1952 were excessive. The locomotive was LM No.42086, the loads 335 and 300 tons respectively. Replacement locomotives for out of service 2-6-4 Tank's varied, in December 1951 for instance a Q Class 0-6-0 No.30541 deputised for a week and a D3 Class 0-4-4 Tank No.2365 appeared on the 17.44 Brighton to Tonbridge. Three different members of the H2 Class 4-4-2's were observed working out of London on the 9th March 1953; with the 15.52 and 18.10 ex Victoria and the 17.40 ex London Bridge.

A new Class of locomotive introduced to the Oxted lines in January 1954 to improve punctuality on the through London to Brighton services were the BR Standard Class 4 2-6-0's. They had 5 feet 2 inches diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, 17½ inches diameter by 26 inches stroke. The boiler working pressure was 225 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 1,453 square feet [1,075 square feet in the tubes, 131 square feet in the firebox and 247 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 23 square feet, the locomotive weighed 59¾ tons, the tender another 42 tons.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Standard Class 4 2-6-0's on the Oxted Lines

Standard Class 4 2-6-0 Nos.76005 and 76006 were allocated to Brighton depot. Number 76006 worked the 08.20 Brighton to Victoria on the 18th January 1954, returning on the 12.03 via East Grinstead and Sheffield Park. Number 76005 worked Up on the 11.02 ex Brighton and returned on the 15.52, it lost four minutes to Eridge with eight coaches. It was reported at the time that it had been hoped the Standard Class 4 2-6-0's would alleviate some of the timekeeping problems with the 2-6-4 Tank's, but apart from obviating the need to take water at Oxted, their performance was no better. Bearing in mind the boiler dimensions of the 2-6-0's it would be surprising if one of them outperformed a 2-6-4 Tank, with consistent driving techniques.

Standard Class 4 2-6-0's allocated to Redhill depot at a later date were often used on Oxted line trains and occasionally appeared on the 15.52 ex Victoria in 1958. Norman Harvey timed No.76060 on the Sunday 19.06 Brighton to Reading, [via Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Redhill], which only stopped at Lewes, Uckfield and Crowborough between Brighton and Groombridge. The 2-6-0 with 235 tons attained 42 miles per hour on the rising grades to Falmer, kept time to Eridge and was slightly late at Groombridge due to a PWR slack. [Harvey alighted at Groombridge, returned to Eridge and travelled to London on the 19.55 ex Brighton, also a 2-6-0, N Class No.31414. The load was only three coaches plus two parcels vans and the maximum 65 miles per hour]

The apparent failure of Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76006 in 1954 led to the use of E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31507 on the 26th January on the 11.02 ex Brighton and the Down 15.52, it reportedly ran well. On the 6th February a West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34039 appeared, presumably it kept time! Later in the year these two trains became part of a Stewarts Lane duty, regularly a U1 Class 2-6-0. On the 10th September there was a shortage of serviceable 2-6-4 Tank's at Brighton, to make up the shortfall U Class 2-6-0 No.31620 and Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76007 were sent from Eastleigh on loan. The left hand on the Southern Region invariably had no idea what the right was thinking. Perhaps the real problem was a combination of Brighton depot's inability to maintain its locomotives and a lack of experienced footplate crews.

Bricklayers Arms duty No.533 included the 08.03 London Bridge to Brighton via East Grinstead and Sheffield Park, invariably a D1 or L1 Class 4-4-0, [the locomotive worked back to London on the 15.36 Brighton to Eastborne and 20.19 ex Lewes to London Bridge parcels trains]

The interval service from Victoria to Tunbridge Wells West via East Grinstead was introduced in 1955, with a connecting auto train service between Oxted and Tunbridge Wells via the shorter route through Edenbridge. The introduction coincided with the first closure of the East Grinstead to Culver Junction line and led to substantially altered engine workings commencing June 15th. Most Tunbridge Wells West to London trains were diagrammed for 2-6-4 Tank's, exceptions were Tonbridge duty No.298, a U1 Class 2-6-0, which included the 07.08 Tunbridge Wells West to London and Stewarts Lane No.508, which included the 10.56 Brighton to Victoria and the 15.52 Down.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Oxted Line interval Timetable, 1955

Some M7 Class 0-4-4 Tanks, considered preferable to the H Class 0-4-4 Tank's because of their greater power and increased coal capacity, were transferred from the Western Section to Three Bridges and Tunbridge Wells West depots for the auto trains. Dover duty, No.438 for an L1 Class 4-4-0, included the 11.02 Tonbridge to Brighton and the 15.55 return.

The initial implementation of the new Timetable, one day after the end of the national footplate men's strike, had its difficulties. A particular problem occurred with the auto trains, some crews had not been trained in push pull working and insisted in "running round" at journey's end rather than operating in auto-train formation. A casualty of the new timetable was the 07.26 ex Edenbridge Town to London Bridge via the Crowhurst South Junction spur, the last regular passenger train booked over the spur, the final vestige of the former South Eastern Railway Oxted Line service. The author remembers in 1951 and 1952 he regularly travelled by an electric, which left East Croydon at about the same time as the 07.26. The electric accelerated quicker but as it slowed for the Norwood Junction stop the L Class 4-4-0 hauling its two ex SE&C three coaches birdcage sets stormed past, fond memories!

The interval trains from Victoria were usually light formations; three coaches the norm, six at times. [The Business service remained essentially unchanged, as it had for many years, similar schedules and train formations.]

Eight personal experiences on the interval service between Victoria and East Croydon from August 1955 to January 1957 give a flavour. Trains consisted of three coaches five times, four coaches once and six on the remaining two. Locomotives were Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's five times, LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's twice and LM Class 2-6-2 Tank No.41296 once. The sprightliest running was with the 2-6-2 Tank, with 105 tons it ran Balham to Selhurst pass to pass in five minutes and a quarter with a maximum of 70 miles per hour. The quickest time to pass Selhurst was Standard Tank No.80011, also with three coaches, 13 minutes 6 seconds, East Croydon was reached in 16 minutes 43 seconds after a signal check, 15 minutes Net, the Balham to Selhurst time was 12 seconds longer than No.41296. The six coach trains were run from Victoria to East Croydon in 20 minutes 27 seconds, including a PWR slack to 16 miles per hour at Streatham Common and 17 minutes 48 seconds, the locomotives were Standard 2-6-4 Tank's Nos. 80014 and 80011, schedule 17 minutes. On the other six occasions East Croydon was reached in less than 17 minutes twice, less than 18 minutes twice and less than 19 minutes twice, hardly examples of exceptional locomotive performance or exemplary punctuality.

The Ivatt designed LM Class 2-6-2 Tank's at times, relative to their dimensions, were assigned heavy trains. On the 17th June 1955 for instance No.41206 had seven coaches on the 18.30 London Bridge to Forest Row and almost maintained schedule. Three years later No.41319, on the 08.20 Brighton to Victoria with eight coaches after the addition of the through Eastborne portion at Eridge, was slightly late at East Croydon.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, locomotives on the "Cuckoo Line"

The blanket employment of 2-6-4 Tanks on the London service led to smaller locomotives on the steeply graded [1/50] Eridge to Eastborne ["Cuckoo"] line. On Saturdays, commencing 18th June an E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank hauled five coaches on the 13.40 Eastborne Tunbridge Wells West [successive Saturdays Nos.32566, 32515, 32514 and 32577]. The return working, 16.35 ex Tunbridge Wells, after attachment of the through portion from London [15.52 ex Victoria] at Eridge, normally loaded to five coaches, on the 25th June No.32566 had six coaches and lost time. The 13.53 ex Tunbridge Wells, rostered for an M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank, also regularly loaded to five coaches, although the depot usually turned out an H Class 0-4-4 Tank, No.31166 on the 18th June and No.31310 on the 25th. On the 2nd July the rostered M7 appeared and 45 minutes was lost compared with a couple of minutes booked against No. 31310. By comparison two tender locomotives appeared on the route, with comparatively heavy trains during July. Standard Class 2-6-0 No.76059 took seven coaches on the 09.08 from Tunbridge Wells on the 9th and the 19.41 return from Eastborne. Eight days later Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066, with a Ramblers Excursion hauled eight coaches to Heathfield.

Another new locomotive type on the Oxted lines at this time, although not destined to become regular motive power, Standard Class 5 4-6-0, No.73081 on the 10.56 Brighton to Victoria and the 15.52 Down.

The hourly interval timetable was extended to the Uckfield and Heathfield lines in 1956, specifically Tonbridge to Brighton and Tunbridge Wells West to Eastborne trains. Brighton departures were at 55 minutes past the hour and Eastborne at 45 minutes past the hour. If the 55 minutes departure from Brighton ran to London, then the Eastborne train continued to Tonbridge. In the Down direction the semi-fast service to Eridge and Brighton left Victoria at 38 minutes past the hour [in practice the 10.38 and 15.38 on Saturdays, the Weekdays 15.52 adjusted at a later date]. The Tunbridge Wells West service via East Grinstead left Victoria as in 1955 at eight minutes past the hour. The introduction of the new trains went smoothly; this time there was no footplate men's strike before.

The 2-6-4 Tanks' worked the Tunbridge Wells West to London service except the 09.47 and now most of the Eastborne trains, many Tonbridge to Brighton trains had L and D1 Class 4-4-0's. Brighton depot had barely enough serviceable 2-6-4 Tank's to meet its duties and often resorted to borrowing locomotives leaving Brighton Works after overhaul. The 11.10 and 16.15 [not to interval because of the maintenance of the 15.52 departure from Victoria] Tonbridge to Eastborne trains, with the through coaches added at Eridge provided variety, inter alia Q and C2X Class 0-6-0's, L Class 4-4-0's and E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank's. Inevitably there were occasional substitutes for the 2-6-4 Tank's, one of the more unusual a C Class 0-6-0 No.31280 on the 16.20 ex London Bridge, ten coaches to East Croydon, four detached for Tunbridge Wells, the remaining six fast to Oxted. A Three Bridges L Class 4-4-0 No.31778 was used on Oxted line trains in November and December 1956 and was noted on the 13.08 ex Victoria on December 8th.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Introduction of Standard Class 4 4-6-0's on the Oxted Lines

The final steam hauled interval service introduced on the Central Section was that from Brighton to Horsham, implemented in 1958. These trains ran over the Itchingfield Junction to Shoreham line [“the linger and die”], departures from Brighton and Horsham were at 30 and 19 minutes past the hour respectively.

As already observed the new services settled down quickly and perhaps more surprisingly, there were fewer complaints about the performance of the 2-6-4 Tank's. This was not the case with the M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank's, they if anything received even greater approbation from Three Bridges and Tunbridge Wells footplate crews. The Tunbridge Wells M7's after only 12 months were replaced by H Class 0-4-4 Tank's. Schools Class 4-4-0's, permitted to run over the Uckfield route in 1958, were first reported in service on the 21st August with a Tonbridge to Brighton train. They had previously run over the Oxted lines North of Eridge, particularly on Eastern Section trains diverted from Tonbridge to London via the Crowhurst spur. From the winter timetable of 1958 the early morning train ex London Bridge; the 05.20 ran to Eastborne via Heathfield rather than as previously to Tunbridge Wells West.

The next new locomotive type introduced to the Oxted lines were Standard Class 4 4-6-0's, initially Nos.75070, 75074 and 75075. They were intended for duties where the 2-6-4 Tank's caused delays through having to take water at Oxted. Number 75074, commencing May 2nd 1959, worked a roster: 06.29 Victoria to Tunbridge Wells West via East Grinstead - 13.47 return via EG - 17.49 Victoria TWW via EG - 21.20 TWW to Victoria via Edenbridge. A Class Standard 4 4-6-0 worked the duty every day from December 8th to 13th April, usually N. 75074; LM Class 2-6-4 tank No.42067 was employed on the 14th with a 4-6-0 reappearing the following day. Number 75075 worked the 08.20 ex Forest Row on 5th February and gained several minutes on schedule. Number 75070 regularly took the Down 15.52 later in the year, working Up on the 08.20 or 09.55 ex Brighton. On the 25th April L Class 4-4-0 No.31762 hauled the Saturday 15.38 ex Victoria and kept time to Eridge with seven coaches, [later in the year, 26th September it was reported 30 minutes late on the same train]. Another Class regularly employed on passenger trains between Tonbridge and Brighton was the three cylinder N1 Class 2-6-0, No.31800 frequently on the 06.22 ex Tonbridge.

The Southern and London Midland Regions in 1960 exchanged 2-6-4 Tank's, the Southern gave up 34 LMS designed engines in exchange for 34 of the BR type. The actual interchange involved the Southern dispatching a locomotive first and receiving one in exchange some days later.

The effective loss of a locomotive aggravated an already acute shortage, Tunbridge Wells depot already under strength in terms of H Class 0-4-4 Tanks' resorted to some unusual motive power on the Tunbridge Wells to Oxted trains. E4 Class 0-6-2 Tanks' not fitted for auto working had to run round at journeys end, when one of four tender locomotives appeared [two C Class 0-6-0's and two E1 Class 4-4-0's] appeared they had to run tender first.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, retrenchment on the Oxted Lines begins

The exchange completed, the Oxted lines became a virtual BR Standard locomotive preserve. The exceptions were, in addition to the auto train workings, two return rosters from Brighton, 13.55 to Victoria and return 18.10 for a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 and the other for a Schools Class 4-4-0. Naturally there were exceptions, on 7th February 1960 Q1 Class 0-6-0 No.33039 hauled the Sunday 19.55 Brighton to Victoria and apparently made a "lively run". The last believed use of an inside cylinder 4-4-0 on the Oxted lines occurred on the longest day of 1960 and the succeeding two days, the 19.08 ex Victoria, the locomotive L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31783.

In 1956 after the introduction of the interval service on the Heathfield and Uckfield lines there were 199 daily trains, arrivals and departures, at Tunbridge Wells West station [previous summer 136]. Fifty-eight daily traversed the single line section between the West and Central stations, [previous year only 28]. Between 06.00 and 24.00 there were 141 trains over the Tunbridge Wells West to Groombridge section, 41 to or from Oxted or beyond, 35 to or from East Grinstead or beyond, 33 to or from the Heathfield line and 43 to or from the Uckfield line.

The first reduction of the five interval services occurred in 1960, some Oxted to Tonbridge trains were truncated to Tunbridge Wells West.

Additional variety at the end of 1960 included, a K Class 2-6-0 on the Saturday 13.55 Brighton to Victoria, Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75068 on a roster which included the 17.49 Victoria to Tunbridge Wells via East Grinstead and Standard Class 2 2-6-2 tank No.84020 on Heathfield line duties.

The Standard Class 2-6-2's had 5 feet diameter coupled wheels and two outside cylinders, 16½ inches diameter by 24 inches stroke. The boiler working pressure was 200 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 1,149 square feet [924 square feet in the tubes, 101 square feet in the firebox and 124 square feet in the superheater]. The fire grate area was 17½ square feet and the locomotive weighed 67 tons. Number 84020 was at times used on the 11.10 and 16.10 Tonbridge to Eastborne trains, which after the addition of the through portion from Victoria at Eridge consisted of six or seven coaches, 200 to 235 tons Gross, a challenging assignment for a Class 2 locomotive over the 1/50 gradients.

There was by this time little criticism of 2-6-4 Tank performance, a correspondent writing to the Journal of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society noted that the 17.37 ex London Bridge regularly arrived at Lingfield early, after attaining speeds in excess of 70 miles per hour past Crowhurst Junction. It has always appeared to the author that the Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tanks' performed significantly better than the LM type on the Southern Region. Why is not obvious, it probably reflected driver foibles and familiarisation more than any design differences. The lower boiler pressure might have been a concern to the crews, there was a smaller margin if difficulties occurred with the fire.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Steam finale on the Oxted Lines

A regular Schools Class 4-4-0 duty involved the 07.17 Brighton to London Bridge and the Down 16.40. There were by late autumn 1961 increasingly vocal complaints from footplate crews concerning difficulties ascending the steeply graded curve after Lewes, where the Uckfield line passed over the Lewes avoiding freight lines. As a result a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 was diagrammed to this duty commencing December 4th.

The use of smaller or unusual locomotives, despite increased standardisation, continued. The 08.20 ex Brighton, made up to six coaches after Eridge, on the 18th November had LM Class 2-6-2 Tank No.41261, which kept time to Victoria. A 700 Class 0-6-0 No.30325 hauled the 14.45 Eastborne to Tunbridge Wells West the following January and on the 29th N1 Class 2-6-0 No.31877 reportedly performed well on the 16.48 ex Victoria.

There were some service cuts on the Heathfield line in the summer of 1962 and the first Diesel Multiple Units were introduced to the Oxted lines. The older locomotives however continued to rush about, an H Class 0-4-4 Tank was timed at 68 miles per hour past Monks Lane [highest personal experience on the Oxted to Tunbridge Wells Auto trains was 59 by No.31005 on the 30th April]. Schools Class 4-4-0's still appeared, indeed the transfer of some to Tonbridge depot for use on the Tonbridge to Brighton trains along with those allocated to Brighton made them regular performers. However at the end of 1962 all the remaining Schools and all the K Class 2-6-0's were withdrawn from service, the blood-letting motivated by "accountancy reasons".

Increasingly the H Class 0-4-4 Tank's struggled with the Tunbridge Wells Oxted service in the spring of 1963, more and more they suffered from a combination of age and lack of love, the 2-6-4 Tanks' were increasingly used.

The final steam worked 15.54 ex Victoria, with through coaches to Eastborne, ran on the 28th June 1963. The writer remembers seeing this train passing Clapham Junction on Maundy Thursday of the same year, made up to eight coaches hauled by a Class 4 4-6-0, the whole assembly looking impressively clean and businesslike. The final steam hauled 07.17 ex Brighton on the 29th June featured rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34013.

The winter Timetable of 1963/4 provided for no steam workings beyond Oxted towards London and the elimination of through coaches from London to the Heathfield line. Steam working on the Tonbridge to Brighton service officially ended on January 3rd 1964. On that day the crew of the 07.39 ex Tonbridge recovered an 11 minutes late start, the locomotive N Class 2-6-0 No.31408, Lewes to London Road, the next stop was run in 11 minutes. Steam continued on some of the Tunbridge Wells to Eastborne trains, in 1964 Standard Class 3 2-6-2s' Nos.82024 and 82026 were often employed. The Heathfield line was closed to passenger services between Eridge and Hailsham on June 13th 1965, bringing to an end scheduled steam hauled passenger trains on the Oxted lines.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Performance on the Eridge to Eastborne Line 1963

On occasions when steam substituted for diesel, some enterprising crews enjoyed proving they could maintain the pared down and very exact schedules [to within a quartet of a minute]. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34006 on the 22nd and 23rd January 1964 hauled the 17.20 London Bridge to Crowborough and the following morning 07.46 Crowborough to London Bridge with the normal diesel locomotive hauled set [No.904 c.240 tons Gross]. On the 23rd the Norwood crew kept to within a few seconds of all the start to stop schedules and despite a prolonged signal check outside Sanderstead station reached Hever only one and three quarters of a minute late. The minimum at the top of Forest Hill bank was 56 miles per hour, 1,550-1,600 EDHP and the maximum at Monks Lane 70. [The previous day the train stopped outside East Croydon three minutes early after leaving London Bridge on time]. Brighton crews produced good performances with the Up train. Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No. 80068 hauled the 07.17 East Grinstead to London Bridge on the penultimate day of 1964. The train, delayed on the approaches to East Croydon, left there ten minutes late and ran to London Bridge in 12½ minutes with 75 miles per hour maximum after Forest Hill. Number 80068 appeared to the author, to be a very good locomotive, [logically after a general overhaul it would assume new characteristics but somehow No.68 was a "good'un "].

Some personal experiences on the Oxted Lines in the period 1957 to 1963 afford a reasonable view of day to day performance. The Eridge to Eastborne route, with its 1/50 gradients, sharp curvature and trains of 200 plus tons was always interesting. Three journeys, two with the 11.49 from Eridge [11.10 ex Tonbridge] with seven coaches and one with the 16.45 [16.10 ex Tonbridge] with six coaches illustrate the performance required.

Standard Class 4 2-6-4 tanks' Nos.80064 and 80014 with 222/230 and 226/235 tons on the morning train took 69 minutes 18 seconds and 70 minutes 44 seconds overall respectively from Eridge to Eastborne [schedule 71 minutes]. Actual running times were 55 minutes 21 seconds and 58 minutes 46 seconds, schedule 57½ minutes. On the 1/50 after Rotherfield No.80064 sustained 20½ miles per hour and No.80014 16. Speed on the longer section of 1/50 before Heathfield fell from 34 to 18½ miles per hour [still falling] and 33 to 16 [sustained].

Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80068 in the afternoon with 193/200 tons left Eridge 15 minutes late and ran to Eastborne in 56 minutes 52 seconds, [schedule 64 minutes], running time 48 minutes 27 seconds, a gain of ten minutes. It accelerated from 21 to 24 miles per hour on the three quarters of a mile after Rotherfield, fell from 39 to 24 on the initial two miles at 1/50 before Heathfield, then from 24 to 21 on the sharp curves maintained over the last three quarters of a mile. Rotherfield to Mayfield [2.75 miles] took 6 minutes 38 seconds [compared with 7 minutes 41 seconds and 8 minutes 33 seconds by Nos.80064 and 80014], from Mayfield to Heathfield, [3.8 miles], 7 minutes 48 seconds, [compared with 9 minutes 36 seconds and 9 minutes 50 seconds]. [Schedules for the two were seven and a half and ten minutes respectively.]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance between Eridge and Brighton, 1957-64

Number 80068 developed 750-800EDHP climbing to Heathfield compared with 700-750 and 620-670 by the other two, leaving Rotherfield the figure was 850-900. Northbound experiences were with light trains, three or four coaches, the 2-6-4 Tanks' maintained the schedules easily.

The Eridge to Lewes line was less severely graded than the "Cuckoo" line, gradients either side of the summit at Crowborough were 1/80 and 1/70 and the approaches more favourable. It seldom witnessed work approaching the levels required by the heavier trains on the Heathfield line. Typical speeds attained on the 1/80 gradient between Eridge and Crowborough were: 34 miles per hour by Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34050 with 205 tons [it gained 20 seconds on the 7½ minutes schedule from Eridge to Crowborough] - 31 by Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30917 with 205 tons [24 seconds gain] - 24 by U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31892 [86 seconds lost] and 39 by Standard Class 2-6-4 tank No.80068 with 105 tons [39 seconds gained].

The schedule over the 4.7 miles from Buxted to Crowborough in the Up direction was nine minutes: Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34004 with 170 tons fell to 34½ miles per hour on the 1/70 gradient [26 seconds gained on schedule] - No.34013 of same Class with only 135 tons produced fastest start to stop time, 7 minutes 17 seconds, minimum speed 45 - Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80154 with 140 tons fell from 50 to 40 [76 seconds gained on schedule] - No.80032 of the same Class with 220 tons fell from 39 to 31 [ten seconds lost].

The 17.40 London Bridge to Brighton ran non stop over the 8.6 miles from Uckfield to Lewes [schedule 13 minutes] and there were reports it reached comparatively high speeds at times, not the case on two personal occasions. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30917 with 205 tons ran the course in 14 minutes 3 seconds including a PWR slack to 22 miles per hour at Isfield] with a maximum of 56 miles per hour. U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31892, with the same load was 14 seconds quicker overall but did not exceed 53 miles per hour.

Although private special trains do not strictly come within the remit of this work a journey behind Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066 with 325 tons on a non stop booking from Brighton to Eridge is of interest. It passed Lewes in 14 minutes 11 seconds after a signal check, averaged 54 miles per hour over the 8.9 miles from MP 9 to Buxted, fell from 53 to 35 on the two miles at 1/70 before entering Crowborough tunnel and further to 33 in the tunnel. Eridge was reached in 42 minutes 5 seconds [schedule 45 minutes] 40 minutes Net.

Earlier in the day with the same train Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066 fell to ten and a half miles per hour on the 1/50 after Rotherfield and climbed to Heathfield at a steady 15½. Eighty-three seconds was lost on the 60 minutes non stop schedule from Tunbridge Wells to Hailsham although there was a signal check before Eridge time was lost between Rotherfield and Heathfield, 23 minutes 6 seconds [schedule 19 minutes]. The date was March 22nd 1964.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Reg, performance on the Down Oxted Line semi-fast's 1957-63

The two daytime semi-fast trains from Victoria to Brighton, with through coaches for Eastborne usually loaded to six coaches as far as Eridge. Schedules from East Croydon were 16 minutes to Oxted, seven and a half minutes to Edenbridge and 14½ minutes to Eridge. Locomotives on the morning service on four occasions, all with the normal 200 tons were: LM Class 4 2-6-4 tank No.42086 in November 1957 - Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80068 in January 1960 - Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75074 in April 1961 - Standard Tank No.80081 in July 1961. The 9.95 miles from East Croydon to Oxted were run in 18 minutes 45 seconds [17½ minutes Net], 16 minutes 57 seconds [15½ minutes Net], 17 minutes 12 seconds and 14 minutes 55 seconds. Number 80081 ran the 5.9 miles from South Croydon to Woldingham in 8 minutes 44 seconds, average 730-780EDH [average gradient 1/116]. Downhill from Oxted to Edenbridge, 5.4 miles, took 8 minutes 11 seconds, 6 minutes 35 seconds, 9 minutes 14 seconds [7 minutes Net] and 7 minutes 11 seconds, the highest speed 69 miles per hour attained by No.80068. The final 9.9 miles to Eridge took, 15 minutes 51 seconds, 12 minutes 21 seconds, 18 minutes 7 seconds [15 minutes Net] and 16 minutes 14 seconds [14 minutes Net]. Number 80068 passed Cowden, 3.7 miles, at 52 miles per hour and Ashurst, 6.5 miles, at 71 in 8 minutes 18 seconds.

Five journeys on the afternoon train [April to September 1961] all involved Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75070. The first four with the standard six coaches, 210 tons Gross, the fifth with two additional, 285 tons Gross. Times from East Croydon to Oxted were 17 minutes, 15 minutes 36 seconds, 16 minutes 47 seconds [16¼ minutes Net], 16 minutes 29 seconds and 16 minutes 56 seconds with the heavier train. On the only occasion the 16 minutes schedule was observed the average EDHP was 740-790 between South Croydon and Warlingham [8 minutes 58 seconds]. The time over this section with the heavier train was exactly one minute longer, 850-900EDHP.

The Downhill stage from Oxted to Edenbridge was run in 6 minutes 46 seconds, 7 minutes 48 seconds, 6 minutes 55 seconds, 7 minutes 25 seconds and 7 minutes 22 seconds, maximum 68 miles per hour. The continuation to Eridge took, 15 minutes 2 seconds, 13 minutes 57 seconds, 13 minutes 13 seconds, 14 minutes 10 seconds and 14 minutes 2 seconds. On the quickest run No.75070 passed Cowden in 6 minutes 5 seconds at 50 miles per hour and Ashurst in 8 minutes 46 seconds at 64. The run with the 285 tons train was competent, 37 miles per hour at Hever, 49 at Hever in 6 minutes 25 seconds and 62 at Ashurst in nine minutes and a quarter.

The 16.20 to East Grinstead usually had eight coaches from London Bridge [three were detached at East Croydon and ran forward as a stopping service to Tunbridge Wells via Edenbridge]. Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80094 in 1963 with 285 tons Gross passed New Cross Gate in 4 minutes 59 seconds at 54 miles per hour and Forest Hill in 8 minutes 32 seconds, it maintained 44 at the top of the 1/100, 1,200-1,250EDHP. The noise from the locomotive remains vivid some forty years later. With restrained running afterwards East Croydon was reached 23 seconds inside the 16 minutes schedule.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on Oxted Line semi-fast's, 1958-63

LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42106 and Standard Class 4 Tank No.80017 in 1958 with 175 tons [after detachment of the rear portion] ran East Croydon to Oxted in 15 minutes 35 seconds [14¾ minutes Net] and 16 minutes 17 seconds. Number 42106 covered South Croydon to Woldingham in 8 minutes 42 seconds, an average 650-700EDHP. Three years later, Standard Tank Nos.80141 and 80142 took 15 minutes 23 seconds and 15 minutes 43 seconds. The highest speed attained before the Lingfield stop was 74 miles per hour by No.80017. Numbers 80017 and 80142 attained 26 and 27½ miles per hour on the one and a half miles at 1/70 after Lingfield, times to the stop at Dormans were 4 minutes 07 seconds and 4 minutes 11 seconds. The final 2.55 miles to East Grinstead, schedule 7 minutes, were run in 5 minutes 42 seconds and 5 minutes 44 seconds.

The 16.40 ex London Bridge, stopped at all stations from Sanderstead to Edenbridge and then ran non stop to Eridge, the scheduled running time from East Croydon to Oxted was 23 minutes. U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31892 in August 1961 with 215 tons exceeded this by 51 seconds and then ran the Oxted to Hurst Green and to Edenbridge stages in 5 seconds and 14 seconds less than schedule, two and a half and six and a half minutes. It exceeded the 14½ minutes schedule to Eridge by 78 seconds.

Regular motive power on the 16.40 in 1961 was a Schools Class 4-4-0. Number 30917 one month earlier lost ten seconds to Hurst Green, gained 43 seconds to Edenbridge and with a signal check to 37 miles per hour at Cowden lost 15 seconds to Eridge. In March 1963 a West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34019 ran from East Croydon to Eridge in an actual overall time of 55 minutes 13 seconds, schedule 54 minutes, running time 47 minutes 20 seconds, a loss of 40 seconds, the large Pacific hardly ideal for such a duty.

The 13.55 and 18.55 ex Brighton ran semi-fast from Eridge onwards, stops at Edenbridge, Oxted and East Croydon, personal records extend to six afternoon trains and eight in the evening. The 13.55, a light train, from 1959 had the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 due to work the 18.10 ex Victoria. Before the introduction of the 4-6-2's, LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42106, with only 140 tons, ran Eridge to Edenbridge, Edenbridge to Oxted and Oxted to East Croydon in 13 minutes 38 seconds, 8 minutes 48 seconds and 16 minutes 53 seconds [14½ minutes Net], schedule 13½, nine and 16 minutes. The best run behind a 4-6-2 was by Rebuild No.34050 with 200 tons, Edenbridge in 11 minutes 12 seconds, with 68, 63, 70 and 75 miles per hour at Ashurst, Cowden, Hever and before Edenbridge. The uphill stage to Oxted took 8 minutes 18 seconds, maximum 48 miles per hour and to East Croydon 16 minutes 32 seconds after signal checks. Sanderstead was passed in 11 minutes 42 seconds, with a clear road East Croydon in 15 minutes. The 16 minutes Oxted to East Croydon schedule was invariably exceeded because of signal checks before South or East Croydon stations, although the lateness was never greater than two minutes. A rebuilt West Country was a quarter of a minute quicker between Edenbridge and Oxted with an attained 52 miles per hour but the load was only 140 tons.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the Up Oxted Line semi-fast's

The 18.55 ex Brighton in 1961 usually loaded to six coaches and a van, 225 to 230 tons Gross with a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank. The 13½ minutes schedule from Eridge to Edenbridge was kept on three out of eight runs, actual times were; 12 minutes 39 seconds with No.80146, 12 minutes 32 seconds with No.80149 and 12 minutes 23 seconds with No.80154. On the first speeds were 59 miles per hour at Ashurst, 50 at Cowden and 70 before the Edenbridge stop, for No.80149, 61, 54 and 67 and for No.80154, 62, 55 and 61. On two others, Net times were 13½ minutes but PWR slacks resulted in losses of one and two and a half minutes, on the other three overruns were, one and a half [30 seconds Net], two and two and a half minutes respectively.

The nine minutes schedule from Edenbridge to Oxted was only kept or improved on twice with a third in a Net time of nine minutes. The loss on schedule was three quarters of a minute on three occasions and one and a half minutes on the other two. The times on the two timekeeping runs were, eight and three quarters minutes by No.80149, with 47 miles per hour at Monks Lane, falling to 42 at Hurst Green and 9 minutes 1 second by No.80146 with a maintained 41 from Monks Lane to Hurst Green.

The continuation to East Croydon from Oxted was invariably bedevilled with signal checks before joining the Main Brighton Line at South Croydon. Number 80146 ran the stage in 16 minutes exactly, it reached 37 miles per hour at Lime Siding and passed Warlingham in 6 minutes 47 seconds, after this without exceeding 53 and with a clear road the schedule was maintained. On the other seven runs actual times were less than 17 minutes three times, between 17 and 17½ minutes three times and 20 minutes 40 seconds once [16 minutes Net, three others less than 16 minutes Net]. The best start from Oxted was No.80154, 38 miles per hour at Lime Siding, Woldingham passed in 6 minutes 18 seconds at 50. Number 80149 passed Woldingham in 6 minutes 27 seconds and 6 minutes 45 seconds.

The 18.55 became part of a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 duty in 1962. Rebuilt No.34089 with 170 tons, following a check at Ashurst Junction, ran to Edenbridge in 13 minutes 12 seconds with a maximum of 70 miles per hour. The continuation to Oxted took 8 minutes 28 seconds, with 59 miles per hour attained at Monks Lane and onwards to East Croydon 13 minutes 22 seconds, Woldingham passed in 5 minutes 33 seconds at 62, Sanderstead in 10 minutes 23 seconds after a maximum of 68. The run appeared quite exciting at the time until it is remembered that Stroudley Singles were achieving similar times some fifty years previous. Twenty-five days later Battle of Britain No.34055 lost six and a quarter minutes between Eridge and East Croydon, three minutes of which was attributable to the locomotive!

The eight coach formations of some London to Tunbridge Wells trains represented arguably the toughest assignments on the Oxted lines. A Standard Class 4 fitted with double chimney, No.75069, was a regular performer on the duty that involved the 13.47 ex Tunbridge Wells West and the 17.49 ex Victoria in 1961.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 300 ton stopping trains on the Oxted Lines

Number 75069 on the 13.47 [28th August] with eight coaches, 264 tons Net, c. 270 Gross [author's notes state less than ten passengers on leaving Tunbridge Wells]. The W.T.T. allowed 85 minutes for the 33.6 miles to East Croydon via East Grinstead with ten and a half minutes for the 13 station stops. Actual overall time was 85 minutes 38 seconds [signal check between South and East Croydon delayed by 40 seconds], running time 70 minutes 34 seconds [70 minutes Net]. This involved uphill work such as 30 miles per hour maintained on the 1/80 between Forest Row and East Grinstead, the nine minutes schedule was kept with six seconds to spare. Eighteen seconds was lost on the seven and a half minutes schedule from Lingfield to Hurst Green with 52 miles per hour reached at Crowhurst Junction. [The junction, 2.9 miles from Lingfield was passed in 4 minutes 54 seconds, schedule five minutes]. The seven and a half minutes schedule from Oxted to Woldingham was improved on by seven seconds with 36 miles per hour at MP17 $\frac{3}{4}$. Power outputs were 950-1,000 EDHP between Forest Row and East Grinstead, 760-810 EDHP at Crowhurst Junction and 800-850 EDHP before Woldingham.

The 17.49 ex Victoria on the 7th September with No.75069 weighed 266 tons Tare, 300 tons Gross leaving Sanderstead and probably 267 tons on arrival at Groombridge! The schedule allowed three and a half, five, four and six minutes for the successive stages from Sanderstead, Riddlesdown, Upper Warlingham and Woldingham to Oxted, plus a minute for each station stop. It lost 26, 27, 25 and eight seconds between stations with maxima of 27½, 39, 35 and 59 miles per hour, the overall schedule was maintained through efficient station working, the natural enthusiasm of home-going commuters to leave the train a.s.a.p. It was eight minutes late at Sanderstead, no doubt this was an evening it caused the 18.10 ex Victoria to be checked before Oxted. Schedules for the Downhill stages from Oxted to Hurst Green and on to Lingfield were maintained with 64 miles per hour at Crowhurst Junction. The challenging four and a half minutes for the 1.5 miles up the 1/70 to Dormans was exceeded by one minute with 21 miles per hour. [The heaviest train personally noted keeping the four and a half minutes schedule was 210 tons in 1958 with LM Class 2-6-4 Tank No.42079]. St. Margarets Junction was passed in 4 minutes 56 seconds at 25 miles per hour, schedule five minutes and East Grinstead reached in 7 minutes 17 seconds, schedule seven minutes, still eight minutes late.

The schedule running time from East Grinstead to Groombridge, 26½ minutes was cut to 23 minutes 7 seconds, the three minutes at Withyam cut to three seconds. Overall Sanderstead to Groombridge schedule was 80 minutes, actual 73 minutes 1 second, running time 65 minutes 31 seconds, one second over schedule. The run said more about station efficiency than locomotive performance. The two passengers alighting at Groombridge were well served, only one minute late, the many hundreds alighting between Sanderstead and East Grinstead were some eight minutes late. The locomotive developed 740-790 EDHP between Sanderstead and Riddlesdown and 720-770 between Lingfield and Dormans. The timetable demanded 100-200 EDHP more than this, a performance level the crew in the Up direction on 28th August achieved.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region Performances on the Oxted Line stopping trains 1957-63

The locomotive of the 17.49 ex Victoria arrived Groombridge at 19.33, turned on the Ashurst Junction-Birchden Junction-Groombridge Junction triangle and returned to London via Edenbridge on the 21.20 ex Tunbridge Wells West. The train on the 6th April 1961, headed by the then normal Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75069 consisted of five coaches plus two vans, 220 tons Gross. The Tunbridge Wells to East Croydon schedule was 58½ minutes overall, actual 58 minutes 24 seconds with 11 stops, schedule running time 51½ minutes, actual 53 minutes 54 seconds. Two minutes was lost, through a long PWR slack before Edenbridge and a signal check before South Croydon. A quarter of a minute was dropped from Ashurst to Cowden [schedule five minutes] despite 45 miles per hour on the rising grades and another half a minute on to Hever, schedule four minutes. Number 75069 reached 47 miles per hour at Monks Lane but still lost a further 27 seconds to Hurst Green, schedule seven minutes, regained to Oxted. The locomotive was driven hard from the Oxted start, it attained 44 miles per hour at MP 17¾ and stopped at Woldingham in 6 minutes 11 seconds, schedule seven minutes, 875-925EDHP. The downhill sections and station stops from there on were smartly made, East Croydon, despite a signal check at Selsdon was reached on time.

Some performances with both Classes of 2-6-4 Tanks as a comparison with Standard Class 4-6-0 No.75069 are interesting. A LM Class 4 2-6-4 tank No.42104, in October 1958 with 245 tons on the 17.25 from East Grinstead [16.47 ex Tunbridge Wells West] ran Lingfield to Crowhurst Junction and Oxted to Woldingham in exactly the same times as No.75069 with 270 tons. At Crowhurst Junction and MP17¾ it reached 51 and 33 miles per hour. Another LM No.42074, with only 170 tons on the 10.47 ex Tunbridge Wells West ran Forest Row to East Grinstead in 7 minutes 51 seconds with 37 miles per hour on the 1/80, 800-850EDHP. Standard 2-6-4 Tank No.80083 with 210 tons in 1960, on the 15.47 ex Tunbridge Wells West, attained 32 miles per hour on the 1/80 before East Grinstead, ran Lingfield to Hurst Green in 7 minutes 17 seconds with 53 at Crowhurst Junction and Oxted to Woldingham in 6 minutes 15 with 43 at MP17¾, 780-830EDHP.

In the opposite direction Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank, No.80143 in March 1963 with seven coaches, 240 tons, on the 17.20 ex London Bridge [overall schedule 78 minutes to Groombridge] took 77 minutes 59 seconds It adhered closely to schedule [maximum deviation 69 seconds]. It passed Forest Hill three seconds within schedule [nine minutes] at 35 miles per hour and reached East Croydon eight seconds within [16 minutes]. It attained 29, 41 and 34 miles per hour on the three uphill stages between Sanderstead and Woldingham and 35 between Edenbridge, Hever and Cowden, Downhill 58 before Oxted, 62 at Monks Lane and 55 between Cowden and Ashurst.

The 2-6-4 Tank's, including the original LM variety which were initially received badly, achieved a performance level and reliability not previously known on the Oxted lines. It was ironic that when there were finally steam locomotives capable of successfully handling an intensive timetable they were replaced by diesel traction.

Chapter 23: Central Section, the 18.10 ex Victoria.

The best known [perhaps notorious] train on the Oxted lines was the 18.10 ex Victoria. The normal formation, after instatement as a through train to Brighton, was nine coaches to East Croydon and six after [three detached for East Grinstead]. It then stopped at Oxted, Edenbridge, Eridge and all stations to Brighton except Falmer. The Atlantics [H2 Class 4-4-2's normally, although often H1 No.32037] were regulars for some time after Nationalisation. They appear to have kept time, the 18.10 usually drew attention to itself when it didn't. The L Class 4-4-0's tried on the train in 1949, No.31766 on the 23rd June, No.31767 from the 27th to 6th July elicited the opinion they had nothing to spare with nine coaches to East Croydon, had to be "thrashed" to Oxted and leaving Edenbridge. Bearing in mind that in Southern Railway times a B4X Class 4-4-0 could time the train, this was a surprising conclusion.

Two years later the Atlantic's were replaced by LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's Nos.42086 and 42087 and the 18.10's profile rose. Initial reactions to the new motive power were not good and when in 1952 No.42087 was "in works" and the Atlantic's' returned there was universal joy. [At this time Atlantics regularly worked the 08.18 Uckfield to Victoria and the 08.22 Lewes to London Bridge returning with the 17.40 ex London Bridge and the 18.10]. However whilst the Atlantic's could be used outside of the summer months, they were then required for additional Newhaven Boat trains and inter Regional services.

The 18.10, or rather its indifferent timekeeping, had by 1953 reached the attention of C.J.Allen writing in the Railway Magazine. Mr. M.F.Proctor wrote stating that the I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank's had been unable to cope with the 18.10, whereas the Atlantic's were fine until one stalled on Grosvenor bank [leading up to Grosvenor Bridge over the river Thames] resulting in Stewarts Lane depot requesting a 2-6-4 Tank. Mr. P.S.Evetts, a regular traveller to Crowborough, had a different view, on September 11th a LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank lost 11 minutes, on the week beginning October 16th No.42105 lost six minutes on the Monday and Tuesday, on the Wednesday a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank lost 16 minutes. It was claimed that the 2-6-4 Tank's had to be worked on full Regulator and 40 to 45 percent cut off to keep schedule [harder working methods than on the Euston outer suburban services, regarded as the epitome of 2-6-4 Tank locomotive performance]. The 2-6-4 Tank's were not alone in causing problems. On the 9th October, an E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31504 with 320/350 tons took 24¼ minutes to reach East Croydon despite rear end banking up to Grosvenor Bridge, and lost another 13 minutes on to Crowborough.

The 18.10, predicating future developments, loaded to ten coaches on November 5th, all of which were worked through to Uckfield. This was for the celebrations at some Sussex towns with respect to a certain Mr. Hawkes and the regrettable desire to burn an effigy of the Pope. The locomotive employed that night was West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34104.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 18.10 difficulties in 1953

Mr.S.C.Nash joined the 18.10 discussion later in 1953. He observed that when the 2-6-4 Tank's were introduced on the Oxted lines, engine rosters were reorganised to achieve more intensive locomotive utilisation, locomotives spent longer days on the road. He observed that Tunbridge Wells had a better record than the larger depots, which he attributed to the fact that one footplate crew managed to stay longer on a particular locomotive. He stated that when the Atlantic's took over the 18.10 there were few complaints, the Tank engines suffered because time was spent taking water at Oxted and Eridge. He suggested a tender engine be rostered to the 15.50 and 18.10. Mr. P.S.Evetts submitted details of 38 runs with the 18.10: LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's lost 92 minutes ["engine loss"] on 18 runs - Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's lost 70 minutes on five - U1 Class 2-6-0's 37 minutes on eight - a U Class 2-6-0 kept to schedule three times - an H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32421 kept time once, on the other occasion it stalled on Grosvenor Bank and lost 18 minutes - an L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31783 lost four minutes on its solitary outing.

This correspondence prompted H.Booth to check his records of journeys made between December 1950 and July 1951 when the LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tanks first assumed the duty. The load was nine or ten coaches to East Croydon and 192 tons Tare, c. 210-215 tons Gross after. The best times between East Croydon and Oxted were 15 minutes 55 seconds and 16 minutes 25 seconds by No.42087 and 15 minutes 50 seconds and 16 minutes 10 seconds by No.42086. [There was a slight signal check on the second occasion]. H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32421 passed Woldingham in 11 minutes 10 seconds [the best time by 42086 was ten seconds quicker] and reached Oxted after a signal check in 17 minutes 17 seconds.

H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32424 was employed on the 9th, 22nd and 23rd September and passed Clapham Junction 14 minutes late on the last occasion. The motive power authorities took no risks with the special train for the bonfire activities that year, nine coaches, they provided a pilot, U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31903 to LM Class 2-6-4 tank No.42092. The following year a shortage of serviceable 2-6-4 Tank's resulted in the regular appearance of the Atlantic's and a U1 three times during January.

The Stephenson Locomotive Society published a letter from a Stewarts Lane depot fireman [under a pseudonym] in 1955. His views can be summarised as: the Atlantic's lacked adhesion - the 2-6-4 Tank's were incapable of supplying sufficient steam, maintaining water level and suffered through the need to take on water en route - the N Class 2-6-0's with their small diameter driving wheels lacked speed - the ideal locomotive a U Class 2-6-0. Number 31790, used three times, first evening was late into East Croydon because of signal checks at Windmill Bridge Junction, otherwise it would have been two minutes early, on the second arrived to time and on the third two minutes early. Boiler pressure was maintained at 195-200 pounds per square inch all the way with full Regulator. This compared with LM Class 2-6-4 No.42106, boiler pressure varied from 200 to 130 to 160 pounds per square inch, full Regulator to Balham, half open to Thornton Heath where it was closed.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region Pacific's on the 18.10, 1958

The fireman's letter prompted a response from his Stewarts Lane boss, R.H.N.Hardy. U Class 2-6-0 No.31790 was fresh out of Ashford works when used, Inspector McCarthy travelled on the footplate on three evenings out of ten and he [Hardy] had ridden on the train 60 times, only two minutes was lost. His personal view was the 2-6-4 Tank's required careful firing and N, U or U1 Class 2-6-0's could time the train. [Ref.30]

P.S.Evetts responded with a summary of his experiences over the years:- an L1 Class 4-4-0 had kept time - U Class 2-6-0 No.31790 sounded better than the U1 Class 2-6-0's - the N and K Class 2-6-0's were goods engines and could not time the train, [K No. 32338, tried on December 22nd after it had successfully hauled the 17.40 ex London Bridge, lost several minutes] - the U and U1 Class 2-6-0's had not been in trouble whereas engine men often struggled with the 2-6-4 Tank's. Numbers 42086 and 42087, when new kept time, troubles developed after a few months. Inspector McCarthy's arrival, reduced daily locomotive mileage and the involvement of a more senior link had improved matters. During the past nine weeks [mid 1955] a U1 Class 2-6-0 for eight weeks gave consistently good running whereas on the one week a 2-6-4 Tank did the honours the performance was moderate. He considered the Atlantic's the best locomotives used on the 18.10 over the years once they had successfully passed Grosvenor Road, the best performances of all were with Newhaven men, along with U Class 2-6-0 No.31790.

A 1955 comment appears apposite "It is odd that the LMS and Standard type 2-6-4 Tank's which excite little unfavourable comment on duties North of the Thames should be criticised so strongly on the Central Section". [Ref.31]

By 1958 operation of the 18.10 was considered satisfactory and commencing with the summer timetable the full load was taken to Oxted. Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80033 with nine coaches on June 9th was several minutes late at Oxted. Subsequently it was reduced to eight coaches, which with better station working at Oxted, improved overall punctuality. Locomotive rosters changed from 15th September, 4-6-2's for the 18.10, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34048 on the first day and from November 3rd the ninth coach was restored. The 2-6-4 Tank's appeared occasionally, on 18th September U Class 2-6-0 No.31639 and on 2nd October Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30934.

The best performance observed during this period was probably with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34066 on the 5th November, it ran East Croydon to Oxted in 15 minutes 40 seconds. There were often delays approaching Oxted due to the late running 17.49 ex Victoria. The 1959 operation ran smoothly, a Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30900, employed twice in February reportedly ran well. Locomotives in March were usually West Country Nos.34008 or 34019. Number 34008 on the 5th ran Victoria to East Croydon in 16 minutes 26 seconds and on the 6th with 325 tons Gross passed Upper Warlingham in 8 minutes 58 seconds before it was checked at Woldingham for the late running 17.49. Speeds after Oxted often reached the upper seventies between Hurst Green and Edenbridge.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region 4-6-2 performance on the 18.10

There was a lack of serviceable Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's in September 1959, 2-6-4 Tank's were used on three consecutive days, 4-6-2's on the next two, then a Schools Class 4-4-0 and then a 4-6-2 again. Platform arrangements were changed at Victoria from the 5th October with the result that no rear end banking could be provided. A West Country duly obliged and stalled on the approach to Grosvenor Bridge. Three days later Schools No.30916 was observed, running 11 minutes late at Edenbridge. The first rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2, No.34022 appeared on the train in 1960.

The formation was strengthened to ten coaches at the beginning of 1962, four detached at Oxted for East Grinstead, on February 7th it was ten coaches plus a van, probably 370 tons Gross, the heaviest ever. Three three-coach diesel multiple units took over from August 13th, the last steam hauled train taken by Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34055.

Personal experiences of the 18.10 were limited to six journeys in 1961. At this time schedules were; 17 minutes to East Croydon, 16 minutes to Oxted, seven and a half minutes to Edenbridge and 14½ minutes to Eridge. Motive power in April was Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34055 and Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30917, in July rebuilt Battle of Britain Nos.34101 and 34050 and in September rebuilt West Country Nos.34012 and No.34101. Loads were nine coaches, 291 to 298 tons Tare, c.330 tons Gross from East Croydon, the train was always very full as far as Oxted. On all six evenings it arrived a few seconds early at East Croydon. East Croydon to Oxted times were: 15 minutes 59 seconds - 16 minutes 48 seconds - 16 minutes 24 seconds - 16 minutes 8 seconds - 15 minutes 28 seconds - 16 minutes 28 seconds. The average EDHP over the 5.9 miles from South Croydon to Woldingham:- 1,150-1,200 - 1,025-1,075 by the 4-4-0 - 1,120-1,170 - 1,150-1,200 - 1,165-1,215 - 1,100-1,150. The best time to Upper Warlingham 9 minutes 17 seconds by No.34012, maxima before the Oxted stop 59 to 64 miles per hour. Numbers 34012 and 34055 both accelerated to 38 miles per hour on the initial stretch of 1/100, 1,225-1,275EDHP.

The 4-6-2's had considerable power to spare on this working. When the Schools Class appeared around the platform curve at East Croydon a boarding passenger was heard to say, "Ah, a real locomotive tonight", but despite being driven quite hard the real locomotive lost three quarters of a minute to Oxted. The crew at Eridge firmly opined that the working was onerous for a 4-4-0.

Downhill from Oxted to Edenbridge, with six coaches took: 7 minutes 13 seconds - 7 minutes 16 seconds - 7 minutes 18 seconds - 7 minutes 38 seconds - 6 minutes 48 seconds - 7 minutes 10 seconds [6¾ minutes Net]. Maxima were 68, 66, 62, 57, 72 and 71 miles per hour. There was a clear road onwards to Eridge on only one evening, times were: 17 minutes 28 seconds [13 minutes Net] - 15 minutes 9 seconds [14 minutes Net] - 14 minutes 54 seconds [14 minutes Net] - 14 minutes 34 seconds - 14 minutes 8 seconds [11¾ minutes Net] - 14 minutes 58 seconds [12¼ minutes Net].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern 80 miles per hour on the Oxted Lines

The exciting run was with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34012, 51 miles per hour reached on the 1/120 up to Markbeech tunnel and 82 before Ashurst [6.5 miles from Edenbridge] passed in 7 minutes 39 seconds before signal checks spoilt the fun. On the others maxima were 64, 65, 58, 61 and 67 miles per hour. Number 34050 was driven close to schedule over the three sections, 16 minutes 8 seconds, 7 minutes 38 seconds and 14 minutes 34 seconds, maximum speeds on the three stages were 59, 57 and 61 miles per hour. Number 34012, with Net times of 15½, six and three quarter and 11¾ minutes plus an assumed 16 minutes from Victoria to East Croydon achieved an overall Net running time of 50 minutes from Victoria to Eridge, for many years the non stop schedule from Victoria to Eridge was 53 minutes. The 80 miles per hour recorded between Cowden and Ashurst was the most unexpected 80 recorded by the author on the Southern.

Chapter 24: Central Section – the Main Line.

Most steam hauled passenger trains on the Brighton Main Line after South Croydon were either Newhaven Boat's or the various inter regional's via the West London Joint or the Reading Redhill route. Although the Evening train to Forest Row failed to reappear in the Timetable after the War, the return Reading to London Bridge via Redhill service did.

Motive power for the Reading train for many years was a two-cylinder Maunsell 2-6-0. The Up train loaded lightly, the Down included a Tonbridge portion detached at Redhill. Standard Class 4 2-6-0's working on the Redhill to Reading section from 1955 onwards handled the duty for a time. On an Up personal journey on the 4th of November 1957 No.76062 with five coaches ran the favourably graded 15.0 miles from Coulsdon South to London Bridge in 20 minutes 6 seconds, with a maximum of 64 miles per hour, schedule 20 minutes. The 17.25 was allowed 22 minutes to the first stop at Coulsdon South after which it served all stations to Wokingham and then Reading South, the Tonbridge portion stopped at all stations from Redhill onwards. The train usually loaded to eight or nine coaches as far as Redhill, personal regular observations at various points on the route between Norwood Junction and Coulsdon North between 1951 and 1959 indicated good punctuality by the various 2-6-0's. There were occasions when other types were employed, on the 7th November 1955 T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30718 worked the 07.27 and the 17.25 and four years later L Class 4-4-0 No.31760 was observed on the duty.

Punctuality of the evening train declined, after it was increased to ten corridor coaches from April 4th 1960 [four detached at Redhill for Tonbridge]. Fortunately at this time Schools Class 4-4-0's recently allocated to the Redhill Reading section were available and replaced the 2-6-0's, they continued with the duty until all remaining members of the Class were withdrawn at the end of 1962. The last time one appeared was on December 28th 1962 when No. 30922 worked Up to London Bridge on the 07.27 but instead of returning to Reading on the evening Train hauled the 17.40 via Eridge to Brighton where it was withdrawn from service.

The duty was rostered for a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 following the withdrawal of the Schools Class, there was one week when N Class 2-6-0's were used before the service was suddenly withdrawn from the middle of February 1963. The 17.25 became an electric train to Redhill where it connected with steam hauled trains to Reading and Tonbridge. In theory the service had been temporarily withdrawn due to coal shortages as a result of the severe winter but in practice the longstanding through Reading to London service had finally ceased.

Another steam hauled passenger train from London Bridge to Redhill the 04.50 to Margate was a train made for gentle travelling. The locomotive was usually a Maunsell 2-6-0, after the initiation of the second stage of the Kent electrification in 1961 it only ran as far as Tonbridge.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Central Section Newspaper Trains

The 04.50 ran for a last time on January 4th 1964, the locomotive was N Class 2-6-0 No.31827, the final valedictory to South Eastern steam hauled passenger services. There was another steam hauled passenger train from London Bridge some twenty minutes later, the actual departure time varied over the years, although this one ran to Brighton via Sutton, Horsham, Steyning and Shoreham. It offered another sedentary experience, stopping at all stations once clear of the inner Suburbs, motive power varied over the years and ultimately graduated to a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 from November 12th 1959 onwards.

An earlier steam departure for Brighton via the Main Line was the 03.25, essentially a newspaper train but with one coach for passengers, schedule to Brighton 82 minutes in 1949 with stops of one minute duration at Redhill, Three Bridges and Haywards Heath. It reversed at Brighton [departure 05.00] and continued to Eastborne. Motive power in 1948 was a Schools Class 4-4-0 to Brighton and an I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank from there to Eastborne. The 03.25 until shortly before Nationalisation was a New Cross Gate duty, when that depot closed the duty was transferred to Bricklayers Arms who initially rostered a Maunsell 2-6-0 which were after a time assessed as unsuitable.

The Sunday Newspaper service departed later at 04.45 with a Brighton arrival at 06.27. This was subsequently altered to a non stop run to Preston Park [62 minutes in the 1954 W.T.T.] and Brighton arrival 05.50. The 04.45 was regularly worked by a 2-6-0. Another train left at 04.50 for Eastborne which in 1950 was reached at 06.34 after stops at East Croydon, Haywards Heath and Lewes, overall running time 95 minutes, motive power usually an I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank. A portion for Bognor Regis detached at East Croydon was not available to passengers beyond Three Bridges.

The 03.25 was hauled by Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's for a time in 1951 they were transferred away from Brighton depot and U1 Class 2-6-0's and Class 4 2-6-4 tank's were used and considered unsatisfactory. West Country Nos.34046 and 34047 were transferred back to Brighton. The early morning trains were occasionally used to work locomotives to Brighton works; on the 29th January 1956 Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30859 hauled the 04.45 from London Bridge, 14 vans plus the one passenger coach and arrived seven minutes late at Brighton. The delay was attributed to PWR. slacks.

The early morning newspaper trains varied over the years. The weekday 03.25 was replaced by two trains commencing with the winter timetable of 1959. The 03.20 ran to Brighton in 72 minutes after a two and a half minutes stop at Redhill, the 03.27 to Eastborne, reached at 05.33 [seven stops en route and a running time of 100 minutes]. The last steam hauled newspaper train was the 03.27 which ran on 4th January 1964 and was noted arriving three minutes early at Eastborne behind Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34070. This train was allowed five minutes at the last stop Hampden Park, it must be assumed it left there early as a time of two minutes for the 2.0 miles start to stop to Eastborne seems unlikely even for some end of term fun.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance in the wee small hours

Locomotive performance on the early morning newspaper trains could be quite stimulating, there were often delays leaving London and with the prospect of a clear road south of Coulsdon there were opportunities to regain lost time. W.G.Skinner spent much of his working life at Redhill station and often travelled to Brighton for duties there. He travelled on the 03.20 ex London Bridge one morning in 1962 from Redhill to Brighton, when Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34057 had 240 tons Tare, 300 tons Gross, the large difference between Tare and Gross weights explained by the newspapers and magazines. Haywards Heath, 17.0 miles from Redhill was passed in 16 minutes 40 seconds, average speeds were 65 miles per hour from Three Bridges to Balcombe Tunnel and 73 from there to Haywards Heath. There was a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour after Haywards Heath, Clayton Summit was passed in 25 minutes 40 seconds and Brighton reached in 31 minutes 9 seconds, 28½ minutes Net for the 29.9 miles.

Some months later Mr. Skinner travelled on the same train when due to permanent way works it was diverted via the Quarry line and stopped at Earlswood in lieu of Redhill. The locomotive was rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34013 with 220 tons Tare, 275 tons Gross. It passed Three Bridges, 7.7 miles from Earlswood in 7 minutes 49 seconds and averaged 72½ miles per hour from there to Balcombe Tunnel. Speed was restrained due to 75 miles per hour restricted vehicles in the formation on the downhill section to Keymer Junction, 19.3 miles, passed in 17 minutes 20 seconds. The 8.4 miles to Preston Park took 7 minutes 17 seconds with 66 to 67 miles per hour maintained on the 1/264 to Clayton tunnel. Brighton was reached in 27 minutes 4 seconds, without the 75 miles per hour limit the time could have been one minute less, schedule from Redhill to Brighton was 39 minutes, two minutes less from Earlswood.

Thirty years after electrification of the Brighton line passenger service and 60 years after Driver Tompsetts epic journey the Bulleid Pacific's hauled 300 tons trains up the long gradients of the Brighton line at similar speeds to his when he ran from Victoria to Brighton in less than 50 minutes. There were rumours in the early sixties of speeds in the Haywards Heath area not only exceeding the 75 miles per hour van restriction but the line speed of 85 miles per hour by a considerable margin. A record of a Pacific' travelling at 100 miles per hour would be an appropriate conclusion to steam on the Brighton Line, regrettably the author has never seen any supporting data for such claims, even less for the reported London Bridge to Brighton [presumably Preston Park] time of 38 minutes. Whatever happened, steam locomotives were a long time dying on the Central Section but they died well.

Chapter 25: Central Section – Tonbridge to Reading and other routes.

The inter-regional Birkenhead Margate was the only express passenger train over the Tonbridge to Reading section, at peak times it ran in several separate sections. Some omitted stops, others ran non stop between Redhill and Tonbridge, eg. Saturday 06.05 Reading Margate allowed 27 minutes for the 19.9 miles, in June 1957 10.37 Saturday Reading to Margate 28 minutes.

The 14.45 ex Margate was allowed 27 minutes over the adversely graded Tonbridge to Redhill sector and for many years was a Schools Class 4-4-0 duty, Three personal experiences [two to schedule, one better than] involved Nos.30934 in 1956 and 30924 and 30933 in 1958 with 210, 295 and 290 tons. Overall times were 28 minutes 24 seconds, 25 minutes 44 seconds and 30 minutes 52 seconds. Nutfield [17.9 miles] was passed in, 24 minutes 14 seconds, 21 minutes 2 seconds and 23 minutes 49 seconds followed by signal checks on the first two and a stop on the third. The average speeds over the adverse 13.5 miles from Penshurst to Nutfield were 49, 60 and 51½ miles per hour. Number 30924 developed 1,000-1,050EDHP.

The 10.16 Redhill to Reading [07.55 ex Eastborne via Heathfield, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge] omitted some stops between Redhill and Reading. For many years it was a Gillingham duty, usually a 4-4-0. From November 7th 1958 it became a Tonbridge duty and Schools Class 4-4-0's appeared, at a later date King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, sent to Redhill depot for storage. By 1961 it was a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank duty and stopped at Reigate, Deepdene and Dorking Town between Redhill and Guildford, [schedules, four, eight, two and 19 minutes]. Number 80065 with 165 tons took 4 minutes 46 seconds, 7 minutes 19 seconds, 2 minutes 16 seconds and 19 minutes 34 seconds [17 minutes Net]. The maximum before Deepdene was 64 miles per hour. MP33¾, 3.2 miles from Dorking, mostly at 1/96, was passed in 6 minutes exactly at 41 miles per hour, following which there were signal checks.

In the opposite direction the 11.05 ex Reading ran of non stop running Guildford to Gomshall and was invariably rostered for a Western Region [former GWR] locomotive. A personal experience in September 1963 involved Manor Class 4-6-0 No.7806 with 215 tons. It left Guildford three minutes late, passed Shalford Junction in exactly three minutes as per schedule, with speed reduced to 22 miles per hour, touched 43 at Shalford, fell to 33 on the 1/96 and with a maximum of 47 reached Gomshall in 13 minutes 41 seconds. Gomshall was left in 14 minutes, the maximum before the next stop at Dorking Town was 60 miles per hour and with 36 attained on the uphill section from Deepdene to Betchworth the stop there was made in 29 minutes 58 seconds. The overall schedule was 31 minutes, the running schedule 27½ minutes, the actual running time 28 minutes 14 seconds, as often time regained the result of shortened station times not of footplate enthusiasm.

Redhill to Reading line trains were usually three coaches with two or three more added at the busier times, motive power normally N or U Class 2-6-0's.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the Redhill Reading line

Normal performance was sedate, as per timetable demands, but on occasions either when recovering lost time or through sheer joie de vivre livelier running occurred. A U No.31797 in 1961 with 135 tons attained 37 miles per hour at MP 33¾ in the westbound direction and two years later N No.31824 with 215 tons 31. Eastbound U No.31638 with 155 tons reached 35 miles per hour on the 1/100 leaving Chilworth, N No.31850 with 110 tons 45 and N No.31823 with 175 tons 32. Number 31850 left Guildford late and continued time recovery reaching 68 miles per hour on the descent to Dorking Town.

The 13.50 ex Reading was the return working of the, normally three coaches [111 minutes to Redhill, 22½ minutes at the 15 stops]. Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80085 with 105 tons took 108 minutes 50 seconds, [running time 80 minutes 47 seconds] with a PWR slack between Ash and Wanborough and 60 miles per hour twice, before Winnersh Halt and Dorking Town.

Diesel multiple units were introduced to the Tonbridge to Reading service on January 4th 1965. On the last Saturday of steam haulage, the 12.34 Redhill to Reading hauled by N Class 2-6-0 No.31816 with 140 tons reached Guildford in 46 minutes 3 seconds after seven stops [schedule 48 minutes], running time 42 minutes 37 seconds [schedule 42 minutes]. Speed reached 34 miles per hour at MP33¾, the maximum downhill was 59. The 18.48½ [W.T.T. exactitude] from Guildford with U Class 2-6-0 No.31627 and 110 tons reached Redhill in 57 minutes 31 seconds, schedule 44½ minutes after standing at Reigate for nine and a half minutes. Running time was 45¼ minutes, schedule 40½ minutes. The train was one minute late on arrival at Reigate, time lost by the locomotive recovered at stations, not a celebratory ending.

Steam hauled passenger trains on the Mid Sussex line were rare, the early morning one to Brighton which followed the route as far as Christs Hospital, the occasional through excursion from the LM Region to Bognor or Littlehampton and sometimes the early morning steam hauled newspaper train from Waterloo to Portsmouth.

The Guildford to Horsham route was used regularly by excursions from Reading to Brighton [but not as before the War to Bognor or Littlehampton]. On Whit Sunday 1950 for example there were specials from Cheltenham, Surbiton and Reading to Brighton all made up to ten coaches, hauled over the line by Q1 Class 0-6-0 Nos. 33002 and 33009 and 700 Class 0-6-0 No.30309. They all ran to Horsham where they reversed rather than as previously by complicated manoeuvres at Christs Hospital. Although 0-6-0's frequently fulfilled these duties there were exceptions, for instance on 28th June 1953 D Class 4-4-0 No.31586 took nine coaches from Reading to Horsham.

The regular Guildford to Horsham and Horsham to Brighton services were mainly provided by auto sets until 1961 hauled by H or M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank's. They were then replaced with ordinary coaching sets hauled by Standard Class 4 2-6-4 or LM Class 2 2-6-2 Tank's. Diesel Multiple units were employed before the final closure on the Steyning Line.

Chapter 26: The Western Section.1948-62

The Waterloo to Southampton and Bournemouth line attracted more enthusiast attention than those to the Sussex and Kent coasts post Nationalisation. It had regular express trains, interspersed with semi-fasts, reasonably heavy loads [12 coaches, sometimes 13] and initially motive power variety, particularly at peak periods and long high speed stretches.

Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 Nos.35025 to 35030 inclusive were allocated to Bournemouth depot in 1949, Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's had been rostered to Bournemouth trains earlier. The number of available 4-6-2's at the end of summer 1948 was such that King Arthur Class 4-6-0's were placed in store for the winter at Nine Elms and Eastleigh depots although most returned to service before Easter 1949. The new motive power reduced the need to use older locomotives despite which T9 Class 4-4-0 No.119 and T14 Class 4-6-0 No.30446 returned to service before the Easter. The heaviest train was the "Bournemouth Belle", regularly in excess of 500 tons at peak periods. In practice it was probably the only train that justified the use of Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's on the Bournemouth service.

Summer Saturday trains were frequent in 1949, 43 Main Line departures [including West of England] ex Waterloo from 07.00 to 13.00. Schedules fortunately were not demanding, despite the new motive power the H15 Class 4-6-0's were used extensively, e.g. on the 15.20 ex Waterloo [the S15 Class 4-6-0's and Maunsell 2-6-0's were available as a final resort]. However at times even these were unavailable, on the 13th August a T9 Class 4-4-0 fitted with a six-wheeled tender had ten coaches on the 10.38 Waterloo to Swanage. Locomotive availability was ample when compared with coaching stock, the intensive use of which led to some very tight turn-round times at Termini, particularly if cleaning was undertaken. The stock for instance arriving at Waterloo at 15.08 ex Torrington in Devon was expected to form the 15.30 to Bournemouth.

The weekday situation was less frenetic; the most powerful locomotives were allocated to the premier trains. The Up morning trains for instance: 07.38 Weymouth to Waterloo [arrival 10.54, 75 minutes from Winchester], Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2. [Dorchester depot could not accommodate such large locomotives, the Merchant Navy worked light engine in the "wee small hours" from Bournemouth to Wimborne, 04.52 Wimborne [03.50 ex Salisbury] to Weymouth, normally two coaches and a van] - 07.20 Bournemouth West, ten coaches, Waterloo [arrival 10.00, 72 minutes Winchester to Waterloo], Nine Elms Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 – 07.03 Southampton Docks to Waterloo, stops at Eastleigh, Winchester, Micheldever and Basingstoke [51 minutes non stop to Waterloo], usually a Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 which with a clear road arrived Waterloo two minutes early.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth to Waterloo performance 1949-1950

Bournemouth depot at the end of 1949 lost two of its allocated Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, adjudged more useful on Eastern section Boat trains, and received in exchange Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's Nos.34044 and 45.

The ability of the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's to gain time on even the most arduous of duties was demonstrated on the 9th October, when following a fire in a Pullman carriage the "Bournemouth Belle" left Southampton late. The locomotive regained ten minutes to Waterloo with c.470 tons Gross [11 coaches after removal of the offending vehicle] On the 87 minutes schedule. Merchant Navy performance on the "Bournemouth Belle" was normally competent; they had as noted a comfortable margin of power. Two examples confirm this, No.21C14 with 500 tons ran unchecked from Southampton to Waterloo in 83 minutes 15 seconds with 56 miles per hour maintained on the climb to Litchfield [Ref.32]. The same locomotive, now renumbered 35014, with 515 tons maintained 57 to 58 miles per hour on the climb and with faster running East of Basingstoke, maximum 82, reached Waterloo in 79 minutes 9 seconds. The EDHP at Micheldever was 1,500-1,550 and 1,590-1,640, a moderate level of working. O.S.Nock, when travelling on the footplate of No.35014, noted the locomotive accelerate with 520 tons to 56 miles per hour on the 1/256 after a signal check at MP70¾, with 180 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and 25 percent cut off. [Ref.33]

The older locomotives could maintain schedule on other trains, even when heavily loaded. An original Urie N15 Class 4-6-0 with 12 coaches, 420 tons Gross, ran from Southampton to Waterloo in 89 minutes including a PWR slack, 87½ minutes Net. The 07.38 ex Weymouth loaded to 13 coaches after Bournemouth and with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35020 and 35016 it ran from Southampton to Winchester in 17 minutes 52 seconds and including a PWR slack 19 minutes. The continuations to Waterloo took 75 minutes 57 seconds and 68 minutes 2 seconds. The first, delayed by a stop for signals and a PWR slack, reached 56 miles per hour at Litchfield, 82 after Basingstoke and 80 at Hampton Court Junction, on the second 50 at Litchfield and 83 east of Basingstoke. EDHP at Litchfield was 1,430-1,480 and 1,230-1,280, more if the trains were still accelerating.

O.S.Nock timed a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 in the Down direction on the "Bournemouth Belle" with 520 tons when it reached Southampton in 86¾ minutes, schedule 88 minutes, the continuation to Bournemouth Central took 33 minutes. The minimum at MP31 was 54 miles per hour, the maximum before Eastleigh 75. [Ref.34]. By comparison Merchant Navy's Nos.35013 and 35019 with 510 and 515 tons ran to Southampton in 83 minutes 5 seconds and 87 minutes, 78 minutes Net, with signal checks, twice before Basingstoke, once after Eastleigh. Number 35019 also passed MP31 at 54 miles per hour but was three minutes quicker, 33 minutes 35 seconds, the maxima around Winchester were 79 and 87. The older locomotives regularly hauled heavy trains, other than the "Belle", to time. F.Cuncliffe noted a Urie N15 Class 4-6-0 maintain a 96 minutes non stop schedule from Waterloo to Southampton with 12 coaches, 390 tons, 88 minutes Net.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Summer Saturday Service intensity

The Urie N15 passed Basingstoke in 53¾ minutes after 52 miles per hour minimum at MP31. Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0, No.855 with 490 tons ran to Southampton in 91½ minutes, minimum 46 miles per hour at MP31, 54 minutes 58 seconds to Basingstoke. Another Lord Nelson No.854, including a signal check took 97 minutes with 475 tons. There was a shortage of serviceable Merchant Navy and West Country Class 4-6-2's in May 1950. The N15 ["King Arthur"] and N15X ["Remembrance"] Class 4-6-0's placed in store the previous autumn, found plenty of work on return to service in the spring. The "Bournemouth Belle" usually had a Battle of Britain/West Country whilst the other Bournemouth trains regularly had King Arthur's. In practice, with the exception of the "Bournemouth Belle" in both directions and the 07.38 ex Weymouth, east of Bournemouth the King Arthur's maintained schedule provided the locomotive was in good condition and footplate crews keen.

The summer service, particularly Saturday's, was very intensive, some observations give a flavour. During a five hours period at Worting Junction one light engine and 80 passenger trains [no freight] were noted working to or from the Bournemouth or West of England routes. Locomotives were:- 22 Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's - 20 King Arthur, ten Mixed Traffic [Classes H15 and S15] and eight Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's - six Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - four N15x Class 4-6-0.s - various 2-6-0's. The inter-Regional trains were mainly handled by 4-6-0's [King Arthur, S15 and N15] and U Class 2-6-0's. R.A.H.Weight observed in a four and a half hour period at Waterloo; 24 4-6-2's, ten King Arthur's, seven Lord Nelson's, three mixed traffic 4-6-0's, two N15X and one U 2-6-0. There were ten departures from Waterloo on Saturday 22nd from 08.30 to 11.20, which illustrate summer Saturday variety on Bournemouth line trains. Destinations were: Lymington, Bournemouth, Swanage or Weymouth, locomotives were:- Merchant Navy No.35005 - Battle of Britain/West Country Nos.34060 and 34106 - Urie N15 Nos.30742 and 30745 - King Arthur No.30780 - Lord Nelson No.30858 - N15x No.32332 - T14 Class 4-6-0 No.30446 - U No.31613. On the previous Saturday the 12.20 Waterloo to Bournemouth had T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30312.

Sixty trains [Up and Down] passed between Brookwood and Farnborough from 13.00 to 17.00. Three were empty stock workings, a 700 Class 0-6-0, a T9 Class 4-4-0 and a Urie N15 Class 4-6-0 respectively, the 0-6-0 travelling in excess of 50 miles per hour. The others involved 50 different locomotives: 13 King Arthur Class 4-6-0's - 12 Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's [only one Battle of Britain] - seven Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's - six Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - four H15 and four S15 Class 4-6-0's - two N15X Class 4-6-0's - one U Class 2-6-0 - one T9 Class 4-4-0. The Western Section was busy everywhere on these Saturdays, there were for instance 11 Up trains from Poole from 13.30 to 15.30, with the 1/60 gradient towards Parkstone a significant operating challenge. The W.T.T. stipulated all Southern Region trains exceeding ten coaches take a rear end banker. The absurdity of this blanket dictate well illustrated by a U Class 2-6-0, which had to haul ten coaches unassisted [Western Region, ex GWR stock] on the through train from Cardiff via Salisbury and Wimborne from a stop at Parkstone.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo to Bournemouth Timetable improvement 1949-51

Trains emanating from the London Midland Region via the Somerset and Dorset Joint route were seldom banked. The LM Class 5 4-6-0's regularly hauled 12 coaches unassisted up the 1/60, including the "Pines Express" which included a heavy Restaurant Car in the formation. The LM locomotives were at the end of their journey, the Southern ones had 115 miles to go, but! The Southern Region tried to reduce the use of banking locomotives in the spring of 1949, the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's handled 400 tons without difficulty. However in the early summer a Q Class 0-6-0 had to take 11 coaches unassisted and as a result of its efforts the local fire brigade was fully employed with line-side fires for the rest of the afternoon. Banking locomotives from Poole to Parkstone were usually 0-4-4 Tank's or 0-6-0's, the Sunday 14.00 ex Weymouth usually had a 4-6-2 tender first. Summer Saturday timekeeping from Poole not surprisingly was poor. The 13.32 ex Swanage was a regular offender following a very short stock turn-round of the 09.17 ex Waterloo. The London Midland Region trains, often late at Poole, were delayed further due to congestion on the short journey to Bournemouth West. On one Saturday in 1950 the average time over this 4.4 miles long section was one hour, as a general rule if the "Pines Express" left Poole ten minutes late it would be 60 minutes late on arrival at Bournemouth West.

There were some improvements in the Waterloo Bournemouth Weymouth weekday timetable in the 1949 to 1951 period. There were in June 1949 for instance six trains from Weymouth to London: the 07.38 [I], 09.20 [II], 11.30 [III], 13.23 [IV], 17.35 [V] and 18.30 [VI]. These left Southampton at 09.17, 11.20, 13.20, 15.22, 19.20 and 20.50:- [I] stopped Winchester and then ran non stop to Waterloo in 75 minutes, arrival 10.54 - [II] non stop to Waterloo in 99 minutes, arrival 12.59 - [III] non stop in 96 minutes, arrival 14.56 - [IV] non stop in 96 minutes, arrival 16.58 - [V] non stop in 98 minutes, arrival 20.58 - [VI] semi-fast, arrival 23.01. There were few improvements in 1950, the only Up trains benefiting were the 08.35 and 15.05 semi-fast's ex Bournemouth West. As the Railway Correspondence and Travel Journal noted, "It is still possible to find trains on the route [London to Bournemouth] which are slower than in Wartime". In June 1951:- [I] left Weymouth four minutes earlier, Southampton at 09.16½ and ran Winchester to Waterloo in 72 minutes, Waterloo arrival 10.50 - [II] Southampton to Waterloo non stop in 94 minutes, arrival 12.54 - [III] 89 minutes non stop, arrival 14.49 - [IV] left Southampton two minutes earlier, 92 minutes non stop - [V] 91 minutes non stop, arrival seven minutes earlier - [VI] arrival two minutes earlier. There were trains from Bournemouth West in 1949 at 08.35, 11.02, 13.05, 15.05 and 17.05, semi-fast to Waterloo - Southampton departure 09.56, 12.20, 14.20, 16.23 and 18.20 - The 07.20 from Bournemouth stopped Winchester after Southampton [departure 08.26] and ran from there to Waterloo non stop in 72 minutes. The "Bournemouth Belle" left the West station at 16.34 and after the Central station stop, Southampton at 17.23 on an 87 minutes non stop schedule to Waterloo. The semi-fast trains reached Waterloo at 12.07, 14.19, 16.13, 18.36 and 20.26. Bournemouth and Southampton departure times in 1951 were similar, Waterloo arrivals earlier: 08.35 ex Bournemouth by 12 minutes - 13.05 by four minutes - 15.05 by six minutes - 17.05 by three minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Inauguration of the "Royal Wessex" 1951

In 1949 the 08.35 ex Bournemouth was shown in the W.T.T. working Local Line from Basingstoke to Farnborough, the 15.05 Local from Basingstoke to Surbiton. The improvements over the two years brought schedules to within a few minutes of pre-war standards.

The 07.34 ex Weymouth and the corresponding Down service, 16.35 ex Waterloo, were named the "Royal Wessex" with effect from May 3rd 1951. The inaugural Up train hauled by West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34105 lost time initially through slipping badly in Bincombe tunnel on the climb out of Weymouth, most of the time was recovered by Waterloo, [later in the year No.34110 slipped to a standstill in the tunnel]. West Country No.34008 hauled the Down train, 13 coaches, c. 446 tons Tare with six coaches detached at Bournemouth Central and two at Wareham for Swanage. The regular motive power was a 4-6-2 as had been the norm for the two years before the train was titled. A Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30862 headed the Up train on the 13th January 1951 and gained four minutes on schedule as far as Winchester. The Festival of Britain year not only witnessed the inauguration of the "Royal Wessex" but the use of two BR Standard Class 7 Britannia 4-6-2's on Bournemouth trains. Numbers 70009 and 70014, allocated to Nine Elms, regularly worked the 08.30 ex Waterloo to Bournemouth West returning on the 13.05 and at times also the 10.30 Down and the "Bournemouth Belle".

With more large locomotives available for the summer Saturday service in 1951 the T9 Class 4-4-0's were not used and the H15 and S15 Class 4-6-0's seldom. Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's usually worked the Swanage trains via Wimborne. The 09.17 and 10.38 ex Waterloo ran to the first stop at Southampton in 95 and 91 minutes and continued non stop over the 45.6 miles to Wareham in 68 and 72 minutes respectively. In the Up direction the 09.15 ex Swanage ran via Bournemouth and the 11.34 and 13.33 via Wimborne. Schedules from Wareham to the next stop at Southampton were 67 minutes and continuing to Waterloo 98 and 96 minutes. The Down 10.38 occasionally had U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31890 rather than the rostered 4-6-2. The 4-6-2's did not always run with distinction, a West Country No.34106 with 13 coaches on the 11.34 ex Swanage [eight coaches from Weymouth were added to the Swanage train at Wareham] took 19 minutes to run from Hamworthy Junction to Broadstone, schedule 6 minutes. It slipped on wet rails and took 3 minutes 45 seconds to cover one quarter of a mile, a gentle walking pace. The 4-6-2's as already noted had problems on the "Royal Wessex" leaving Weymouth, particularly in Bincombe tunnel. They were limited to 290 tons unassisted from Weymouth, Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's to 300 tons and the Western Region Castle Class 4-6-0's to 310 tons.

There were occasions when the general performance of the 4-6-2's was poor for no obvious reason, Merchant Navy No.35013 left Weymouth 51 minutes late on the 17.35 and despite the incentive to regain time then took 7 minutes 38 seconds to pass Moreton from the Dorchester start. It then attained 78 miles per hour but the time to Wareham was 17 minutes 38 seconds with a PWR slack before the station, schedule 16 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Pacific performance from Bournemouth, 1951-1952

Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's often ran well on the Up "Bournemouth Belle". [Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's were used on the 9th and 10th June, five minutes lost on the second day] Three journeys behind Nos.35019, 35015 and 35012 with 510, 505 and 500 tons gave Southampton to Waterloo times of 80 minutes 30 seconds, 81 minutes 14 seconds and 86 minutes 11 seconds [84 minutes Net, signal checks at Swaythling and Worting Junction]. Number 35019 attained 57 miles per hour at Winchester, fell to 52 at Litchfield tunnel, passed Worting Junction in 35 minutes 11 seconds [schedule 38 minutes] Woking in 55 minutes 58 seconds and after 82 maximum, Clapham Junction in 74 minutes 2 seconds. Number 35015 was 93 seconds faster to Worting Junction, with 57 miles per hour at Winchester, 62 after and 57 at Roundwood, [1,750-1,800EDHP at 62 miles per hour]. Speeds after Worting Junction were moderate with Woking passed in 56 minutes 53 seconds. Number 35017 slowed for signals at Swaythling then achieved the same time from Winchester to Worting Junction, 16 minutes 12 seconds as No. 35015, the maximum after Worting Junction was 77 miles per hour. Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 on the 07.20 ex Bournemouth with the usual ten coaches, 335 tons lost 40 seconds from Winchester to Waterloo, schedule 72 minutes, with a signal check before Worting Junction and at Surbiton, 66 to 67 minutes Net. Between checks it attained 53 miles per hour after Winchester and 81 at Fleet. [Ref.35]

A Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 invariably hauled the Up "Royal Wessex" in 1952 and often lost time. Many considered the 130 minutes schedule from Bournemouth to Waterloo with two intermediate stops and 480-490 tons too much for these locomotives, with hindsight a statement difficult to reconcile with subsequent performances. It appears likely that the crews, used to timing the train with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, when driving one of the smaller locomotives, particularly on the rising grades between Southampton and Litchfield set the controls as for the larger machines.

There were on the first Summer Saturday of 1952, unlike 1951, many trains hauled by H15 and S15 Class 4-6-0's with inevitably some late running, the 14.10 ex Bournemouth was once 40 minutes late. The King Arthur and Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's were used extensively on both the 12th and 19th July, 19 King Arthur's and 12 Lord Nelson's passed Eastleigh over a seven hours period, by comparison 14 Pacific's were seen including three Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's. The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society carried out a traffic survey on August 23rd between Waterloo and Poole. Waterloo arrivals between 08.10 and 15.10 were on average 13½ minutes late, delays increased after this. The shortest turn-round of steam hauled passenger stock was 19 minutes, following a nine and a half minutes late arrival, with the result the 09.24 to Weymouth left on time. T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30719 took the 12.22 to Bournemouth. Most observers focussed their attention on the Pacific's but the Lord Nelson's could perform well. On the 14th September 1952 No.30857 with 12 coaches on the 18.20 ex Waterloo ran the 36.0 miles from Winchfield pass to Swaythling pass in 30 minutes 6 seconds with 53 minimum, 78 and 80 miles per hour at Wootton, Winchester and Shawford. [Ref.36]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, temporary withdrawal of Pacific's from Service, 1953

The first of the Urie designed N15 Class 4-6-0's was withdrawn from service in 1953. Pre-war memories were evoked when a Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30931 worked the 09.20 ex Weymouth to Waterloo in March, this Eastleigh duty no doubt a less than direct method of returning the locomotive to the Eastern Section after attention at the Works. The following month a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 suffered a fractured driving wheel whilst travelling at speed on the West of England route. This led to the subsequent withdrawal from service of all the Class for testing and checking followed by the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's [commenced May 18th].

Various locomotives were borrowed to overcome the resultant motive power shortage. Nine Elms depot received six former LNER V2 Class 2-6-2's plus a Kings Cross depot top link driver, made up to acting Inspector to assist with the introduction of these strange, to Southern eyes, machines. The V2's required some minor surgery to meet the loading gauge around Southampton, cab steps were cut back and certain live steam pipes moved several inches. The first day one appeared, on the 10.30 ex Waterloo, it reached Southampton three minutes early at 11.56 and Bournemouth Central on time at 12.41. The return was with the 15.05 semi-fast. The V2's had 6 feet 2 inches diameter coupled wheels and three cylinders [18½ inches diameter by 26 inches stroke]. The boiler working pressure was 220 pounds per square inch and the total heating area 3,111 square feet [2,216 square feet in the boiler tubes, 215 square feet in the firebox and 680 square feet in the superheater tubes]. The fire grate area was 41.2 square feet and the locomotive weighed 93 tons, the tender an additional 51 tons. A V2 No.60916 was at work on Basingstoke semi-fast's on Whit-Monday whilst a Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70009 hauled the "Bournemouth Belle" from May 12th, the first V2 took over the duty on the 15th. The Western Section borrowed four Britannia's from the Western Region. The first Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 re-entered service after testing on May 17th and to partially ameliorate the loss of the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's then taken out of service seven LM Class 5 and three Standard Class 5 4-6-0's appeared.

The "Bournemouth Belle" schedule to the first stop at Southampton was 88 minutes, V2 Class 2-6-2 No.60893 with 510 tons took 90 minutes 3 seconds. The start from Waterloo was competent, Clapham Junction passed in 7 minutes 38 seconds, Woking in 29 minutes 40 seconds at 60 miles per hour after a maximum of 62 followed by a minimum of 53 at MP31. There was a PWR slack to 22 miles per hour with the result the train was five minutes late at Worting Junction, 61 minutes 3 seconds. The minimum at Wootton was 45 miles per hour and then with speed rising to 82 at Winchester and 86 at Eastleigh, the station was passed only 53 seconds late [schedule 80 minutes]. There was a signal check before Southampton, 81-82 minutes Net, the average EDHP between Woking and Basingstoke was 1,150-1,200. The last noted working of a V2 on the Southern Region occurred on July 5th, the last LM Class 5 4-6-0 on June 14th. Both Classes were debited with much lost time but in truth punctuality with Southern locomotives on the Western Section at this time was poor.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Punctuality on the Bournemouth Service, 1953-1954

Ten out of 59 long distance steam hauled arrivals observed at Waterloo on Saturday June 27th were over 15 minutes late. V2 Class 2-6-2, No.60917 arrived 13 minutes late on the 08.14 ex Bournemouth and left late on the 13.22. Trains, worked by Southern Region locomotives were:- early twice - on time three times - between one and five minutes late 17 times - between six and ten minutes late 16 times - between 11 and 15 minutes late ten times - plus five bad offenders. Fifty enthusiasts conducted an unofficial survey on August 15th and concluded punctuality was reasonable despite the effects of a points failure at Waterloo and a broken rail at Wimbledon. One cannot but muse whether travellers on the day would have drawn the same conclusion. The following Saturday, when there were no locomotive failures en route or other unplanned hindrances the average lateness of 29 trains at Bournemouth was eight minutes.

The punctuality of the Up "Royal Wessex", or rather the lack of, attracted persistent criticism during the year. T. McHattan, on 18 journeys from Winchester to Waterloo noted times from 68 minutes 36 seconds to 81 minutes 30 seconds [schedule 72 minutes], load 13 coaches, 441 tons Tare, 475 tons Gross. The Net time exceeded 72 minutes twice, i.e. time was booked against the locomotive on the 15th August and the 4th December, 76½ and 73 minutes. Typical Net times were 68½ and 67¾ minutes by West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34109, 69, 64½ and 70 minutes by No.34110 and 66½ minutes by No.34106. The best run by No. 34110 occurred on 30th August, 70 minutes 35 seconds when it reached 52 miles per hour at Roundwood [Litchfield signal box was renamed Roundwood in August 1953] and passed Worting Junction one and three quarters minutes early in 21 minutes 44 seconds. Then with a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour at Farnborough, 85 before and 82 after at Weybridge, it passed Clapham Junction in 64 minutes 5 seconds.

The Down 15.20 Down made its first stop at Winchester in 74 minutes and with West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 and 430 tons would have maintained schedule except for a signal check before the station. The 17, 21 and 22 minute timings to Southampton, Brockenhurst and Bournemouth Central were kept, the final arrival was five minutes late. Urie Class N15 No.30738 with 440 tons lost 6 minutes 35 seconds to Winchester. The 17.30 ex Waterloo ran to Winchester in 90 minutes, first stop Basingstoke in 55 minutes, five minutes spent at Basingstoke and Micheldever stops. Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30865 on 29th December and King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30783 earlier in the year, both with 440 tons, lost four and three quarters and one and three quarters of a minute to Winchester respectively. The King Arthur lost 85 seconds to Basingstoke.

The Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's, driven appropriately could keep time. One [No.30858 or 30859] hauled the 10.30 ex Waterloo each day of the week commencing 30th November, and passed Winchester Junction on time each day, [schedule to pass the signal box, 72½ minutes]. The locomotive on the 10.30 returned to London on the 15.05 semi-fast ex Bournemouth West.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Performance to Bournemouth in 1954

The Southampton and Bournemouth service received few if any accolades at this time. The Hampshire Chronicle felt moved to inform its readers that the "Bournemouth Belle" took two hours ten minutes to reach Bournemouth Central, the Saturday 12.35 with two stops required an additional 11 minutes, this it compared with the, 12.30 ex Waterloo in 1888, 2 hours 27 minutes with the same two stops.

Locomotive performance in 1954, compared with 1953 remained like the Timetable virtually unchanged. Mr. McHatton was excited on Sunday 17th January when he observed the 18.35 ex Bournemouth reach 59 miles per hour at Roundwood, 70 on the easier grade afterwards and pass Woking Junction in 19½ minutes from Winchester [schedule 23 minutes]. Following a signal check it stopped at Basingstoke in 23½ [schedule 27 minutes]. It then passed Woking in 22 minutes 25 seconds from the restart at 80 miles per hour before various delays led to an anticlimax, Waterloo reached in 65¾ minutes, 49 minutes Net. The locomotive was Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35017 with nine coaches. McHatton observed that after every other recent Winchester start 46 miles per hour was the maximum on the 1/256. [Ref.38]

The ease with which the semi-fast schedules could be kept is exemplified by reference to a Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30852 on the 17.05 ex Bournemouth West. The standard 26 minutes schedule [whether via the Local or Through lines] from Basingstoke to Woking was kept with 53 seconds to spare without exceeding 67 miles per hour before MP31 and 61 afterwards.

The "Royal Wessex" [particularly the Up], considered a difficult proposition for the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's, was allocated a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, one of three transferred to Bournemouth depot. All three Classes of 4-6-2 were actually capable of performing well above the level required to time the "Royal Wessex". Two runs published in 1954 illustrate the point, West Country Class No.34110 with 480 tons on the 18.30 ex Waterloo passed Basingstoke, after a slow start to Woking, in 51 minutes 44 seconds, the average EDHP between Woking and Basingstoke was 1,300-1,350. Merchant Navy No.35010 with 510 tons on the "Bournemouth Belle" ran to Southampton in 84 minutes 39 seconds including signal checks after Basingstoke and at Wallers Ash. MP31 was passed in 33 minutes 59 seconds, Basingstoke in 48 minutes 48 seconds, the average EDHP between Woking and Basingstoke was 1,450-1,500, the maximum at Shawford, after the road had cleared was 84 miles per hour, 79 minutes Net to Southampton.

Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's or 4-6-2's hauled most Bournemouth and Weymouth trains during Easter 1954. There were 17 departures from Waterloo on Maundy Thursday to Bournemouth, Poole and Weymouth from 14.30 to 20.00. The 14.30 with West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34110 reached Southampton at 15.53, the 17.23 was not so fortunate with a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30786 and 13 coaches, it took two and a half hours, brakes leaked on regularly. Most trains after 17.00 passed Surbiton, 12.0 miles from Waterloo, some 40 minutes after the scheduled Waterloo departure time.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, locomotive through Working to Weymouth 1954

Additional through locomotive workings were introduced between Waterloo and Weymouth from May 3rd. i.e. Nine Elms duties: No.31 - 05.40 Waterloo to Weymouth - 13.25 Weymouth to Waterloo and No.32 - 08.30 Down - 17.35 Up. Nine Elms crews as a result of the new rosters returned from Bournemouth, with the exception of the "Belle" on a different locomotive, they were apparently not pleased. Bournemouth duties Nos.381 and 383 included;- 07.34 Weymouth to Waterloo, "Royal Wessex" - 17.30 Waterloo to Bournemouth and - 11.30 Up - 19.30 Down to Bournemouth. Dorchester depot had a duty No.425, which included 09.20 Weymouth to Waterloo and the 18.30 return. The three Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's allocated to Dorchester to cover this and other duties proved to be only a temporary measure, shortly afterwards Southern 4-6-2's were allowed inside the former Great Western depot at Weymouth. The Dorchester depot was subsequently closed in March 1955, the remaining locomotives, U and Standard Class 4 2-6-0's reallocated to Eastleigh and Bournemouth. Dorchester remained a crew signing on point until the transfer of staff to Weymouth on June 17th 1957.

Summer Saturday requirements remained a challenge for the depots, the Up "Royal Wessex" was regularly a Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 duty and equally regularly reached Waterloo 20 minutes late. Nine Elms frequently resorted to mixed traffic 4-6-0's, even S15's on weekdays. One such working was the 19.00 ex Basingstoke, passenger to Southampton Terminus, parcels to the Dock Gates, schedule to Winchester 25 minutes. Number 30833, on June 4th, with 205 tons passed Worting Junction in 4 minutes 57 seconds at 43 miles per hour and without exceeding 55, reached Winchester in 25¾ minutes. Number 30839 on the 25th with 255 tons, attained 48 miles per hour on the 1/249 and reached Winchester in 24 minutes exactly without exceeding 62. Nine days previously No.30840 with a light train, 138 tons, started slowly, 5 minutes 44 seconds to Worting Junction, then reached 60 miles per hour at Roundwood and 75 before the Winchester stop. Some drivers let the S15's run, others regarded them as freight engines; piston speeds for an S15 4-6-0 travelling at 75 miles per hour correspond with a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 at 88 miles per hour, a not uncommon figure on the West of England route in the 1930's. An unusual locomotive on Eastleigh Duty No.252, which included the 11.30 ex Waterloo, was Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70014.

Overall, punctuality on Summer Saturdays in 1954, despite some locomotive shortages was good. There were 73 steam hauled passenger trains from Waterloo, six more than in 1939, the extra ones ran before 08.00. The post War World surfaced earlier in the morning, a social change reflected by Timetable planners. Ninety-one different tender locomotives were noted at Waterloo in a 12 hours period on August 14th, punctuality was good until mid afternoon, when a bridge collapse on the Portsmouth Direct line began to affect all routes, not just the electric trains to Portsmouth. Actual numbers of various Classes were: 26 King Arthur Class 4-6-0's - 21 Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's - 15 Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - nine Lord Nelson Class, four H15 and four S15 Class 4-6-0's - four Maunsell 2-6-0's - three T9 and three D15 Class 4-4-0's - one N15X Class 4-6-0.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section lateness compared other BR Regions

This included West of England trains as well as those to Southampton and beyond. King Arthur's found more use on the West of England route but a Urie example [Nos.30738 or 30739] regularly hauled 13 coaches on the 18.30 to Bournemouth. They occasionally appeared on weekdays, No.30736, built August 1918, with the 18.22 ex Waterloo on May 14th and No.30740 with the Down "Royal Wessex" on June 26th, debited with seven minutes to Bournemouth with the usual 13 coaches.

How did lateness on the Southern Region's Western Section compare with other Regions of British Railways on a summer Saturday? A league of lateness for a particular Saturday was compiled for the London Termini in 1954. [Ref.39] Observations were made between 08.00 and 20.00; 83 arrivals at Paddington were on average 7.1 minutes late - Liverpool Street 108, 10.7 minutes late - Euston 52, 11.0 minutes late - Kings Cross 44, 12.6 minutes late - Waterloo 76, 14.5 minutes late. The maximum lateness of any one train at each station was similar i.e. between 41 and 50 minutes, Waterloo the worst. The percentage arriving to time or early was: Paddington 30 - Euston 27 Kings Cross 14 - Liverpool Street 12 - Waterloo 11. [A less comprehensive analysis the previous year, over a shorter period of time, put Waterloo third out of five but the Liverpool Street figures were bad due to particularly inclement weather in East Anglia]. These figures can at best be regarded as indicative and there were mitigating circumstances for Waterloo, not the least threading 75 Main Line steam hauled passenger trains and the Portsmouth Electric's through an intensive electrified suburban service. For a passenger however there was only a ten percent chance of reaching Waterloo on time.

Weekday punctuality was also variable. The 18.22 Fridays ex Waterloo, allowed 70½ minutes to Winchester Junction on 16 successive Fridays from June September was on time on only four occasions. On the other twelve the lateness in minutes was, one, three, four, five twice, six, seven twice, eight, nine, 16 and 94 minutes, the cause, the late running 19.00 Basingstoke to Southampton Terminus, due past Winchester Junction ten and a half minutes ahead of the 18.22 at 19.22. The one hour and a half delay was occasioned by the failure of West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 at Wallers Ash. The introduction of the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's on the Up "Royal Wessex" apparently achieved little improvement. T.M.McHatton observed that locomotive performance in 1954 was inferior to 1953 when the West Country Class 4-6-2's held sway, the only stimulating happening, 18 minutes 5 seconds for the favourable Basingstoke to Woking stretch one morning, 77.5 miles per hour average. Two journeys on the Down 17.30, considered well above the norm featured Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30861 and a West Country with 400 tons. Number 30861 passed Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 37 seconds, Hampton Court Junction in 16 minutes 25 seconds and Woking, at reduced speed in 28 minutes 20 seconds. There was a PWR. slack to ten miles per hour after the station, following which it reached 56 miles per hour at MP31, at least 1,100 EDHP and 68 maximum before the Basingstoke stop, 54 minutes 40 seconds, 50½ minutes Net. [Schedule, 18 minutes to Hampton Court Junction, 28 minutes to Woking and 55 minutes to Basingstoke].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Swanage branch 1954

The redoubtable Driver Letchford with the West Country Class 4-6-2 was 12 seconds slower to Hampton Court Junction, but then with 76 miles per hour at West Byfleet, 63 minimum passed MP 31 in 32 minutes 10 seconds and after 72 maximum, reached Basingstoke in 47¾ minutes.

R.I.Nelson observed from the footplate how easy it was to keep time with [Ref. 40] the Up "Bournemouth Belle", [schedule nine minutes from Bournemouth West to the Central Station, 34 minutes to Southampton and 87 minutes to Waterloo]. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35018 with the winter loading, nine Pullman Cars, 380 tons Gross ran the three stages in 7 minutes 54 seconds, 32 minutes 39 seconds and 83 minutes 26 seconds. The locomotive was driven easily on the two uphill sections, 110 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and 25 percent cut off between Christchurch and Sway and 120 pounds per square inch and 25 percent cut off to Roundwood. Minima were 52 miles per hour at New Milton and 59 sustained at Roundwood. Nelson expressed doubts over the cut off, bearing in mind the vagaries of the Bulleid valve gear but from published test IHP curves it appears likely the figures, within the errors of pressure gauges, were correct.

The Swanage Branch in 1954 epitomised many of the problems associated with summer Saturday working. The normal weekday service provided by two coach push and pull trains consisted of 16 trains in each direction between Wareham and Swanage, with through coaches to or from Waterloo attached to three of these. On summer Saturdays there were three through trains from Swanage to London, two from London to Swanage and through carriages from the 12.35 and 18.30 ex Waterloo. The turntable at Swanage could only accommodate the smaller locomotives thereby necessitating tender first working over the branch. The stock for the 09.20 Swanage to Waterloo, ten coaches including a Restaurant Car was worked empty to Swanage on Friday nights. The Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 for this train reached Swanage tender first on the 08.18 Wareham to Swanage made up of two coaches. The locomotive for the 11.34, another 4-6-2, piloted tender first the 05.40 Waterloo to Weymouth from Bournemouth to Wareham and then ran light engine to Swanage. The 11.34 usually five or six coaches had another seven or eight ex Weymouth added at Wareham. The 09.15 Waterloo to Swanage, Nine Elms duty No.44, was hauled to Wareham by a Nine Elms based Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2. At Wareham, another 4-6-2, which had worked the Friday evening 18.22 Waterloo to Bournemouth, on Saturday ran to Wareham tender first as pilot to the 08.30 Waterloo to Weymouth, replaced it. This 4-6-2 returned to London on the 13.22 ex Swanage. The Nine Elms locomotive on the 10.54 ex Waterloo worked through to Swanage and returned tender first light engine to Bournemouth. The 10.54 stock spent the week at Swanage returning as the 11.34 the following Saturday. The combination of routing four of the trains via Ringwood with single line operation between Hamworthy Junction and Broadstone, the machinations of using large locomotives between Worgret Junction and Swanage without turning facilities added to the pressures associated with Saturday workings, the economics of it all must have been questionable.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance to Bournemouth in 1955

Weekday trains between Bournemouth and Weymouth loaded lightly, the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's invariably used could easily make up lost time. Number 34020 with 175 tons ran the short stages between Bournemouth, Poole, Wareham, Dorchester and Weymouth, [5.8, 7.1, 15.0 and 6.8 miles respectively] in 9 minutes 7 seconds, 9 minutes 15 seconds, 15 minutes 46 seconds and 10 minutes 22 seconds. Maxima before stops were 73 miles per hour before Wareham, 80 before Dorchester and 78 before Weymouth. It maintained 66 miles per hour on the adverse grades between Wool and Moreton and 37 on the 1/91 to Bincombe tunnel. The Bournemouth to Weymouth running time was eight and a half minutes less than schedule.

Locomotive performance on the Bournemouth route apparently improved in 1955, despite schedules remaining essentially unchanged, a sense of urgency seemingly entered the engine-mens' pschyche. A West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34109 with 465 tons ran to Southampton in 89¼ minutes including a PWR slack before Hampton Court Junction, a signal check before Woking and a signal stop before Eastleigh. Between the checks speed rose from 54 to 55 miles per hour on the rise from Worting Junction to Wootton, an EDHP of 1,400-1,450 and reached 88 at Winchester. The Southampton to Bournemouth stage took one second under 33 minutes, Net running time from Waterloo to Bournemouth was 110 minutes.

Mr. McHatton made a series of journeys between Waterloo and Winchester in the period June 27th to July 11th. The Down "Royal Wessex" regularly with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35011 ran to Winchester between 67 minutes 57 seconds and 71 minutes 18 seconds [McHatton calculated the best parts of the various journeys gave a composite time of 62 minutes. The value of such calculations is doubtful, although the fact that the summary time is some ten percent less than the actual times suggests the locomotives were eased in places.] Number 35011 one day gained over three minutes between Worting Junction and Winchester Junction, with an average of 79 miles per hour from Micheldever to Winchester Junction whereas when Winchester was reached inside 68 minutes the locomotive was "severely eased" after Basingstoke. Driver Wyffen on the 6th July, with No.35022 and 435 tons on the 15.20 ex Waterloo started urgently, he passed Berrylands 10.9 miles, in 13¾ minutes, observed a PWR slack at Surbiton, the minimum at MP31 was 65 miles per hour and the time to Winchester, 69 minutes 58 seconds, 63¾ minutes Net. There were PWR slacks in force during this period in the Up direction at Basingstoke and to 15 miles per hour at Surbiton. This encouraged some fast running between these two points in order to maintain time. Driver Emms of Nine Elms for instance on the 07.20 ex Bournemouth with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35015 ran Winchester to Waterloo with six seconds to spare on the 72 minutes booking, 65 minutes Net. The average from Fleet to Hampton Court Junction was 80 miles per hour with 90 maximum at Woking. Conversely the drivers of West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34106 with the 13.20 from Southampton and Merchant Navy No.35020 on the Up "Royal Wessex" made no attempt to recover lost time and arrived at Waterloo ten and a half and 14 minutes late respectively.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, variable Pacific performance, 1955

The Bulleid Pacific's at times provided pleasant surprises to interested observers and at other times frustrations to operating staff and passengers. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35022 on the 11th August with 435 tons on the 15.20 ex Waterloo passed MP31 in 33½ minutes at 58 miles per hour, after 74 maximum at Hampton Court Junction and a slight check to 59 at Byfleet. It was diverted to the Local Line at Sturt Lane Junction and back to the Through line at Winchfield. Then in heavy rain and with continuous slipping it took 20 minutes 25 seconds to run the 10.5 miles from Winchfield to Worting Junction. It recovered two and a half minutes of the lost time with 50 miles per hour at Wootton and a maximum of 87 at Winchester Junction and reached Winchester in 82 minutes 35 seconds, schedule 74 minutes. Five days later Driver Varney of Bournemouth [throughout his career a lively performer] anticipated the introduction of two hours schedules from Bournemouth to Waterloo, including a stop at Southampton with West Country Class 4-6-2 No. 34108 and a 350 ton train.

Performances recorded later in the year, in October, varied from downright bad to fairly good. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34095 with 385 tons fell to 35 miles per hour at MP31 and took 65¾ minutes to the stop at Basingstoke. Number 34011 in the Up direction with a light 322 tons train ran Southampton to Waterloo two seconds inside the 89 minutes schedule. Fifty-six miles per hour at Roundwood was sufficient to pass Worting Junction four and a quarter minutes early, 34 minutes 39 seconds and with no more than 70 east of Basingstoke, Woking, four and a quarter minutes early, 57 minutes 40 seconds from Southampton. There was a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Berrylands and a signal check before Waterloo. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35022, with 460 tons, on the 07.20 ex Bournemouth left Southampton nine minutes late and arrived Waterloo one minute early, 18 minutes to Winchester and 65 minutes from there to Waterloo. It is difficult to assess how much of this erratic performance was attributable to the idiosyncrasies of the Bulleid design and how much to a "laissez faire" attitude amongst footplate crews.

The older locomotives performed adequately when required. An N15X Class 4-6-0 No.32332 replaced a failed locomotive on the 17.05 ex Bournemouth West and with a 12 coach train maintained schedule between Basingstoke and Waterloo. The Urie N15 Class 4-6-0's were used regularly, Nos.30749 and 30750 received General Repairs at Eastleigh Works, even the H15 Class 4-6-0's appeared on express's occasionally, No. 30486 with 11 coaches on the Saturday 18.16 ex Bournemouth ran from Southampton to Waterloo in 93 minutes [schedule 91 minutes]. The 11.30 Down, an Eastleigh turn, was regularly hauled by a Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0. R.I.Nelson made one of his footplate journeys with No.30857 hauling 14 coaches, 490 tons. There was a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Berrylands for the bridge repairs from where with Regulator full open, [220 pounds per square inch in the boiler, 215 pounds per square inch in the steam chest] cut off 18 percent it reached 59 at Byfleet. Woking was passed in 32 minutes 36 seconds at 50, Brookwood at 54 with cut off at 23 percent, and MP31 at 50 in 40 minutes 32 seconds after cut off reduced to 18.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Lord Nelson 4-6-0 performance to Bournemouth 1956

The Basingstoke stop was affected in 58 minutes 11 seconds [schedule 57 minutes]. The Lord Nelson developed 1,225-1,275 EDHP with full Regulator and 23 per cent cut off. [The original indicator tests, 520 tons and No.E850 on April 10th 1927, Dia. No.8 gave an IHP of 1,431 at 56 miles per hour, steam chest 198 pounds per square inch, cut off 23 percent]. On Mr Nelson's journey it was notched up to 15 percent cut off at MP31, 20 percent could have produced an on time arrival at Basingstoke. The lost time was recovered by running to the next stop at Winchester in 24 minutes 29 seconds with a maximum of only 65 miles per hour [schedule 26 minutes], full regulator and 22 percent cut off to Wootton, passed in 9 minutes 32 seconds at 43. A Lord Nelson could comfortably time a 500 tons train on the semi-fast schedules.

There were some unusual locomotive workings during January 1956. On the 9th Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73118 worked the "Bournemouth Belle", nine Pullman Cars, the standard winter formation, in both directions, one minute early at Bournemouth, after a PWR slack and signal checks Waterloo seven minutes late. A Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 hauled the 10.30 ex Waterloo to Weymouth throughout the week commencing the 10th, reportedly running well [three Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's transferred from Stewarts Lane to Nine Elms stopped this]. Number 30857 had the Up "Bournemouth Belle" on the 20th, 525 tons Gross and ran well before a PWR slack and signal checks resulted in a 12 minutes late arrival. Number 30858 on the 16th April gained three minutes to Winchester with the Down "Royal Wessex". King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30792 with the Down 15.30 lost four minutes between Southampton and Brockenhurst, gained two minutes on to Bournemouth.

C.J.Allen visited Winchester early in 1956. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35027 with 445 tons on the 13.30 ex Waterloo ran to Basingstoke the first stop in 53¾ minutes and to the next at Winchester in 24 minutes 2 seconds. The following Morning No.35027 with 475 tons on the "Royal Wessex" reached Waterloo in 68 minutes 47 seconds with 53 miles per hour attained at Roundwood and a maximum of 75 after Basingstoke. The Southern could operate a punctual steam hauled service. [Ref.41] S.C.Crowther-Smith on holiday in the UK from Canada made two Sunday trips to Bournemouth [09.30 and 10.30 ex Waterloo] and arrived a few minutes late each time, he returned by the Up "Belle" and reached Waterloo ten minutes late and on time.

The first rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 left Eastleigh works, on 9th February 1956 and was timed shortly afterwards on the Up "Bournemouth Belle" and 440 tons. Driver Letchford, restrained by the presence of an Inspector, with a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Lyndhurst Road, ran Bournemouth to Southampton in 34 minutes 50 seconds with 50 minimum at New Milton and continued to Waterloo in 84 minutes 27 seconds, 80 minutes Net. The Eastleigh to Roundwood average was 55 miles per hour [stem chest 180 pounds per square inch and 30 percent cut off]. The 37 miles from Worting Junction to Hampton Court Junction were run in three seconds under half an hour [stem chest 120 pounds per square inch cut off 25 per cent cut off] the maximum after Woking was 80 miles per hour. [Ref.42]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance improves in 1956

The general level of performance in 1956 followed previous patterns. In October West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34043 with 435 tons on the 17.30 ex Waterloo took 20¾ minutes to Hampton Court Junction and with a PWR slack at Weybridge was four minutes late at Basingstoke and seven minutes down at Winchester. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35027 with 455 tons was three minutes early at Winchester. The second Merchant Navy to be rebuilt No.35022, usually worked Bournemouth duty No.385, two return trips to London: 07.07 Bournemouth West to Waterloo - the "Bournemouth Belle" in both directions - 21.30 Waterloo to Bournemouth.

The genesis of the rebuilt locomotives has been discussed extensively in various articles and books, the comparative values of the locomotives before and after assessed, many of the conclusions emotional. The key changes effecting performance were the provision of a new inside cylinder, three sets of Walschaerts valve gear, a new superheater header with some reduction in tube lengths and a change of tube gauge. The other changes mainly afforded better access for servicing. Whilst there are many people who swear by the original Bulleid Pacific's the facts firmly show that the introduction of the rebuilt locomotives transformed Western Section performance.

The 08.20 ex Waterloo in 1956, allowed 86 minutes to Southampton, interestingly was diagrammed for a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 crewed by Nine Elms No.3 link. C.K.Dunkley observed performance 11 times during the first month of operation, the normal load ten coaches, 326-330 tons Tare, 340-345 tons Gross, two runs with Drivers Prikett and Camp were published at the time. [Ref.43] Prikett, with West Country No.34008 after a slow start to Clapham Junction, 8 minutes 5 seconds, passed Hampton Court Junction in 17 minutes 58 seconds at 70 miles per hour and reached 76 before slowing for a PWR slack. He passed Woking at 43 miles per hour in 31 minutes 22 seconds, MP31 at 59, touched 75 before Basingstoke, Worting Junction in 55 minutes 18 seconds [schedule 54 minutes] fell to 59 at Wootton and reached 83 at Winchester. He eased off and finally reached Southampton in 84 minutes 53 seconds. Camp with No.34012 was 37 seconds quicker to Clapham Junction, 24 seconds slower past Hampton Court Junction and with a slower recovery from the PWR slack was four and a quarter minutes late at Worting Junction. This was converted to an arrival only 25 seconds late with 63 miles per hour at Roundwood, 88 at Winchester, 91 before Eastleigh and Northam Junction to Southampton run very slowly. Both drivers observed the Junction at Worting cautiously, 45 and 48 miles per hour.

Dunkley suggested performance on the 08.20 showed the proposed two hours schedule to Bournemouth with a stop at Southampton was viable. He cited, in further support of this view, a run with No.34005 on the Down 10.30 when Southampton to Bournemouth took 28 minutes 51 seconds, with 78 miles per hour maximum and the 60 restriction for the Christchurch curve observed [schedule a generous 38 minutes]. A culture of regaining lost time began to grow, the 13.30 left Waterloo 14 minutes late on the 14th July, passed Surbiton in 16 minutes and stopped at Basingstoke in 48 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Maunsell locomotives on the 11.30 Down, 1956

Signal checks cost six minutes around St Denys but Bournemouth was reached on time. Exactly one month later King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30771 with 11 coaches on the Up Sunday Bournemouth excursion left Winchester five minutes late and reached Woking on time, [schedule 57 minutes].

New locomotives stimulated crews, not just on the Main Line, the 12.05 Alton to Eastleigh with LM Class 2 2-6-2 tank No.41293 on the 7th August and two coaches exceeded 30 miles per hour on the 1/60 before Medstead and Four Marks. On occasion the new Standard's appeared on duties disproportionate to their power, on June 16th Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76026 had 11 coaches on a Waterloo to Bournemouth service.

Rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35018, a "Bournemouth Belle" regular, was noted running Waterloo to Southampton in 86 minutes 50 seconds, with 480 tons, including a PWR slack before Southampton. Minima were 54 miles per hour at MP31 and 44 after Worting Junction, maxima 81 at Winchester. On the 28th July with 520 tons it passed MP31 in 34 minutes 40 seconds, stopped for signals for one minute and a quarter at Hook, observed a PWR slack at Micheldever and reached Southampton in 92½ minutes, 86½ minutes Net. These performances were similar to previous day to day pre rebuilding, it could do better, indeed on Whit Monday of the previous year the "Belle", 12 Pullman's and a van, arrived at Bournemouth three minutes early.

The 11.30 ex Waterloo, with stops at Basingstoke, [schedule 57 minutes], Winchester, [26] and Southampton, [21], usually with a Maunsell locomotive attracted some attention. G. Vuillet travelled on Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30852 with 440 tons. After an initial delay, 11 minutes to Clapham Junction and then with 72 miles per hour at Byfleet, 60 at MP31 and 75 maximum at Fleet, it reached Basingstoke in 54 minutes 35 seconds, 50½ minutes Net. Steam chest pressures during this good performance were 180 at Hampton Court Junction, 190 at MP31 and 170 pounds per square inch at Fleet, cut off 18, 20 and 20 percent. Times to Winchester and Southampton were 29¾ minutes, 25¾ minutes Net and 17 minutes 30 seconds. [Ref.44].

P.R.Wallis made two footplate trips at about the same time. Lord Nelson No.30851 with 430 tons ran to Basingstoke in 56 minutes 5 seconds, including a PWR slacks to 15 miles per hour after Hampton Court Junction and before Basingstoke. It passed Hampton Court Junction in 17 minutes 23 seconds at 62 miles per hour, recovered from the slack to 65 and fell to 47 at MP31. Times to Winchester and Southampton were 32¾ minutes, including a four minutes stop for signals at Micheldever and 17 minutes 5 seconds. King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30775 with 415 tons passed Hampton Court Junction in 18¼ minutes at 64 miles per hour [full Regulator and 25 percent cut off]. It attained 57 miles per hour at Woking [35 percent cut off from the check], fell to 52 at MP31, 1,050-1,100EDHP and reached Basingstoke in 60½ minutes after a further slack. The next two stages took 26½ minutes, with a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Micheldever and 19 minutes 44 seconds. The two trains ultimately reached Bournemouth eight and five minutes late. [Ref.45]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the Up "Belle" 1956 and 1957

P.R.Wallis made two Up trips on the "Bournemouth Belle", with ten Pullman Cars, 425 tons Gross. On the first Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 ran Bournemouth to Southampton in 32½ minutes. After the restart from Southampton, it averaged 50 miles per hour between Winchester and Roundwood with the Regulator set to give 120 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and the Reverser to give 25 percent cut off. There was a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Worting Junction, Woking passed in 65½ minutes, maximum afterwards 83 miles per hour before signal checks caused a late arrival at Waterloo, 90½ minutes from Southampton. Merchant Navy No.35019, fitted with a single blast pipe passed Roundwood at 50 miles per hour, Regulator one third open on the long ascent, boiler pressure 240 pounds per square inch, 120 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and the cut off 20 percent. It passed Woking in 58 minutes 35 seconds before a PWR slack and signal check, overall time 65 seconds slower than No.35028.

Easter traffic in 1957 was heavy, 16 extra trains on Maundy Thursday plus five Boat trains, timekeeping reputedly good.

R.J.Doran made return footplate trips to Bournemouth on June 1st and 8th on the "Bournemouth Belle" with 500 tons. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35021 passed MP31 in 34½ minutes at 59 miles per hour and Basingstoke, [following a signal check to 22], in 52 minutes 10 seconds at 30. It recovered to 46 miles per hour on the 1/249 to Wootton, [steam chest 110 to 150 pounds per square inch, cut off 25 percent] and reached Southampton in 86 minutes 3 seconds without exceeding 74. Christchurch was passed in 31 minutes 43 seconds from the Southampton restart and following a PWR slack the stop at Bournemouth effected seven minutes later. Rebuilt No.35012 passed MP31 in 36 minutes 23 seconds at 59 miles per hour, was checked by a signal to 26 before Basingstoke, 51 minutes 56 seconds and after 75 maximum reached Southampton in 87 minutes 5 seconds. It passed Christchurch 31 minutes 26 seconds and reached Bournemouth in 37 minutes 57 seconds.

Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35021 left Bournemouth 12 minutes late and ran to Southampton in 31 minutes 47 seconds, rebuilt No.35012, on time, took 34 minutes 40 seconds. Number 35021 passed Christchurch at 64 miles per hour and fell to 53 minimum at New Milton [steam chest 140 pounds per square inch, cut off 25 percent]. Number 35012 fell from 57 to 45 miles per hour [steam chest 100-140 pounds per square inch]. Number 35021 accelerated from 55 to 57 miles per hour between Eastleigh and Winchester [steam chest 120 pounds per square inch, cut off 25 percent] before a PWR slack intervened. It ran the 35.8 miles from Basingstoke to Surbiton in 27 minutes 41 seconds, 77.6 miles per hour average, the maximum 81 achieved with 90 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and 25 percent cut off. There was a slight signal check on the approach to Waterloo, reached two minutes late against the Public Timetable, 80 minutes 20 seconds from Southampton. The rebuilt locomotive, on time at Southampton, ran to Waterloo in 87 minutes. Fireman Walker built up a large fire before Southampton which he then let burn down on the climb to Roundwood.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, two hours schedules to Bournemouth

Boiler pressure fell from 240 to 208 pounds per square inch between Winchester and Roundwood, steam chest pressure from 210 to 172 and speed from 54 miles per hour to 50, cut off was maintained at 25 percent. The Basingstoke to Surbiton stretch took 30 minutes with 90-100 pounds per square inch in the steam chest, cut off 25 percent. Although a fairly empirical measure, Dorman assessed coal consumption as 286 and 249 shovels in the Down direction with Nos.35021 and 35012 and 233 and 205 in the Up. Unfortunately for comparison purposes the non-rebuilt locomotive in the Up direction developed a higher horsepower than the rebuilt locomotive, it was recovering lost time. Going Down the work done was similar and assuming the fires were in a similar state on departure, the results indicated an advantage in terms of horsepower developed per unit of coal to the rebuilt locomotive of ten to fifteen percent.

The first rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 emerged from Eastleigh works in June 1957 incorporating modifications similar to those on the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's and on the 17th of the month the two hours schedules to Bournemouth were inaugurated. The Down schedule was 81 minutes to Southampton, five minutes stop and 34 minutes onwards to Bournemouth, The Up schedules were 32, four and 84 minutes. These were set for 400 tons Tare maximum with Merchant Navy haulage [there were 15 rebuilds in service when the new timetable started]. The semi-fast service was also altered, interval departure times from Southampton, 15 minutes past the hour as with the two hours trains. The Down two hours trains left Waterloo at 08.20, 10.30 and 18.30 and the Up, Bournemouth Central at 14.40, 18.40 and 19.40.

This timetable with slight changes, including some improvements formed the basis for steam operation of the Bournemouth and Weymouth service for the next eight years and in a slowed down form until the end of steam. The working Timetable for June 1959 included the following principal Down trains: 05.40, semi-fast to Bournemouth, [first departure after the Newspaper trains], Bournemouth, 08.53 and Weymouth, 10.07 - 08.20 to Bournemouth Central, two hours, [82 minutes to Southampton, 34 minutes to Bournemouth], West station, 10.37, connection to Weymouth, 11.45 - 08.30, 09.30 and 11.30 semi-fast's to Bournemouth West, 11.14, 12.33 and 14.37 with seven, 11 and ten intermediate stops - 08.30 to Weymouth, 12.21 - 10.30 Bournemouth Central, two hours [81 minutes to Southampton, 34 minutes to Bournemouth], Weymouth 13.30, stops at Poole, Wareham and Dorchester South, - 12.30, "Bournemouth Belle", to West, two hours ten minutes to Bournemouth Central [88 minutes to Southampton, 37 minutes to Bournemouth] - 13.30 semi-fast to Bournemouth West, 16.32, nine stops - 14.30 Bournemouth Central, two hours [81 minutes to Southampton, 34 minutes to Bournemouth], Weymouth, 17.38 after five stops - 15.20 and 16.35, "Royal Wessex", Bournemouth Central, 17.40 and 18.55, stops Winchester, Southampton and Brockenhurst, Weymouth, 19.05, after ten, 19.59, after four stops -15.30 semi-fast to Bournemouth West, 18.40, with 11 stops - 16.22 Fridays only, relief to "Royal Wessex", Bournemouth West, 18.59 - 17.30 semi-fast Bournemouth West, 20.29, 11 stops - 17.23 Fridays only, Bournemouth West, 20.02, six stops.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section Working Timetable, June 1957

Down continued: 18.30, stops at Winchester and Southampton, Bournemouth Central, 20.37, Weymouth, 21.41, four stops - 18.22 Fridays, Bournemouth Central 23.45 [86 minutes to Southampton, 34 minutes Bournemouth Central] - 19.30, semi-fast Bournemouth Central, 22.42, 15 stops, Weymouth, 23.56, 11 stops - 19.23 Fridays relief, Bournemouth Central, 21.46, five stops - 21.30, semi fast Bournemouth Central, 00.05, seven stops.

The 10.30, 16.35 and 18.30 included through coaches, detached at Wareham, for the Swanage branch. The 15.20, 16.35 and 18.30 were allowed 74, 72½ and 69 minutes respectively to Winchester the first stop, the Fridays only 16.22, 17.23 and 19.20 73½, 73½ and 74½ minutes.

In the Up direction:- 07.07 and 07.40 ex Bournemouth West to Waterloo, arrived 09.33 and 10.20, four and eight stops, Winchester to Waterloo 72 minutes - 07.34 ex Weymouth, "Royal Wessex", Waterloo, 10.50, Bournemouth Central to Waterloo two hours ten minutes, stops Southampton and Winchester - 08.14, 08.35 and 09.22 ex Bournemouth West to Waterloo, 10.42, 11.54 and 11.49, three, 15 and three stops [08.14 stopped Southampton and Winchester, 09.22 Brockenhurst and Southampton, 92 minutes to Waterloo. The 09.22 was the first 15 minutes past the hour interval departure from Southampton in the Public timetable, actually 10.17 in the W.T.T. with trains at every quarter past the hour from then until 20.15. W.T.T gave actual departures; 11.16, non stop Waterloo, 12.46 - 12.16 semi-fast, Waterloo, 14.10 - 13.16 non stop Waterloo, 14.40 - 14.15 semi-fast, Waterloo, 16.09 - 15.16, non stop Waterloo, 16.40 - 16.19 semi-fast, Waterloo, 18.26 - 17.19 "Bournemouth Belle" non stop Waterloo, 18.46 - 18.16 semi-fast, Waterloo, 20.21 - 19.16 non stop Waterloo, 20.40 - 20.52 semi-fast, Waterloo, 22.56. The two best trains from Weymouth to Waterloo, the 11.30 and 17.35 had overall times of three hours ten minutes and three hours five minutes. The "Bournemouth Belle" left Bournemouth Central at 16.41, schedule 34 minutes to Southampton, the Up "Royal Wessex" at 08.40, 33 minutes and the two hours trains at 12.40, 14.40, 18.40 and 19.40, 32 minutes.

C.J.Allen in October 1957, published details of six experiences from correspondents on the new Waterloo to Southampton 81 minutes schedule. Unmodified Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, No.35021 passed Clapham Junction in six and three quarters minutes before a PWR slack to 22 miles per hour. The maximum before Woking was 70 miles per hour, the minimum at MP31 57 and maximum before Basingstoke 70. It was one and a half minutes late past Worting Junction, 53 minutes 27 seconds, a quarter of a minute early at Eastleigh, 72 minutes 39 seconds after 86 miles per hour and reached Southampton in 80 minutes 40 seconds, 78 minutes Net.

The five rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's all had, as did No.35021, 12 coaches, c.425 tons Gross, times varied between 79 minutes 16 seconds and 80 minutes 40 seconds to Southampton, on two the Net time was reckoned at 78 minutes. Number 35018 with Driver Hooper made the fastest exit from London, Hampton Court Junction passed in 15 minutes 46 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth two hours performance, 1957

The time to Woking was 25 minutes 18 seconds and to MP31, 31 minutes 48 seconds. The best running between Woking and Basingstoke was with No.35020, driven by Chant, 19 minutes 34 seconds with 66 miles per hour minimum at MP31 and 77 maximum before Basingstoke. There was a signal check earlier before Hampton Court Junction and Woking was passed in 27 minutes 43 seconds. Number 35020, quicker by over one and a half minutes between Woking and Basingstoke than all the others developed an average EDHP of 1,440-1,490.

C.J.Allen gave details of four runs between Southampton and Bournemouth; overall times were 35 minutes 58 seconds, 35 minutes 56 seconds, 32 minutes 9 seconds and 35 minutes 40 seconds. The first two were with the 10.30 ex Waterloo, which was regularly stopped by signals before Bournemouth due to the late running 09.30 ex Waterloo, the locomotive both times was rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35017. Christchurch, 25.5 miles from Southampton, was passed in 27 minutes 18 seconds and 25 minutes 58 seconds, to achieve less than 26 minutes involved 75 miles per hour before Brockenhurst, passed in 15¾ minutes, 62 minimum on the rising grades before Sway and 74 before Christchurch. Number 35016 passed Christchurch in 26 minutes 37 seconds and with a clear road stopped at Bournemouth inside 32¼ minutes. The Merchant Navy in original condition lost one and three quarters of a minute with no higher speed than 64 miles per hour before Brockenhurst and a minimum of 41 before Sway.

Four Up runs between Bournemouth and Southampton featured rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35017 with 355 tons, No.35020 twice with 420 tons and a West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 with 420 tons. Times to Southampton were 30 minutes 55 seconds, 31 minutes 42 seconds, 31 minutes 51 seconds and 31 minutes 16 seconds. The quickest time over the uphill section from Christchurch to Sway was achieved by No.35020, 8 minutes 23 seconds, after taking the Christchurch curve at 70 miles per hour. With 82 miles per hour maximum after Brockenhurst, It passed Totton, 25.5 miles, in 25 minutes 47 seconds and with a gentle finish reached Southampton nine seconds within schedule [32 minutes]. The West Country was 13 seconds slower between Christchurch and Sway and with 77 miles per hour maximum before, passed Totton in one second over 26 minutes.

Four runs were tabulated on the continuation to Waterloo with rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35010 twice, No.35020 once and West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108. Actual times varied from 81 minutes 54 seconds to 83 minutes 18 seconds, Net times from 78½ to 83¼ minutes. Average speeds between Winchester and Roundwood, all with 425 tons were 49.6, 53.2, 56.4 and 54.5 miles per hour. Merchant Navy No.35020 developed 1,290-1,340EDHP and the West Country 1,240-1,290. The 85 miles per hour line limit was approached on all four at certain points between Basingstoke and Hampton Court Junction. The 34.5 miles run in 25 minutes 50 seconds, 26¼ minutes, 28 minutes 6 seconds and 27 minutes 23 seconds, 80.1 to 73.6 miles per hour average.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth two hours performance 1958

C.J.Allen travelled on the footplate of a rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 on the 10.30 ex Waterloo with 430 tons. It passed Woking at 69 miles per hour, [steam chest 185 pounds per square inch, cut off 30 percent, and attained 70 by MP31, passed in 33 minutes 34 seconds, 1,675-1,725EDHP. There was a long PWR. slack before Basingstoke, 51¼ minutes, following which with 190 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and cut off at 30 percent, it accelerated from 50 to 55 miles per hour on the 1/249 between Worting Junction and Wootton. . Southampton, after a signal check before the station, was ultimately reached in 82 minutes 53 seconds, Allen reckoned the Net time at 76 minutes. Signal checks caused further delays after Southampton; the Bournemouth arrival was 13½ minutes late. He returned to London, "on the cushions", with the 17.35 ex Weymouth, 33 minutes 13 seconds to Southampton, 87 minutes 20 seconds to Waterloo, 84 minutes Net and an arrival five and a half minutes late. The safety valves lifted on both uphill sections, after Christchurch and at Allbrook, driving strategies were often difficult to fathom.

The increased speeds on the Bournemouth route, the establishment of an interval service from Southampton to London, the introduction of the Hampshire diesel multiple units in September and a National petrol crisis undoubtedly contributed to the steady increase in passengers on the route during 1957. Commencing with the winter Timetable, the two hours Bournemouth train formations were reduced from 12 coaches to 11, this led to the more regular use of the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. The two hours trains did not have a good reputation for punctuality, the Down 08.20 was considered the best of a poor bunch. There were less PWR slacks in force on the route in 1958, partly responsible for a better performance that year. The increased patronage led to further trains, the Down 14.30, two hours to Bournemouth and a duplicate to the Up "Royal Wessex". The Friday 18.30 regularly loaded to 13 coaches.

Another change in 1958, noticeable on the first summer Saturday, every train was made up of corridor carriages; there was no need to use former SE&C stock as in previous years. Perhaps even more impressive, the improved punctuality, much of which attributed to the use of Standard Class 5 4-6-0's by Nine Elms depot. The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's still appeared occasionally, on Easter Monday for instance No.30765 lost time with the 18.30 ex Swanage and No.30779 took the 18.30 ex Weymouth. The Mixed traffic 4-6-0's also featured, an S15 usually hauled the Saturday 18.16 ex Bournemouth and usually failed to maintain schedule. Locomotives observed on Waterloo to Bournemouth trains on Saturday August 30th included: seven West Country Class 4-6-2's - six Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's - three rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - one Standard Class 5 4-6-0 - one King Arthur Class 4-6-0.

An interesting late change of motive power one morning produced former GWR 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.6306 on the 09.17 ex Weymouth. The Churchward designed [H.Holcroft would claim it as his] 2-6-0, four minutes late leaving Dorchester South regained three minutes by Bournemouth.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth two hours performance, 1958

The Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's and particularly the Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's could comfortably maintain the two hours schedules. R.A.H.Weight made a return trip to Bournemouth early in 1958. West Country No.34105, driven by Varney, with 385 tons on the 14.30 ex Waterloo ran to Southampton in 81 minutes, including a signal check, which cost one and a half minutes and on to Bournemouth in exactly 36 minutes, signal checks delayed the final approach. He returned to Waterloo behind Merchant Navy No.35021 with 430 tons, to Southampton in 31¾ minutes, to Waterloo in 82½ minutes, 52 to 54 miles per hour maintained up to Roundwood and maxima of 85 to 86 east of Basingstoke. [Ref.46]. J.G.Webber noted West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34041 and Driver Hancock of Bournemouth with 400 tons run Southampton to Waterloo in 79¾ minutes with 58, 61 and 57 miles per hour at Eastleigh, Winchester and Roundwood, a maximum of 85 near Woking. It was five and three quarters of a minute inside schedule at Hampton Court Junction, 61 minutes 17 seconds. Number 34041 developed 1,325-1,375 EDHP between Winchester and Roundwood.

Occasionally loads exceeded 500 tons, C.J.Allen travelled on the August Bank Holiday Friday behind Driver Hill with rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, No.35002 and the "Bournemouth Belle", 12 Pullman Cars plus a van, 555 tons Gross. Speeds after Southampton were 52 miles per hour at Eastleigh and 56 at Roundwood and 88 maximum near Woking. Hampton Court Junction was passed in 63 minutes 10 seconds, despite checks and a stop for signals the "Belle" was still two and a half minutes early at Clapham Junction [schedule 79 minutes] but further delays led to a Waterloo arrival nine and a half minutes late, 79 minutes Net. The average EDHP Eastleigh to Winchester was 1,500-1,550 and at Roundwood the actual at least 1,560-1,610.

The rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, like the originals, had a significant reserve of power with 400 ton Tare trains. A return footplate journey made by R.I.Nelson indicates how much. [Ref.47] Rebuilt Merchant Navy No.35030 with 430 tons Gross ran from Waterloo to Southampton in 84 minutes 3 seconds despite five signal checks. The heaviest working, Woking to MP31, 200 pounds per square inch in the steam chest, cut off at 30 percent, produced acceleration from 54 to 59 miles per hour on the rising grades. Southampton to Bournemouth took 31 minutes 11 seconds with Christchurch passed in 26 minutes 21 seconds, 190-200 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and cut off at 29 percent produced a minimum after Brockenhurst, passed at 70 miles per hour, of 59 before Sway. With the load reduced to 210 tons from Bournemouth and further to 140 tons at Wareham the scheduled running time from Bournemouth to Weymouth, 49 minutes was cut to 45 minutes 55 seconds. Number 35030 returned, as per roster, on the 17.35 ex Weymouth with 215 tons as far as Bournemouth. Running time to Bournemouth, with four stops was 51 minutes 52 seconds, schedule 53½ minutes. There was a signal stop leaving Weymouth, then with Regulator full open and 40 percent cut off No.35030 sustained 30 miles per hour on the 1/50; after the Poole restart, with Regulator three quarters open and cut off 32 percent, speed fell on the 1/60 to Parkstone from 34 to 31.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth two hours performance 1958 and 1959

Number 35030, with 12 coaches, 430 tons Gross, after Bournemouth passed Brockenhurst in 16 minutes 54 seconds and following various signal checks and stops reached Southampton ten and a quarter minutes late. The controls were set from Eastleigh to Roundwood to give 200-215 pounds per square inch in the steam chest, cut off between 25 and 30 percent, from Basingstoke to London cut off was 25 percent with Regulator either half open [225 pounds per square inch boiler pressure gave 120 pounds per square inch in the steam chest] or five eighths open [228 and 165]. This working produced an average of 60.1 miles per hour from Eastleigh to Roundwood [average 1,460-1,510EDHP], a time of 28 minutes 24 seconds for the 37 miles from Worting Junction to Hampton Court Junction, a maximum of 83 miles per hour and a time to Waterloo of 75 minutes 19 seconds.

P.Dean made 42 journeys on the 10.30 ex Waterloo to Southampton in 1958 and early 1959. Train formation was, 13 coaches on three occasions, 12 on 27 and 11 on the rest. Locomotives were rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 - 25 times, West Country Class 4-6-2 - seven, Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 - eight and Britannia Class 4-6-2 - twice. The Merchant Navy's ran: early or to time five times, [average gain 1 minute 9 seconds] - late on 20, [average 6 minutes 16 seconds] - Net times were within schedule 13 times, [average gain two and a half minutes] - to schedule seven times and over five times, [average two and a quarter minutes]. The West Country's were: early once, [27 seconds] - late six, [average 4 minutes 55 seconds]. Net times were within five times, [average one and a quarter minutes] - over twice, [four minutes]. The Lord Nelson's lost time on all eight occasions, [average 8 minutes 26 seconds] and only once was the Net time within [30 seconds]. The average Net loss was three and a half minutes. Both Britannia's were late into Southampton, average 8 minutes 26 seconds, Net time to schedule once, seven minutes over once. Passengers on the 10.30 reached Southampton punctually once in seven, six and three quarters of a minute average late on the other six. On 36 percent of the runs time was debited to the locomotive.

Punctuality Up was better [the approach to Waterloo was easier than to Southampton, one line through the tunnel followed by one platform used for the Bournemouth trains]. The departure from Southampton was also easier, a slow passage of the tunnel then an open road compared with the 40 miles per hour restriction at Clapham Junction. [Departure from Southampton was however often a minute or so late due to either exceeding the 32 minutes schedule from Bournemouth to Southampton or replenishing the tender, sometimes both]. P.Dean noted 20 Up non stop runs with 12 coaches, eight behind Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, twelve behind rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. The Merchant Navy's improved on the 84 minutes schedule five times, [average 4 minutes 6 seconds] - lost time on three, [average 3 minutes 48 seconds]. Net times were within on all, [average four minutes and a quarter]. The smaller 4-6-2's improved on schedule five times [average 2 minutes 32 seconds] - lost time on seven, [average 6 minutes 23 seconds]. Net times were within on nine, [average four and a quarter minutes] - over three times [average three and a quarter minutes].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance above Timetable requirements, 1959

In the Up direction there was a 50 percent chance that three and a quarter minutes would be gained on schedule between Southampton and Waterloo and conversely a 50 percent chance of five and a half minutes being lost.

Driver Letchford of Nine Elms demonstrated on February 12th 1959 what could be achieved with a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2. Number 35030 with 11 coaches passed MP31 in 30 minutes 5 seconds from Waterloo at 75 miles per hour and after a marked easing, Basingstoke in 43 minutes 10 seconds. This was followed by a stop for signals; it took 66 minutes 57 seconds to pass Micheldever at 20 miles per hour. However cannot keep a good man down, Letchford passed Eastleigh at 92 miles per hour and reached Southampton in 85 minutes 20 seconds, 70½ minutes Net. After a competitive restart from Southampton, 82 miles per hour at Brockenhurst, 75 at Lymington Junction and 86 at Hinton Admiral he swept through Christchurch [25.1 miles] in 23 minutes 55 seconds, stopped for 52 seconds for signals at Boscombe and reached Bournemouth in 29 minutes 53 seconds. Equivalent to Waterloo to Bournemouth non stop unchecked, assuming the water supply held out, in 97 minutes, an average of 66.7 miles per hour. [Ref.48]

Locomotive availability on peak summer Saturdays improved significantly in 1959 following the inauguration of stage one of the Kent Coast electrification. On August 8th, the peak day, Schools Class 4-4-0's and King Arthur Class 4-6-0's on many Waterloo to Bournemouth trains. The winter timetable of 1959 included diesel multiple unit operation of local services on the Portsmouth, Eastleigh Andover route. Increasingly there were frequent reports of good performances by the 4-6-2's.

O.S.Nock in the February 1960 Railway Magazine noted that the five most recent logs he had received from correspondents included actual Waterloo to Southampton times between 81 minutes 23 seconds and 85 minutes 30 seconds with 390 to 460 tons, 71 to 82 minutes Net, one of them was Letchford's romp with No.35030. An interesting comparison with Letchford's effort was afforded by rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34010 with 460 tons, Waterloo to Southampton in 81 minutes 8 seconds, 76 minutes Net with MP31 passed in 34 minutes 7 seconds at 66 miles per hour, Basingstoke in 48 minutes 18 seconds and Eastleigh in 69 minutes 50 seconds after 83 maximum. The average from Woking to Basingstoke was 71.7 miles per hour, Letchford despite easing averaged 76.9, albeit with a lighter train, the average EDHP from Woking to Basingstoke in each case similar i.e. 1,550-1,600. In the opposite direction Rebuilt Merchant Navy No.35025 ran Southampton to Waterloo in 77 minutes 19 seconds [75¾ Net].

Train timing was in many ways an art, one thing however is clear, it was difficult to recover two minutes or so lost through a slow start, conversely with a rapid start all things were possible. Driver Woods of Bournemouth achieved one of the fastest starts to MP31, one minute quicker than Letchford, despite speed falling to the mid-sixties at that point, the locomotive Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35021 with 12 coaches.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Locomotive variety in 1960

Time could be recovered going Down on the favourable stretches west of Roundwood and Up, east of Worting Junction. A rebuilt Merchant Navy No.35019 which passed Worting Junction five and a half minutes late at Worting Junction recovered most of this by Southampton with 96 miles per hour at Winchester Junction and 93 at Shawford, the average from Micheldever to St Denys was 88½, the line limit 85.

R.A.H.Weight on a Saturday, at the end of August 1960 spent six hours observing traffic between Woking and Basingstoke and saw: 15 Merchant Navy Class - 19 Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's - 13 BR Standard Class 5 - 12 King Arthur Class - four Lord Nelson Class - two ex SR Mixed traffic - two Schools Class 4-4-0's - one L Class 4-4-0 - several, 2-6-0's, both Maunsell and BR Standard Class 4. Later in the year, on Christmas Eve, another observer spent four hours noting the late afternoon peak at St Denys, he observed that: 1) punctuality was good until the 18.14 Waterloo to Weymouth passed 24 minutes late behind West Country No.34095 2) the only pre-grouping locomotive seen was 700 Class 0-6-0 No.30357 with a Fawley to Eastleigh train, aside from three Urie designed 4-6-0's. 1960 was the year of the demise of pre-grouping locomotives in the Southampton area on local passenger trains, the next two years witnessed the final withdrawal of pre-Bulleid express passenger locomotives.

C.J.Allen, early in 1961 published details of a series of journeys, recorded by G.F.Bloxham, J.G.Webber, C.M.Napier and S.C.Nash [Ref.49]. The Southampton to Waterloo stage on the two hours Bournemouth trains witnessed much good locomotive work at this time, not least because out of course delays were invariably slight or non existent. Seven of the nine runs, were with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, the other two with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's. The Merchant Navy's were, Nos.35019, 35021, 35010, 35011, 35001, 35027 and 35025, the respective loads 390, 400, 395, 400, 425, 430 and 470 tons. The overall actual [and Net] times from Southampton to Waterloo were: 77 minutes 13 seconds [76¼ minutes Net] - 79 minutes 25 seconds [76½ minutes] - 84 minutes 40 seconds [77 minutes] - 87 minutes 56 seconds [79 minutes] - 78 minutes 32 seconds [76½ minutes] - 82 minutes [77¾ minutes]. There were signal checks at Eastleigh twice from which, Driver Letchford, with No.35019 accelerated to 64 miles per hour at Roundwood and Driver Hill with No.35010 from 20 at Eastleigh to 61 at Roundwood.

The Eastleigh to Roundwood average with Nos.35021, 35001, 35027 and 35025 were 59.8, 64.5, 67.0 and 56.0 miles per hour, actual speed 61, 60, 65 and 58 at the end of the long rise. J.G.Webber noted the brakes leak on when No.35025 passed Winchester Junction reducing speed to 50 miles per hour. The actual EDHP at Roundwood was 1,475 - 1,525 with No.35019 - 1,400-1,450 with No.35021 - 1,380-1,430 with No.35010 - 1,615-1,665 with No.35001 - 1,630-1680 with No.35027 - 1,490-1,540 with No.35025. Number 35027 developed an average 1,710-1765 between Eastleigh and Roundwood, at Winchester Junction the figure rose to 1,800-1,850. Whether the locomotive was eased after this or the boiler pressure began to fall was not noted.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Up performance from Southampton, 1960 and 1961

Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No. 35027, driven by Sprague after a check for signals before Basingstoke, reached 84 miles per hour at Farnborough, 85 before Woking and after a slight check 83 at Byfleet, the 75½ minutes Net, with 12 coaches was the best performance of the nine. It is salutary to note that not long after this Driver Sprague was at the controls when somebody ventured on to the track and was killed, he seldom if ever after that drove in excess of 65 miles per hour.

The two rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's, Nos.34039 and 34085, both with 12 coaches, 425 tons, ran from Southampton to Waterloo in 81 minutes 35 seconds and 83 minutes 45 seconds, 76¾ and 78½ minutes Net. Driver Purchase, with No.34039, averaged 59.8 miles per hour between Eastleigh and Roundwood, with 62 at the summit. Driver Varney with No.34085, averaged 53.2 miles per hour, 53 miles at Roundwood. The average EDHP 1,420-1,470 and 1,280-1,330, No.34039 peaked at 1,500-1,550.

Implementation of the second stage of the Kent electrification in 1961 released further 4-6-2's to the Western Section. The morning departures from Waterloo were altered at this time: Channel Islands Boat Train, 08.10 - two hours Bournemouth. 08.30 - Bournemouth semi-fast, 08.35. The Portsmouth to Reading service was taken over by diesel multiple units from May 1st. Another change in 1961 was the reduction in the number of summer Saturday extras, which coupled with the increased availability of 4-6-2's led to a significant reduction in the use of King Arthur Class 4-6-0's.

Eastleigh duties Nos.251, 2 and 3, previously Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's, changed to Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. The 11.30 ex Waterloo, with Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No.30859 was noted early in the year running to Basingstoke, the first stop in 58 minutes, including a PWR slack at Malden to 10 miles per hour, 54 minutes Net. The next two stages, to Micheldever and Winchester took 15 and 12 minutes, the load less was than in previous years, 366 tons Tare / 390 tons Gross. The smaller locomotives, despite the further 4-6-2's, still appeared occasionally and unusually on the 3rd August ex GWR 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.7317 worked the 15.50 ex Weymouth.

The heaviest summer train on the Waterloo to Bournemouth route was the "Belle", in the winter when the load was less time could be gained easily. Norman Harvey, on the 18th of February recorded 78 minutes 3 seconds from Southampton to Waterloo with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030 and 375 tons, his friend Driver Sartin was at the controls. There was acceleration from 60 miles per hour at Eastleigh to 74 at Roundwood, Worting Junction was passed in 30½ minutes, schedule 37 minutes, from where matters were taken gently on to Waterloo. The EDHP at Roundwood was 1,800-1,850. [Ref.50]

There were further reductions in the summer Saturday service in 1962, through coaches on weekdays from Waterloo to Swanage were withdrawn and it was the last year in service for the Maunsell designed express passenger locomotives.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Stroudley 0-6-0 Tank performance in the sixties

The Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's found occasional use on the main line during 1962; No.30850 for instance was noted on the 11th August arriving at Waterloo five minutes late on the 10.08 ex Bournemouth West, [schedule a generous 93 minutes from Southampton to Waterloo]. A better example perhaps, of Lord Nelson performance was afforded by a log of a run with No.30850 and 350 tons on the Fridays only 18.22 ex Waterloo during July published by O.S.Nock. Southampton was reached in 93 minutes 12 seconds [81 minutes Net], schedule 93 minutes, with a signal stop before Surbiton and a check after Winchester. Between the checks the running was to Bournemouth two hours schedule standard, Woking to Basingstoke 21 minutes 31 seconds, Woking to Winchester 37 minutes 34 seconds, [two hours schedule, 38½ minutes Woking Junction to Winchester Junction, equivalent to 40½ minutes Woking to Winchester], average EDHP Woking to Basingstoke 975-1,025.

C.J.Allen, an infrequent traveller on the Southern Region, noted a typically good performance behind a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2. Driver Clarke with No.35001 and 400 tons on the 10.30 ex Waterloo reached Southampton in 81 minutes 9 seconds, 76 minutes Net and continued to Bournemouth in two seconds under 32 minutes. The average from Woking to Basingstoke was 70.5 miles per hour, 1,310-1,360EDHP average. Winchester was passed four minutes early, 63 minutes 23 seconds from Waterloo.

A somewhat surprising survival, with hindsight, was the steam hauled Hayling Island service, this a former LB&SC branch, as it was west of Chichester fell within the jurisdiction of the Western Section and until its closure in November 1963 was the haunt of ex LB&SC A1X "Terrier" Class 0-6-0 Tank's.

A1X No.32650 in 1962 ran the 4.6 miles from Havant to Hayling Island in 9 minutes 5 seconds, No.32640 on two other occasions took 10 minutes 6 seconds [schedule ten minutes], the train consisted of four coaches plus a van, c.150 tons Gross. The journey in the reverse direction was accomplished in five seconds over the schedule. Numbers 32650 and 32640 ran the 1.33 miles from Langstone to North Hayling in 2 minutes 23 seconds and 2 minutes 36 seconds respectively with maxima of 52 and 47 miles per hour before Hayling. Numbers 32640, 32650 and 32661 in 1963 with three coaches, c.100tons, reached Hayling Island approximately a quarter of a minute inside schedule. The Langstone to North Hayling times were 2 minutes 38 seconds, 2 minutes 28 seconds and 2 minutes 26 seconds with 44 miles per hour maximum. In the opposite direction maxima were higher, 48, 46 and 53 miles per hour with Havant reached in 9 minutes 17 seconds on the last.

The 1963 summer Timetable represented the final development of steam hauled passenger services on the Waterloo, Southampton and Bournemouth route. The "Bournemouth Belle" schedule was improved to give another two hours service to and from Bournemouth including the Southampton stop. The 15.20 and 15.30 ex Waterloo were changed to 15.30 and 15.35, the Bournemouth arrival times unaltered.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Giesl Ejector fitted to Battle of Britain

The remaining Schools Class 4-4-0's were withdrawn from service at the end of 1962, reportedly "for accountancy reasons". The only Maunsell designed passenger locomotives remaining in service were the U Class 2-6-0's, a few of the U1's, the mixed traffic N Class and S15 Class 4-6-0's.

The last Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 to be rebuilt emerged from Eastleigh works in June 1961 and the last modification to a Bulleid designed 4-6-2, the fitting of a Giesl ejector to Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34064, was carried out in May 1962. The Giesl ejector was reportedly fitted to obviate the loss of gas velocity engendered by fitting a spark arrester. The original Bulleid designed 4-6-2's steamed freely but were prone to excessive spark throwing, they provided regular employment for the fire brigades of Southern England in dealing with line side fires during the summers. It is doubtful that the Ejector improved the performance of the unrebuilt Battle of Britain, there limitations lay more in the utilisation of steam efficiently rather than the generation of it. B.L.Smith recorded a journey on the 10.30 ex Waterloo with No.34064 and 400 tons, presumably with his friend Driver Hooper at the controls. Mile Post 31 was passed in 32 minutes 20 seconds and Basingstoke in a few seconds inside 47 minutes with 59 miles per hour minimum at MP31, the average EDHP from Woking to Basingstoke was 1,175-1,225. Southampton was reached in 80¾ minutes, with easy running after Basingstoke and two signal checks. Christchurch was passed in 27 minutes 57 seconds from the Southampton restart and after a PWR slack the stop at Bournemouth effected in 36 minutes 12 seconds. In the opposite direction with 430 tons No.34064 ran from Bournemouth to Southampton exactly to schedule, 32 minutes 2 seconds. It passed Sway in 14 minutes 48 seconds, with 57 miles per hour minimum after Hinton Admiral, the average EDHP Christchurch to Sway was 1,160-1,210. [Ref.51]

A sensibly driven Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 could comfortably maintain the Bournemouth schedules, improved considerably since 1948, with the possible exception of the "Bournemouth Belle", when loaded to 12 Pullman Cars. Even with an unrebuilt or rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 there was power to spare with 12 coach trains. Indeed a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 could maintain most schedules, albeit sometimes with scant reserve. An example occurred on the 1st March when Standard 5 No.73089 replaced Merchant Navy No.35027 at Eastleigh. The Winchester departure was 22 minutes late, schedule to Waterloo 72 minutes, there were delays for a PWR slack at Wallers Ash and because the train was outside its normal path signal delays amounting to seven minutes. The final Waterloo arrival was 32 minutes late, the Net time less than 72 minutes schedule. The two hours Bournemouth trains were allowed 66-67 minutes from Winchester pass to Waterloo.

Chapter 27, Waterloo to Weymouth 1963-1967

Waterloo to Bournemouth and Weymouth line performance from 1963 to 1967 has featured in many books and articles. The general demise of the steam locomotive throughout Britain, particularly on express passenger trains, attracted a continually increasing number of enthusiasts to the Western Section. The introduction of diesel traction on the West of England service during 1964 and particularly the demise of the "Atlantic Coast Express" in September of that year led to an even greater focus on the Bournemouth trains. The footplate crews, particularly those from Nine Elms, often responded to the resultant enthusiast encouragement and adulation.

Locomotive performances at times undoubtedly ranked amongst the best ever achieved by British steam locomotives. It is difficult to offer a true prospective, if virtually every journey is recorded by someone, then naturally the best performances are noted and published. This undoubtedly was not the case in the early years of either the Southern Region or other British Railways Regions. Footplate crews' attitudes, motivated by the approaching end of steam traction and admiring publicity, changed, they showed a predilection to gain time on schedule even when departures were on time. There had been, in the recent past, drivers such as, Gingell, Payne before the War and Letchford who had always run hard on the Southern, on other Regions Messrs Hailstone and Hoole at Kings Cross immediately come to mind but now there were a significant number not adverse to "giving it a bit of welly".

Summer 1963, as already noted was the first post Maunsell year. It is perhaps surprising that the normal stopping train services between Bournemouth and Brockenhurst via Wimborne and on the Swanage and Lymington branches were entrusted to Maunsell's predecessor's predecessor's M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank's. Although often reported "short of steam", total failure in service was not uncommon, they could still perform well.

Personal observations on the Swanage branch during the Easter weekend indicated they maintained schedule comfortably with the two coach auto trains. The Maundy Thursday 19.28 ex Wareham left 35 minutes late, occasioned by the late running of the Down "Royal Wessex". On the Sunday a return journey from Swanage to Corfe Castle was to time and on the Monday the 17.38 ex Swanage despite some chaos on the Main line, ran to time. The 12.30 on the Monday ran from Swanage to Corfe Castle, 5.0 miles and on to Wareham, 6.05 miles in nine and eight and a half minutes respectively, the W.T.T. allowed ten and 11 minutes.

Heavier trains worked over the Swanage branch, particularly on the summer Saturday through trains from Waterloo when Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's were usually employed. The 09.54 Easter Monday relief from Eastleigh to Swanage consisted of ten coaches and was hauled from Bournemouth to Swanage by Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76015.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Easter Weekend, 1963

Punctuality on the Main Line over the Easter period varied. The Down "Royal Wessex" on the Thursday left Waterloo on time at 16.35 with a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 hauling 13 coaches, c. 470 tons Gross. The initial 72½ minutes schedule to the first stop at Winchester was exceeded by almost six minutes; there were in mitigation signal checks to 24 and 22 miles per hour at Malden and Worting Junction plus a PWR slack to 42 at Brookwood. Worting Junction was passed in 58 minutes 46 seconds, four and three quarter minutes late. The succeeding stages to Southampton, Brockenhurst and Bournemouth Central were run in 23 minutes 2 seconds, 18 minutes 54 seconds and 34 minutes 49 seconds [schedules 18, 19 and 21 minutes], overall Waterloo to Bournemouth Central 164 minutes 41 seconds [schedule 140 minutes]. Operating difficulties caused the loss although the locomotive barely kept time. The train, reduced to six coaches at Bournemouth was checked by signals continuously on to Wareham.

The Easter Monday Up 17.35 ex Weymouth, 12 coaches, c.435 tons Gross and rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34077, left Wareham five minutes late. The ten minutes schedule to Poole, 7.1 miles, was exceeded by 93 seconds with 54 miles per hour maximum at Holton Heath. Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76015 banked the train out of Poole, the two locomotives attained 37 miles per hour before the 1/60, passed Parkstone in 4 minutes 6 seconds at 34 and were still travelling at 32 before they were stopped for signals at Branksome, Bournemouth Central was reached in 17 minutes 21 seconds after a four minutes and a quarter stop [schedule ten minutes]. The Bournemouth departure was 20 minutes late and the Weymouth crew kept the 32 minutes schedule to Southampton with seven seconds to spare. The start was slow; Christchurch in 7 minutes 17 seconds, the minimum after Hinton Admiral 51 miles per hour and the maximum after Brockenhurst 80.

The new crew ran to Roundwood, in then characteristic Eastleigh depot form, the average from Eastleigh was 52 miles per hour, and lost another two and a half minutes to Worting Junction, passed at 44 miles per hour. Fleet was passed in 52 minutes 16 seconds at 76 miles per hour after which there were checks all the way to Waterloo, 132 minutes 26 seconds from Southampton, 68 minutes late. The problems aggravated by the failure of a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 on an Up "Queen Elizabeth" Boat train at Brookwood, replaced from Brookwood to London by Urie S15 Class 4-6-0 No.30506.

Another Urie S15 Class 4-6-0 featured when the two hours "Bournemouth Belle" made a somewhat inauspicious debut on the first day of operation to the new summer timetable, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35002 failed at Woking. The replacement, S15 No.30499 "put up a very creditable performance", small recompense to passengers who reached Bournemouth 50 minutes late. [Ref.52]

A weeks travelling on the Bournemouth and Weymouth line from the 28th August to the 2nd September affords a flavour of day to day performance in 1963.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo to Bournemouth, August 28th 1963

The 08.30 ex Waterloo on Wednesday the 28th consisted of 11 coaches, c. 395 tons Gross and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35021. It passed Clapham Junction, after an initial check in 8 minutes 21 seconds and then with a clear road, 59 miles per hour minimum at MP31 and 72 maximum at Farnborough, Hook in 46 minutes 49 seconds. There was a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour, Worting Junction was passed six minutes late, 57 minutes 58 seconds, some of the lost time was recovered with an average of 78.5 miles per hour between Micheldever and Eastleigh, maximum 82 on to St. Denys, 77.2 miles, 81 minutes 2 seconds. After another signal check Southampton was reached in 86 minutes 11 seconds. The continuation to Bournemouth, schedule 34 minutes, took 37 minutes 19 seconds, with a PWR slack to 26 miles per hour before Brockenhurst, the final arrival was six and a half minutes late, 113-114 minutes Net running time from Waterloo.

The 15.30 ex Waterloo with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34044, 12 coaches, c.445 tons Gross and Driver Varney appeared a better prospect. The start to Clapham Junction was slow, 8 minutes 2 seconds, but with 74 miles per hour at Weybridge, 65 minimum at MP31 and 72 at Winchfield he passed MP47 in 47 minutes 7 seconds. There was then a PWR slack to 19 miles per hour at Basingstoke, a three-quarters of a minute signal stop at Worting Junction, a check before Micheldever, [11.1 miles from MP47 to Micheldever took 25 minutes 41 seconds] and Winchester reached 11³/₄ minutes late, 80 minutes 40 seconds. The average EDHP from Woking to Basingstoke was 1,370-1,420. The 15.30 stopped at Southampton and Brockenhurst before Bournemouth, schedules 17, 19 and 21 minutes. The actual times were 18 minutes 15 seconds with a signal check at Eastleigh, 20 minutes 37 seconds including a PWR slack to 29 miles per hour and 20 minutes 24 seconds, Sway, 2.75 miles passed in 6 minutes 46 seconds from Brockenhurst. The Bournemouth arrival was 13 ³/₄ minutes late.

R.A.H.Weight travelled on another Thursday in August when Driver Varney had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34048 with ten Pullman Cars on the 12.30, the "Bournemouth Belle" c.410 tons Gross. After an initial check, it took eight and three-quarters minutes to Clapham Junction, then with 72 miles per hour at Weybridge, 64 minimum at MP31, Basingstoke was passed in exactly 49 minutes, average EDHP Woking to Basingstoke 1,250-1,300. Varney, after 81 miles per hour maximum at Winchester was one and a half minutes early, at Eastleigh 71 minutes 35 seconds before signal checks resulted in a 25 seconds late Southampton arrival. The continuation to Bournemouth was exactly to schedule, 34 minutes, including the PWR slack at Beaulieu Road.

Weight returned to London on the Up "Royal Wessex" the following day, not with Varney, and reached Waterloo five minutes late after "an undistinguished run". [Ref.53] Varney's abilities in the Up direction were highlighted by a run with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35005 when he achieved a Net time of 75 minutes from Southampton to Waterloo with 500 tons on the "Bournemouth Belle". He reached 62 miles per hour at Winchester Junction; an EDHP of 1,750-1,800, the average from Basingstoke to Woking was 80. [Ref.54]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo Bournemouth August 30th to September 2nd 1963

The Friday 16.22 relief to the "Royal Wessex", eight coaches, c.280 tons Gross was easy for rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34104. It ran to Winchester in 71 minutes 2 seconds including a 19 miles per hour PWR slack at Basingstoke [schedule 73½ minutes]. The stages to Southampton and Brockenhurst took 18 minutes 8 seconds [two signal checks] and 20 minutes 35 seconds [check to 12 miles per hour at Totton] [schedules 17 and 20 minutes]. The "Royal Wessex" with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030 and 13 coaches was three minutes late at Brockenhurst.

The 13.30 ex Waterloo on Sunday September 1st, 11 coaches, c.390 tons with rebuilt Battle of Britain No.34090 reached Basingstoke 100 seconds early [schedule 55 minutes] after diversion to the Local line between Vauxhall and Wimbledon, signal checks to 56 miles per hour at Farnborough and again before Basingstoke. Maxima were 71 miles per hour at Weybridge and after the slowing 70 at Hook. The three stages to Winchester, Southampton and Brockenhurst took 23 minutes 34 seconds, including a PWR slack and 79 miles per hour at Winchester Junction, 16 minutes 9 seconds and 17 minutes 13 seconds with 70 before Brockenhurst [schedules 24, 17½ and 19 minutes]. There were stops at New Milton, Christchurch, Pokesdown and Boscombe between Brockenhurst and Bournemouth Central [schedule running time 28 minutes] and 2 minutes 36 seconds was lost. Sway was passed in 6 minutes 18 seconds and 30 miles per hour attained on the 1/99 after Christchurch. Time was saved at all the stops, Boscombe was left on time before 58 seconds was lost on the two minutes schedule to Bournemouth. .

The 08.30 ex Waterloo on both the first Monday and Tuesday of September loaded to 395 tons Gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028. On Monday it passed Clapham Junction in 7 minutes 33 seconds and Weybridge, 19.1 miles, in 21 minutes 47 seconds after 78 miles per hour at Esher. Signals then intervened, Woking passed at 32 miles per hour, MP31 at 56, the average from Fleet to Hook was 75.5, MP46 in 48 minutes 20 seconds before a long PWR slack to 15 through Basingstoke. It passed Worting Junction seven minutes late, 58 minutes 54 seconds, at 39 miles per hour, Wootton at 51 and Winchester at 86, [the Micheldever to Eastleigh average was 81] and reached Southampton in 87 minutes 42 seconds. The continuation to Bournemouth took 34 minutes 7 seconds, with a PWR slack before Bournemouth, a 6 minutes 5 seconds late arrival. On Tuesday it left Waterloo eight and a half minutes late, was diverted to the Local line between Vauxhall and Wimbledon and lost a further four and three-quarters minutes to Hampton Court Junction, 22 minutes 51 seconds. Despite 70.5 miles per hour average on to Hook [actual, 73, 60 and 76 at Esher, MP31 and Winchfield] after the Basingstoke PWR 18 it was eight minutes behind schedule, 16½ minutes late, at Worting Junction. It then reached 54 miles per hour at Wootton, 82 at Wallers Ash and passed Winchester in 73½ minutes. There were further signal checks before Southampton was reached in 96 minutes 5 seconds. The continuation to Bournemouth took 32 minutes 40 seconds with 74 miles per hour before Brockenhurst and 84 before Christchurch; overall time from Waterloo was 133½ minutes, the actual arrival 22 minutes late.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth Waterloo August 28th to September 1st 1963

The 12.40 from Bournemouth on the last Wednesday of August loaded to 420 tons Gross, 11 coaches plus two vans with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35011. The 32 minutes schedule to Southampton was kept with seven seconds to spare, 57 miles per hour minimum after Hinton Admiral 74 maximum before Lyndhurst Road, Totton, 25.5 miles, passed in 26 minutes 38 seconds. Eastleigh was passed in 9 minutes 41 seconds from the Southampton restart, speed rose to 67 miles per hour at Wallers Ash, 1,680-1,730 EDHP, before signals caused a reduction to 42. Worting was passed three and a half minutes early, 33 minutes 30 seconds and after 81 miles per hour at Winchfield, a signal check before Woking plus a PWR slack to 16 at Weybridge Clapham Junction, one and a quarter minutes early, 75 minutes 40 seconds. The final 3.9 miles to Waterloo, bedevilled with checks took 16 minutes, 7 minutes 40 seconds late.

The 18.40 on Thursday and Friday had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34090, with 11 coaches plus a van on the Thursday, c.425 tons Gross, one coach less on the Friday, c.390 tons Gross. The start from Bournemouth on the first day was good, Boscombe passed in 3 minutes 11 seconds before a PWR slack at MP 103¼ to 29 miles per hour. Consequently it took 18 minutes 34 seconds to pass Sway at 67 miles per hour and with 60 at Lymington Junction and 71 at Beaulieu Road the Southampton arrival was three and a quarter minutes late, 35 minutes 21 seconds. The relieving Eastleigh crew lost another two minutes on to Woking, average 53 miles per hour from Eastleigh to Roundwood, no higher than 70 between Basingstoke and Woking. After a check to 17 miles per hour at Weybridge they reached Waterloo in 90 minutes 6 seconds [schedule 84 minutes], three minutes lost by the locomotive. The following evening the same Eastleigh crew left Southampton three minutes late, averaged 54.8 miles per hour between Winchester and Roundwood, reached 74 maximum at Farnborough, passed Hampton Court in 67 minutes 41 seconds [schedule 67½ minutes] and Clapham Junction in 77 minutes 30 seconds [schedule 77 minutes]. They reached Waterloo in 88 minutes 10 seconds after signals, four minutes lost from Southampton and seven minutes late, the driving on these two evenings not untypical at this time.

There was only one Up two hours train to Waterloo on a summer Saturday from Bournemouth Central, the 19.40 [19.28 ex Bournemouth West]. On the last Saturday of August it consisted of ten vehicles, six passenger coaches and four bogie parcels vehicles, 360 tons Gross, with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34010. The initial 3.5 miles between the West and Central stations was run to schedule, i.e. eight minutes. Christchurch was passed in 6 minutes 7 seconds from the Bournemouth restart before slowing for the PWR slack, taken at 37 miles per hour, the time to pass Sway was 17 minutes 43 seconds, the maximum after Brockenhurst 75 and the stop at Southampton effected in 34 minutes 40 seconds. Eastleigh was passed in 9 minutes 38 seconds from Southampton, the average from there to Roundwood was 63.3 miles per hour, 1,440-1,490EDHP, and Worting Junction in 31 minutes 42 seconds, five and three-quarter minutes inside schedule.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth Waterloo September 2nd to 4th 1963

The average over the 37.0 miles to Hampton Court Junction was 73 miles per hour, without exceeding 76 [the formation included 75 limited stock] a restriction this driver carefully observed, not always the case. The train [five and a half minutes ahead of the schedule from Southampton] was actually three and three-quarters of a minute early at Hampton Court Junction. Weekend track works then intervened, with a diversion to the Local line at New Malden Waterloo was reached in 86 minutes 42 seconds, 78 minutes Net.

The Sunday 18.57 from Bournemouth [17.50 ex Weymouth] with 11 coaches and an unrebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34073 stopped at Brockenhurst, Southampton, Basingstoke and Surbiton [to set down only]. It took 24 minutes 14 seconds to Brockenhurst, delayed by the 25 miles per hour PWR slack after Christchurch. The initial 10.3 miles to Totton from the restart were run in 12 minutes 23 seconds, the stop at Southampton made in 17 minutes 35 seconds. Roundwood was passed in 30 minutes 22 seconds from the restart, after 53.5 miles per hour average from Eastleigh and following a signal check to 27 Basingstoke reached in 43 minutes 20 seconds. The 34.5 miles from there to Hampton Court Junction took 33 minutes 38 seconds, maximum 77 miles per hour after Woking and after a 50 seconds stop for signals before the station, Surbiton reached in 39 minutes 12 seconds. The final stage to Waterloo, after an early departure from Surbiton, a PWR slack to walking pace at Wimbledon, took 22 minutes 59 seconds, an arrival one minute late. Overall running time Bournemouth to Waterloo was 147½ minutes [schedules 22, 20, 43, 43 and 19 minutes, total 147] Net time 130-131 minutes Net, overall time 157¾ minutes.

The 11.00 semi-fast ex Bournemouth West on the Monday with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34028 and 410 tons Gross, on time at Basingstoke, improved on the 25 minutes schedule to the next stop at Woking by 2 minutes 20 seconds. It passed, Farnborough, 14.55 miles, in 14 minutes 25 seconds at 80 miles per hour. It then passed Malden, 14.6 miles from Woking in 14 minutes 25 seconds and reached Waterloo in 31 minutes 58 seconds after 22 miles per hour PWR slack at Wimbledon and signal checks, 27½ minutes Net.

The 14.40 from Bournemouth on Tuesday had Driver Harry Pope of Nine Elms with rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34053 and 395 tons. He passed Christchurch in 6 minutes 9 seconds and after the PWR slack to 29 miles per hour Sway in 17 minutes 53 seconds at 63. The 13.0 miles from there to Totton were run in 11 minutes with 82 between Beaulieu Road and Lyndhurst Road. [The average between the two stations was 80.5, a novel personal experience] and reached Southampton in 33 minutes 41 seconds, a loss of only one and three-quarters of a minute despite the severe PWR slack after Christchurch. The start to Eastleigh was good, a Pope characteristic, 9 minutes 40 seconds and 60 miles per hour, then with no higher average speed on to Roundwood than 55.8 miles per hour and 72 maximum at Wootton, he passed Worting Junction two and three-quarters of a minute ahead of schedule.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth Waterloo fastest ever? 1963

Speed rose to 80 miles per hour at Basingstoke and Brookwood, Hampton Court Junction was passed three and a half minutes inside schedule and Waterloo reached, after the PWR slack to 25 at Wimbledon, with a quick finish from Clapham Junction, another Pope speciality in 81 minutes 15 seconds, two and three-quarters of a minute within schedule and half a minute early.

Some four weeks and a day previous to this Pope had achieved a spectacular overall time from Bournemouth to Waterloo with the "Bournemouth Belle". The locomotive was Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35016, the train 12 Pullman Cars, c.495 tons Gross. The initial Bournemouth to Southampton stage took 29 minutes 3 seconds, Totton passed in 24 minutes 39 seconds, with an average of 77.5 miles per hour from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst Road. [The time between Beaulieu Road and Lyndhurst Road was actually a few seconds longer than with No.34053]. The continuation from Southampton to Waterloo exemplified his ability to save time by quick starts and finishes. The average from Eastleigh to Roundwood was 63.6 miles per hour with 65 maximum, an average EDHP of 1,790-1,840 and from Worting Junction to Hampton Court Junction 79.5 with a maximum of 86. The Southampton Waterloo time was 73 minutes 33 seconds including a signal check after Clapham Junction, the overall running time from Bournemouth 102 minutes 36 seconds, an average of 63 miles per hour with 500 tons, probably equivalent to 64 for a non stop run. The full details, timed by D.J.Coomber are included in D.W.Winkworth's book on the Bulleid Pacifics. [Ref.55] The run was particularly impressive because with the exception of through the New Forest Pope strictly observed the speed limits, it may be the fastest, in terms of actual overall running times, achieved by steam with a heavy train between Bournemouth and Waterloo.

Locomotive working west of Bournemouth to Weymouth usually involved light trains, which often led to sprightly running, particularly with Weymouth crews, [who also performed well between Bournemouth and Southampton in the 1960's]. Performance in the seven day period from August 28th to September 3rd 1963 varied. The 08.30 ex Waterloo left Bournemouth Central at 10.41, usually in the summer of 1963 after stock reshuffling a nine coach formation. It stopped at Poole, Wareham and Dorchester South [schedules ten, ten, 18 and 11 minutes]. On the 28th green liveried Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73029 with 315 tons ran the three stages to Dorchester in 10 minutes 34 seconds, 10 minutes exactly and 18 minutes 38 seconds with 65 miles per hour before Wareham, 56 at Wool, 50 at Moreton and 61 before Dorchester. On the 3rd September Class 5 No.73018 had 320 tons, the times were 10 minutes 57 seconds, 11 minutes 47 seconds with a signal check before Wareham and 18 minutes 18 seconds, speeds at the same locations were 60, 60, 51 and 65 miles per hour respectively. The final 7.1 miles to Weymouth took 11 minutes 16 seconds, 39 to 36 miles per hour on the 1/91 gradient up to Bincombe tunnel and without exceeding 60 on the steep descent to Weymouth.

The Merchant Navy and Battle of Britain/West Country Classes of 4-6-2 frequently hauled light stopping trains between Bournemouth and Weymouth for which they were far from ideal.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth to Weymouth performance 1963

Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34090 left Bournemouth four minutes late on Sunday September 1st with the 16.13 and 180 tons. The overall schedule to Weymouth with seven intermediate stops was 71 minutes, the actual overall time 67 minutes 5 seconds. The 5.0 miles from Poole to Holton Heath took 6 minutes 40 seconds reaching 62 miles per hour. The train, on time by Wool left Moreton two and a quarter minutes late as a result of a protracted station stop and recovered the time lost between Dorchester and Upwey, 4.7 miles, run in 7 minutes 2 seconds, schedule nine minutes.

The 11.30 ex Weymouth on 28th, on time at Dorchester South with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35011 and four coaches plus a van, 160 tons Gross stopped further at Wool, Wareham and Poole [schedules 12, eight, ten and ten minutes], actual times: 11 minutes 32 seconds - 7 minutes 47 seconds, signal check before Worgret Junction - 13 minutes 23 seconds, signal stop at Holton Heath - 9 minutes 5 seconds, driven vigorously from the Poole start to recover time, 41 miles per hour at Parkstone and 45 at Branksome.

The 13.30 on the 3rd September with rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34053 and five coaches, c.180 tons ran the same stages between Dorchester South and Bournemouth in 11 minutes 7 seconds, 7 minutes 41 seconds, 11 minutes 27 seconds and 9 minutes 48 seconds. Seventy two miles per hour before Wool, stop for signals before Poole and a check approaching Bournemouth Central. Previously it passed Dorchester Junction 20 seconds early from Weymouth [schedule 13 minutes] after 41 miles per hour at Radipole Halt and 27 minimum on the 1/50 and 1/52 to Bincombe Tunnel. It stopped before the Dorchester reversal in 13 minutes 47 seconds.

An unmodified Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34073 on the Sunday 17.50 ex Weymouth had 11 coaches and Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76056 as pilot to Dorchester. The two locomotives attained 31 miles per hour at Radipole, fell to 22 at Bincombe Tunnel, reached a maximum on the falling gradients of 57, passed Dorchester Junction in 14 minutes 8 seconds [schedule 12 minutes] and stopped at Dorchester, before reversing, in 15 minutes 32 seconds. Number 34073 on its own passed Worgret Junction, 13.9 miles, in 13 minutes 41 seconds and reached Wareham, 15.0 miles, in 15 minutes 32 seconds, the maximum was 80 miles per hour, the average between Moreton and Wool 77.5. The ten minutes schedules to Poole and Bournemouth were exceeded by 74 seconds with 64 miles per hour maximum and kept exactly with a Class 4 2-6-0 as banker to Parkstone and 42 at the foot of the 1/60, 38 at Parkstone and 40 at Branksome. Working 400 tons trains between Weymouth and Bournemouth was never easy, even more difficult on this particular evening with continuous thunderstorms, overall schedule from Weymouth to Bournemouth was 61 minutes, actual 62 minutes 46 seconds.

The 16.50 ex Weymouth was an interesting train for Railway Enthusiasts, invariably hauled by a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 or 2-6-4 Tank, the running at times between Bournemouth and Southampton could be very lively.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, poor timekeeping 1964

Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76060 on 30th August with 175 tons however ran circumspectly, it passed, Lyndhurst Road 7.7 miles from Brockenhurst in 8 minutes 57 seconds at 66 miles per hour, was checked by signals to 12 and reached Southampton 25 seconds inside the 20 minutes schedule. For what could be achieved see article in Railway World 1990. [Ref.56]

A correspondent writing in the "Railway Observer" at the end of 1963 opined that "South Western Division locomotive performance had reached a low ebb", [Ref.57] if anything in 1964 it was worse. The exact cause of the malaise, as ever with such things, is not clear, the locomotives could perhaps have been better serviced but they were not in as bad a condition as some reports suggested, there were engineering works in progress but not significantly more than in previous years. The Railway was however being subjected to one of its regular political inspections with the inevitable claims and counter claims. Perhaps these and other real and perceived injustices led to low morale amongst footplate crews.

The Bournemouth to Salisbury and the Bournemouth to Brockenhurst via Wimborne services were withdrawn at the beginning of May 1964. The Salisbury trains usually consisted of five or six coaches, motive power in March varied, including regular appearances of Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. N Class 2-6-0 No.31835 on the 21st with six coaches lost five minutes between Poole and Salisbury whereas a week later a Standard Class 4-6-0 No.75003 kept time. The last service day was May 2nd, the 16.50 ex Bournemouth West had five coaches entrusted to Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76066, the 17.20 and 20.30 ex Salisbury eight coaches with West Country Class No.34091 and No.76066. The West Country was credited with a good performance, time was kept and more despite delays due to the need to draw up twice at Downton and Fordingbridge. The West Country returned to Salisbury on the 19.50 ex Bournemouth with eight coaches.

The remaining Drummond M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank's were all withdrawn during May, although replaced previously on the Bournemouth to Brockenhurst service they had continued on the Swanage and Lymington branches.

Punctuality [or lack of] on the Waterloo, Southampton and Bournemouth route can be illustrated by reference to Tuesday August 18th and Wednesday the 19th. The 08.30 ex Waterloo, 11 coaches, 400 tons gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 each day started consistently, Walton 17.1 miles, in 21 minutes 52 seconds. On Tuesday it was then checked by signals to 29 miles per hour; on Wednesday with no checks it passed Worting Junction one minute late and Winchester Junction six seconds early. On Tuesday it was five and a quarter and four and three quarters minutes late at the two points. The minima were 56 miles per hour at MP31 and 56 and 58 at Wootton, on the second day maintained from Worting, maxima at Winchester Junction 78 and 76. On both days the performances was to schedule, with a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour in force at Winchester, this would have resulted in a late arrival at Southampton even if there were no other out of course delays.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, August 18th and 19th 1964

In practice there were signal checks after Shawford, the times to Southampton were 92 minutes 37 seconds and 86 minutes 45 seconds. Ninety seconds was recovered on Wednesday to Bournemouth, 32 minutes 32 seconds, with 51 miles per hour before Sway and 83 before Christchurch.

The 08.35 semi-fast ex Waterloo on the Tuesday, with rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34082 and 390 tons reached Southampton 12 minutes late. No further time was lost on the continuation to Bournemouth, Southampton to Brockenhurst and on to Bournemouth in 19 minutes 3 seconds and 20 minutes 52 seconds. The 11.30 semi-fast with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34018 and 360 tons arrived at Southampton eight minutes late and lost another three and three quarter minutes to Bournemouth. It stopped at Brockenhurst, New Milton, Christchurch and Pokesdown, and against the schedule it gained 37 seconds, lost 82 seconds, gained 28 seconds, gained 22 seconds and lost 68 seconds. The average lateness had grown by mid afternoon, the 15.30 ex Waterloo with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35008 and 400 tons was 26 minutes late at Southampton and lost another six and a half minutes to Bournemouth, six minutes at signals at Lyndhurst Road, 34 seconds between Brockenhurst and Bournemouth, schedule 19 minutes.

The Wednesday 10.30 ex Waterloo with rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34082 and the standard 11 coaches reached Southampton 15 minutes late and lost another 44 seconds to Bournemouth, schedule 34 minutes, the minimum before Sway was 46 miles per hour. The 11.30 with ten coaches and rebuilt West Country No.34021 was on time at New Milton, left Pokesdown on time and then lost 89 seconds to Bournemouth. After this all Down trains ex Waterloo were between ten and 20 minutes late on the Southampton to Bournemouth section, even the 17.05 ex Southampton Terminus was 17 minutes late at Brockenhurst, S15 Class 4-6-0, No.30827 with six coaches. [The 17.05 was regularly hauled by a BR Standard Class 9F 2-10-0 in 1963]. The schedule running time Brockenhurst to Bournemouth, with six intermediate stops was 33 minutes; No.30827 exceeded this by 13 seconds and the actual overall time of 37 minutes by half a minute.

The 12.40, 14.40 and 16.40 "The Bournemouth Belle" from Bournemouth on the Tuesday were hauled by Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35017, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34040 and Merchant Navy No.35025 with 435, 395 and 460 tons Gross. They ran to Southampton [schedule 32 minutes] in: 33 minutes 14 seconds, 33 minutes 17 seconds and 32 minutes 14 seconds - the minima after Hinton Admiral, at MP100 were 55, 54 and 51 miles per hour - the maxima after Brockenhurst 70, 73 and 72 - times to pass Totton were 28 minutes 28 seconds, 28 minutes 2 seconds and 27 minutes 25 seconds. The 18.20 from Bournemouth, [16.50 ex Weymouth], five coaches, 185 tons Gross with Standard Class 4 2-6-4 No.80015 passed Christchurch in 5 minutes 27 before various delays at New Milton and Lymington Junction and reached Brockenhurst six and a quarter minutes late. Three minutes were recovered on to Southampton, 17 minutes 2 seconds from Brockenhurst. Lyndhurst Road was passed in 8 minutes 34 seconds at 64 miles per hour.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth Waterloo August 19th 1964

A Standard Class 3 2-6-2 Tank No.82027 hauled many Bournemouth West portions on the 18th, eight coaches, 295 tons Gross, for the 12.40 from Bournemouth Central taken to schedule in 8 minutes 6 seconds.

The 13.12 [13.14 in the W.T.T.] and the 17.10 from Bournemouth Central on the Wednesday with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35024 and rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34022 consisted of eight coaches and ten coaches plus two vans, 295 and 400 tons Gross respectively. The 13.12 allowed 18 minutes running time to New Milton with intermediate stops at Pokesdown and Christchurch took 113 seconds longer, [overall it adhered to schedule due to time saved at the stops]. A similar situation occurred on the virtually empty 17.10, actual running time to Brockenhurst was 34 minutes 26 seconds, schedule 30 minutes, but for a check costing one minute at Lymington Junction, the arrival would have been to time.

Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 with 400 tons on the 14.40 from Bournemouth kept time to Southampton, 31 minutes 54 seconds, the minimum at Hinton Admiral was 55 miles per hour, the maximum after Brockenhurst 74, 26 minutes 48 seconds to Totton. The Weymouth crew on the 18.40 with 395 tons and rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34082 passed Christchurch in 5 minutes 55 seconds, were still travelling at 59 miles per hour past Hinton Admiral before a signal check to 30, and finally reached Southampton in 34 minutes 12 seconds.

The 19.15 from Southampton, [17.35 ex Weymouth] had the same Eastleigh crew on both evenings. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35024 on Tuesday with 400 tons Gross reached 56 miles per hour at Swaythling, passed in 6 minutes 59 seconds before a PWR slack to walking pace. It passed Winchester two minutes late [22 minutes 26 seconds at 61 miles per hour, fell to 56 at Roundwood reached 69 at Wootton and was six seconds early at Worting Junction. The 37 miles to Hampton Court Junction were run in 29 minutes 21 seconds, maxima 85 miles per hour after Fleet and 81 after West Byfleet, and after a signal check to 48 at Wimbledon, Waterloo was reached on time, 83 minutes 54 seconds. Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 on Wednesday, also with 400 tons, after the PWR slack to 24 miles per hour, maintained 55 to Roundwood, touched 69 at Wootton and was 20 seconds inside schedule at Worting Junction. It ran on to Hampton Court Junction in 29 minutes 49 seconds with 82 miles per hour at Fleet and Brookwood, 75 past Woking and 80 at West Byfleet. At Malden it was 13 seconds behind No.35024, before three signal checks and an arrival at Waterloo in 87 minutes 23 seconds, five minutes late. Two competent performances

Two other examples illustrate poor performance on the route during 1964. On October 16th 1964, General Election Day, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34021 left Dorchester South on time with five coaches, 190 tons Gross. The initial 10.0 miles to Wool, schedule 12 minutes took 10 minutes 6 seconds with 75 miles per hour maximum and the eight minutes to Wareham was kept with 23 seconds to spare with a signal check at Worgret Junction.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Dorchester to Waterloo, 1964

Number 34021 reached Poole 19 seconds inside [schedule 11 minutes] including another signal check. With 37 miles per hour at the bottom of Parkstone bank, 35 at Parkstone and 41 at Branksome it was past Gas Works Junction in 6 minutes 32 seconds before a signal stop and arrival at Bournemouth two and three quarters minutes late [12 minutes 40 seconds]. Six coaches were added at Bournemouth, 400 tons Gross and Christchurch was passed in 6 minutes 25 seconds at 66 miles per hour and after an average of 64.9, Totton in 26 minutes 37 seconds. The running was very even, 59 miles per hour minimum at MP100, an easing to 62 at Lymington Junction and between 64 and 67 on to Totton, after a slight signal check Southampton was reached in 31 minutes 41 seconds. It left Southampton two minutes late and [barely exceeding 50 miles per hour] passed Worting Junction passed three minutes and a quarter late. Three quarters of a minute was regained to Woking with 84, 75 and 85 miles per hour at Fleet, MP31 and Brookwood before a PWR slack to 19 at West Byfleet and a diversion to the Local line and back at Esher resulted in Waterloo reached in 96 minutes 4 seconds. Fourteen minutes late against the Public Timetable.

Christmas Eve operations were always fraught; in 1964 aggravated by heavy fog in London. The 08.30 ex Waterloo, 11 coaches, 395 tons Gross, with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35017 started slowly, with continuous slipping plus the fog it took ten minutes to pass Clapham Junction. There was a slowing for a diversion to the Local line at Woking and another to the Through line at Fleet following which Basingstoke was passed in 70³/₄ minutes at 65 miles per hour. After further fog delays, signal checks and a final flourish to 80 miles per hour at Shawford, Southampton was reached 35 minutes late. No time was recovered on to Bournemouth, 34 minutes 28 seconds, the minimum before Sway was 55 miles per hour and the maximum before Christchurch 71.

At Bournemouth low-lying sea fog caused operating difficulties. Unusual sightings in the gloom were a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 with a Gatwick Airport service board on its smokebox door and an ex GWR Hall Class 4-6-0 on the 10.15 ex Dorchester. The 12.40 [11.30 ex Weymouth] with 13 coaches, 470 tons Gross had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35004. [Christmas period trains could be heavy, the previous Christmas Eve the 09.21 from Bournemouth loaded to 14 coaches with Merchant Navy No.35019.] Number 35004 passed Christchurch in 6 minutes 21 seconds at 60 miles per hour, the minimum at Hinton Admiral was 59, at least 1,340-1,390EDHP, and Sway in 14 minutes 40 seconds at 72 miles per hour, before signals at Lymington Junction caused a reduction to 20. Southampton was reached two and a quarter minutes late, 34 minutes 18 seconds. The Eastleigh Roundwood average was 55 miles per hour, Worting Junction was passed slowly at 35 under signals one minute inside schedule, Hook at 80 before further signal checks. It was three and a half minutes down at Woking, seven at Hampton Court Junction following a PWR slack at Weybridge and 14¹/₂ at Waterloo after two further signal checks and a stop, 17 minutes late overall. Regular passengers on the Waterloo to Bournemouth route greeted the detailed announcement of the proposed electrification with relief.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Hooper's targets, 1965

There were occasional good performances in 1964, Driver Rabbetts' anticipating his imminent retirement from Bournemouth depot produced some exciting moments, some even benefited passengers. He brought Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35009 into Waterloo eight minutes early on the 11.30 ex Weymouth on the 30th April. [Ref.58]. There were good performances with the "Bournemouth Belle", particularly with 500 tons, in the Up direction. [Ref.59]

Locomotive performance improved significantly in 1965, partly the result of Management policy to improve timekeeping following the travelling Public's unremitting grumbles, partly enginemen's reactions, particularly Nine Elms. Schedules were eased at the commencement of electrification works due to the anticipated PWR slacks. There has been considerable attention given to some of the better performances by Nine Elms footplate crews in the first five and a half months of 1965. Arguably the most complete engineman at Nine Elms was Hooper and two of his performances set targets for other crews to aim at during the remaining period of steam operation.

On Sunday 4th April Hooper with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35012 and 455 tons on the Up "Bournemouth Belle" accelerated from 70 miles per hour at Winchester to 76 at Roundwood. The average EDHP was in excess of 1,880-1,930 and at Roundwood 2,230-2,280. This was achieved with the Regulator full open and the cut off at 25 to 27 percent. Hooper was one of those enginemen who had an excellent understanding of the relationship between speed, cut off and the maximum point on the horse power curve. Personal memories of this performance relate to a discussion on Basingstoke platform the following Tuesday and then sitting on the 19.12 to Waterloo with a slide rule trying to evaluate its significance. Assuming the 27 percent cut off figure was accurate the locomotive produced in excess of 40,000 pounds of steam per hour, probably close to 45,000, based on the BTC Bulletin issued for the Merchant Navy Class after rebuilding. [The BTC Bulletin probably underestimates traction DBHP (Drawbar Horse Power) at higher boiler evaporation rates due to a lack of data during the trials which were limited to a maximum boiler evaporation of 32,000 pounds per hour. There appears to be a tendency to accept linear relationships between speed and EDHP in the higher ranges.] [Ref.60]

Hooper drove Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35005 with 360 tons to the Basingstoke stop in 43 minutes 48 seconds on May 15th with the 21.20 ex Waterloo. There was a check to 20 miles per hour at Wimbledon adjudged to have cost two and a half minutes. The 28.9 miles from Hampton Court Junction to Hook, passed at 90 miles per hour were run in two seconds under 21 minutes, the average EDHP from Woking until slowing for the stop at Basingstoke was 1,650-1,700.

The two hours Bournemouth trains and the race to Basingstoke naturally attracted most attention at the time and since then in various magazine articles and some books. A few personal recollections of "normal" running during the period on semi-fast trains may be of interest.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Basingstoke to Waterloo 1965

The 16.55 ex Bournemouth West, [17.13 from Central] was allowed 3 hours 20 minutes to Waterloo with 13 intermediate stops, overall running time for 111.4 miles was 2 hours 44 minutes. Between 15th January and 27th May 1965 on 16 evenings randomly spaced it was more than 12 minutes late at Basingstoke twice. On the 14 occasions it was on time or less than five minutes late Motive Power was one Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, two Standard Class 5 4-6-0's, four unmodified Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 and seven rebuilt 4-6-2's. The Basingstoke to Woking schedule was a generous 28 minutes, the train usually crossed from the Local to the Through line when leaving Basingstoke which led to a slow start, occasionally it ran Local line, which necessitated a slowing through Farnborough.

Merchant Navy No.35019 [Local line] with 390 tons and without exceeding 63 miles per hour took 27 minutes 5 seconds. Class 5 4-6-0's Nos.73087 and 73110 with 390 tons took 27 minutes 8 seconds [Through line] including a PWR slack to 27 miles per hour after Winchfield and 25 minutes 36 seconds [Local line] with a signal check to 57 at MP31. Number 73087 attained 72 miles per hour before the slack and 70 afterwards, No.73110, 70 twice. The four unmodified 4-6-2's ran inside 24 minutes once, 25 minutes twice and 26 minutes on the other. West Country No.34041 on the 12th March with 400 tons took 24 minutes 3 seconds with a slow start to the Through line and a maximum of 80 miles per hour at Brookwood. On the 9th April [Local line] with 395 tons the time was 23 minutes 13 seconds with 77 miles per hour at Fleet reduced to 69 through Farnborough and 80 at Brookwood. The rebuilt Pacific's recorded times of less than 25 minutes once, less than 26 minutes four times and less than 27 minutes once. Time was lost once, 29 minutes 40 seconds [Local line] with a PWR slack to 27 miles per hour.

The Woking to Waterloo schedule [31 minutes] was only bettered twice, there were usually signal checks. Unmodified West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34041 attained 74 miles per hour at Esher, passed Clapham Junction in 21 minutes 43 seconds and with a signal check at Vauxhall reached Waterloo in 29 minutes 43 seconds. Rebuilt West Country No.34104 was one minute slower to Clapham Junction, was checked by signals at Vauxhall and arrived in 31 minutes 2 seconds. The other five runs finished half a minute late, one minute late, two minutes late, three minutes late and with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73110, 6 minutes 46 seconds late. The Class 5 was checked by signals before Weybridge, to 22 miles per hour for a PWR slack before Wimbledon, diverted to the Local line at Wimbledon and back to the Through line at Vauxhall. Net times on all five runs were within 31 minutes.

Sunday schedules were generally easier than weekday's, to allow for engineering works, conversely traffic was lighter reducing the incidence of signal checks. The Sunday 13.30 ex Waterloo stopped at Basingstoke and Winchester before Southampton [schedule 55, 24 and 17½ minutes]. On the 28th March rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34036 had nine coaches, 325 tons Gross. There was a check to ten miles per hour before Clapham Junction, 72 reached at Esher and a PWR slack to 19 through Woking.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo Bournemouth 1965

The time to Basingstoke was 52 minutes 5 seconds, 47 minutes Net, from Woking 22 minutes 42 seconds with 63 miles per hour at MP31 and 79 at Fleet. The next two stages were run in 21 minutes 10 seconds with a maximum of 80 miles per hour at Wallers Ash and 16 minutes 18 seconds.

The 11.30 ex Waterloo with the same stops and schedule as the 13.30 on the 5th of June consisted of eight coaches and a van, 320 tons Gross with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73110. An additional stop was made at Woking, reached in 28 minutes 25 seconds and left 34 seconds later, Basingstoke was reached two and a quarter minutes late, 57 minutes 21 seconds including time spent at Woking. The next two stages to Winchester and Southampton were run in 25 minutes 12 seconds with a PWR slack to 17 miles per hour at Wallers Ash and 16 minutes 28 seconds with a check to 38 at Eastleigh. The van was detached at Southampton [load 290 tons gross], footplate crew changed and the train left seven minutes late. The new Eastleigh crew changed this to a 30 seconds early arrival at Bournemouth Central against the Public timetable. With stops at Brockenhurst, New Milton, Christchurch, Pokesdown and Boscombe, actual running time was 43 minutes 27 seconds, a gain on schedule of four and a half minutes [another three minutes was recovered by smart working at the stations]. This included: 16 minutes 24 seconds Southampton to Brockenhurst with 72 miles per hour maximum - 9 minutes 3 seconds to New Milton with 65 maximum - 4 minutes 39 seconds from Christchurch to Pokesdown with 35 attained on the 1/99.

The Sunday 14.15 ex Bournemouth West schedules were Bournemouth Central to Brockenhurst, 20 minutes, to Southampton the next stop 19 minutes and from there to Waterloo, 89 minutes. On March 28th, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34001 with ten coaches, 360 tons Gross ran Southampton to Waterloo in 88 minutes 11 seconds. The Eastleigh to Roundwood average was 57.5 miles per hour and without exceeding 75 Woking was passed in 56 minutes 36 seconds, six minutes early. There was a PWR slack to 18 and signal checks caused the final 9.8 miles from New Malden Waterloo to take 16¼ minutes. On June 5th No.34108 left Bournemouth with ten coaches plus one van, 380 tons Gross and ran to Brockenhurst in 18 minutes 49 seconds with 56 miles per hour minimum after Hinton Admiral and 72 maximum before Lymington Junction. It continued to Southampton in 17 minutes 42 seconds with 72 miles per hour maximum. Two more parcels vehicles were added at Southampton, bringing the load to 440 tons Gross and resulting in a departure three minutes and a quarter late. The Eastleigh to Roundwood average was 51¼ miles per hour, 37 minutes 7 seconds to Worting Junction and 71 minutes 45 seconds to Malden with 79 maximum at Weybridge. With a PWR slack to 38 miles per hour at Wimbledon, Waterloo was reached in 85 minutes 48 seconds, exactly to time.

Overall punctuality in the first half of 1965 was good, far better than in the two previous years although there was a period in the spring when with single line operation in force due to engineering work in the tunnel at Southampton delays inevitably occurred.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, leaving Waterloo in a hurry, 1965

The 14.40 ex Bournemouth Central during this period was regularly 20 minutes late at Waterloo. On Maundy Thursday all main line trains were running to time past Eastleigh or no more than three minutes late, a surprising achievement, although no doubt there were some late arrivals at Waterloo.

Some remarkably quick exits from London were recorded, primarily Nine Elms engine-men determined to prove Bulleid Pacific's were capable of electric type starts if required. Driver Saunders had a tilt at Hooper's Basingstoke standard during the week commencing Monday June 6th with the 17.30. On Tuesday and Thursday, with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35005 and 35017 and 430 and 400 tons he reached Basingstoke in 48 minutes 47 seconds and 44 minutes 20 seconds, Net times were below 42 minutes. On Monday he passed Hampton Court Junction in 15¼ minutes at 80 miles per hour before a stop for signals. On Saturday June 4th an unknown Nine Elms crew, with Merchant Navy No.35005 and 390 tons passed Hampton Court Junction in 15 minutes 40 seconds at 77 miles per hour and MP31 in 28 minutes 52 seconds at 76 after 83 miles per hour maximum at West Byfleet. They passed Hook [42.2 miles] in four seconds under 37 minutes before the inevitable signal checks. This is perhaps the fastest start to MP31 ever; it beat Letchford in 1959 and Woods in 1964. The checks continued on the 4th June such that the 10.30 reached Southampton nine and three-quarters minutes late. The fun was not over, the final stretch to Bournemouth Central was run in 29 minutes 7 seconds with a minimum of 60 miles per hour before Sway and a maximum of 86 before the Christchurch slowing, negotiated at 68. [Ref.61]

The Timetable for June 14th 1965 effectively heralded the rundown of steam traction on the Bournemouth and Weymouth service. It incorporated significant decelerations to allow for anticipated delays for major engineering works associated with electrification. The Down two hours Bournemouth trains were slowed by 15 minutes, Waterloo to Southampton in 96½ to 97½ minutes and the continuation to Bournemouth in 37 to 37½ minutes. The corresponding Up times were; 35½ to 37 minutes and 96 to 97½ minutes, a slowing of 16 to 17 minutes. The semi-fast's were changed by comparable amounts, the 11.30 Down for example, 65 minutes to Basingstoke and 25½ minutes to Winchester. The 15.20, 16.35 and 18.30 ex Waterloo ran to Winchester in 78½, 82 and 78½ minutes respectively. The initial reaction to these schedules was that it represented the end of any interesting locomotive performance; the second thought, how would crews react? Would they drive slower or regard the extra time as if it were a recovery margin?

The Bournemouth line in the summer of 1965 was the last major UK route to maintain an intensive, albeit slower than previously, steam hauled express passenger service. The intensity illustrated by the locomotives observed over a ten hours period on Saturday June 26th at Winchfield: six Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - 11 rebuilt and three original Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's - two standard Class 5 4-6-0's - one ex LMS Class 5 4-6-0 [No. 44775] - one S15 Class 4-6-0 [No.30824] - one standard Class 4 2-6-0. Six locomotives were seen twice.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, adjusting to the Timetable easing

There has been much writing devoted to the period 1965 to 1967, in an attempt to give a reasonably balanced view of locomotive performance personal recollections will be used. Travel was random i.e. when work and domestic requirements permitted, on the odd occasion a special visit was made, corresponding to a particular footplate crew, this will be stated.

The 13.30 ex Waterloo on Thursday June 24th, nine coaches plus two vans, 390 tons Gross, had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34017 and started as before the Timetable slowing, as indeed was required as far as Woking. There was a slight check for signals before Wimbledon, 71 miles per hour at Esher, a PWR slack to 18 at Weybridge and a further slowing at Woking for the diversion to the Local line. [The Through lines between Brookwood and Farnborough were closed from June 14th for re-ballasting]. Speeds on the Local line were 57 miles per hour at MP31 and 67 between Farnborough and Fleet, the stop at Basingstoke affected 27 seconds over schedule, 61 minutes 27 seconds. The 13.30 stopped seven times between Basingstoke and Bournemouth, schedule running time was 98 minutes, [89 minutes before the decelerations], the actual 95 minutes 6 seconds. Speeds were 47 miles per hour at Wootton, 69 at Winchester Junction and before the stop at Brockenhurst, the only out of course check was a PWR slack to 27 at Wallers Ash. The crew didn't run to the old timetable, but then perhaps they didn't when it was in force.

The Up "Bournemouth Belle", ten Pullmans plus one luggage car, 455 tons Gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35026 started from Bournemouth quickly, Christchurch in one second under six minutes at 61 miles per hour. Subsequent speeds were 57 miles per hour minimum; 69 maximum after Sway, passed in 14 minutes 38 seconds and 58 at Brockenhurst. With nothing higher than 69 miles per hour afterwards, Southampton was reached in 32 minutes 3 seconds, the revised timetable allowed 35½ minutes. From the restart No.35026 reached 58 miles per hour at Shawford and, after a long PWR slack to 25 at Winchester, at Roundwood, Worting Junction was passed exactly to the revised schedule, 40 minutes 30 seconds, speeds at Hook, Fleet and Farnborough were 83, 75 and 80 miles per hour. There was a diversion to the Local line at Sturt Lane and back again to the Through line at Woking, following which with a PWR slack to 28 miles per hour at Weybridge and a maximum of 73 at Hampton Court Junction. Waterloo was reached in 96 minutes 50 seconds [revised schedule 96½ minutes], Net times were 32 and 78-79 minutes.

The summer Saturday 10.30 ex Waterloo in 1965 usually had only ten coaches, passengers stood two deep in the corridors. Motive power on the 10th and 24th of July and the 7th and 21st of August was Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 Nos.35028, 35007 and 35028 and Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34021. On all four occasions it ran Through Line to Brookwood, Local from there to Worting Junction. Actual times to Southampton were 99 minutes 5 seconds, 93 minutes 29 seconds, 97 minutes 58 seconds and 99 minutes 50 seconds, schedule 93 minutes, Net times 86, 79, 83 and 86 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo to Southampton, Summer Saturdays, 1965

Driver Prickett on the 10th believed the locomotive had a broken or cracked inside piston ring. The only run to the previous 81 minutes schedule level was on the 24th, Woking in 27 minutes 25 seconds with 74 miles per hour at Esher and 70 maximum at Fleet after slowing to 30 for the crossover at Brookwood. There was a signal check to 24 miles per hour approaching Basingstoke, Worting Junction, schedule 60 minutes, was passed in 57 minutes 43 seconds at 36, subsequent speeds were, 58 at Wootton, 70 at Roundwood, 32 after Micheldever for the PWR slack, 84 at Shawford and 72 past Eastleigh. Swaythling, 75.8 miles, was passed in 81 minutes 53 seconds before a signal check and a stop for two and a half minutes resulted in an arrival at Southampton 30 seconds late.

The "Bournemouth Belle" on July 10 with Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34050 and 455 tons ran Southampton to Waterloo in 98 minutes 6 seconds [88 Net]. There was a long PWR slack to 20 miles per hour before Winchester, Local line from Worting Junction to Woking, one signal check before Waterloo cost one minute. Speeds were 51 miles per hour before Shawford, 52 at Roundwood, 72 maximum before Woking and 73 afterwards.

Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73037 on Saturday August 21 with nine coaches, 325 tons Gross on 15.10 from Southampton [15.13 in the W.T.T] left 12³/₄ minutes late on a generous 102 minutes non stop schedule. The 4-6-0 made a typically brisk start, 4 minutes 43 seconds to St. Denys before a signal check to 20 miles per hour. It recovered to 48 miles per hour at Eastleigh, averaged 49 to Roundwood, took the Local line from Worting Junction, 39 minutes 15 seconds, touched 83 before Hook, 84 before Fleet and reduced to 73 for the Farnborough restriction, 52 minutes 38 seconds. Woking was passed in 65 minutes 42 seconds after a signal check to 12 miles per hour and a slack to 21 for the crossover to the Through line at Brookwood. Then with 81 miles per hour at Weybridge, 76 at Walton, 81 again at Walton, a signal check to 8 Malden, Waterloo was reached four and a quarter minutes late, 93 minutes 32 seconds, 81 to 82 minutes Net.

By the end of January reballasting and laying progress west of Brookwood enabled the Through line to Fleet to be opened, albeit with a 40 miles per hour restriction from Farnborough. On the last day of the month the 13.30 ex Waterloo, 11 coaches, 385 tons Gross with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34017 reached Basingstoke in 60 minutes 49 seconds [schedule 63 minutes]. It passed MP31 in 35 minutes 58 seconds at 58 miles per hour before slow running and diversion to the Local line at Winchfield. The Basingstoke to Southampton running time [stops at Micheldever and Winchester] was 51 minutes 29 seconds with two PWR slacks between Worting Junction and Roundwood and a signal check at Eastleigh [schedule 48¹/₂ minutes]. Southampton was reached five minutes late after delays at Winchester where the rear coach was detached. The 16.28 Up from Southampton on the same day consisted of ten coaches plus one van, 385 tons Gross, with another vehicle added at Basingstoke, 415 tons Gross hauled by a rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34095.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, May 20th to May 26th 1966

Time was lost on the initial three stages, to Eastleigh, Winchester and Micheldever, 20 to 40 seconds, the ten and a half minute schedule to Worting Junction from Micheldever was exceeded by three minutes and after a long signal stop Basingstoke was reached 29 minutes late, schedule 14½ minutes. Continuing it took 34 minutes 10 seconds to Woking, schedule 29 minutes, after a diversion to the Local line, reversion to the Through line and 40 miles per hour running for nearly four miles. Woking, left 35 minutes late, to Waterloo took in 32 minutes 8 seconds, schedule 37 minutes, with a signal check before Clapham Junction and 72 miles per hour before Esher.

Engineering works during the period Friday May 20th to Wednesday May 26th necessitated speed restrictions at: Esher in both directions - MP14 Down - MP14½ to MP16 varying Up - after Wootton, MP57 Down until the 23rd - Wallers Ash MP63½ Down from the 22nd - south end of Eastleigh station Up - between Roundwood and Wootton, varying MP52 to 56 Up. West of Southampton there was single line working in force between the west end of Hinton Admiral station and the east end of Christchurch station.

Nine Down journeys illustrate the operating difficulties. The 18.30 ex Waterloo on the Friday evening with 12 coaches, 455 tons Gross, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 and a cheerful Driver Woods passed Hook in 50 minutes 52 seconds after 26 miles per hour for the PWR at Esher, 58 minimum at MP31 and 72 maximum at Winchfield. There were signal checks before and after Basingstoke, 75 miles per hour maximum after the Wootton PWR slack at Winchester Junction and Winchester reached four and three quarters of a minute late, 83 minutes 48 seconds, 70 minutes Net. Another 35 seconds was lost to Southampton after a signal stop before St. Denys, 17 minutes Net. The relieving Weymouth crew ran to a stop at Hinton Admiral, 21.8 miles from Southampton in 26 minutes 48 seconds with 70 miles per hour maximum before Brockenhurst and 54 minimum at Sway. The Hinton Admiral stop lasted only 14 seconds, the single line running was of necessity slow, Christchurch was passed at 32 miles per hour, 39 reached after the station and 35 the minimum on the 1/99 to Pokesdown. Bournemouth was reached in 42 minutes 28 seconds [schedule 41 minutes] overall time Waterloo to Bournemouth was 152 minutes 6 seconds, a loss of ten minutes.

The Night Mail trains, although not required by the timetable, often provoked a joie de vivre from some Nine Elms Enginememen. On Saturday morning, May 21st Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34037 on the 02.45 ex Waterloo had three coaches and 15 assorted vehicles as far as Winchester, 330 tons Gross. Between checks it reached 73 miles per hour after Hook and 81 before Winchester Junction and was on time at Winchester where three vehicles were detached [290 tons Gross remained]. Southampton was reached late after signal checks before and after Eastleigh. Some of the lost time was regained to Brockenhurst, 16 minutes 29 seconds [schedule 19 minutes] with 75 miles per hour maximum, a further 61 seconds on to New Milton [schedule ten minutes] before eight and a half minutes was lost to Christchurch due to the single line working.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo to Bournemouth, May 1966

Time was recovered at Christchurch station and more by running the final 3.7 miles to Bournemouth in 6 minutes 48 seconds with a signal check entering the station [schedule 11 minutes]. Pokesdown, 1.95 miles was passed in 3 minutes 58 seconds, with 42 miles per hour attained on the 1/99, the final arrival was two and a half minutes late, locomotive performance in the "wee small hours" on the Southern Region could be lively.

The Saturday 11.30 ex Waterloo with Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34077 and 11 coaches, 390 tons left five minutes late and arrived at Southampton, after stops at Basingstoke, Winchester and Southampton Airport three quarters of a minute late. The only out of course check, apart from the PWR slack was a diversion to the Local line and back at Vauxhall, overall running time was 104 minutes 44 seconds, [schedule 110 minutes], maxima 73 miles per hour at Surbiton and 78 at Winchester Junction.

The Sunday 09.30 nine coaches plus one van, 330 tons with Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34052 was checked everywhere. The 114 minutes schedule to Southampton with stops at Surbiton, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester and Southampton Airport was exceeded by 4 minutes 39 seconds, which hardly did Driver Saunders justice. He ran to Surbiton in 16 minutes 3 seconds, the continuation to Woking included two signal stops and diversion to the Local line and back at Weybridge. There was a three minutes signal stop before Brookwood and then after 72 miles per hour at Fleet a check to 60, then 65 miles at Hook increased on the 1/249 to MP47 to 72. Saunders managed to reach 86 miles per hour at Wallers Ash between PWR slacks to 10 at Wootton and Winchester Junction. The 8.4 miles from Winchester to Southampton Airport were run in 9 minutes 42 seconds.

Driver Saunders transferred at Southampton to the 10.34 ex Bournemouth, which on this day ran to Waterloo via Alton, where a stop was made. He apparently made a "spirited run" with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 and ten coaches. The Sunday 10.30 ex Waterloo with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34098 and eight coaches, 280 tons Gross arrived Southampton on time and ran on to Bournemouth in 42 minutes 7 seconds, [schedule 39½ minutes]. It passed New Milton in 22 minutes 43 seconds; speed rose on the 1/99 after Christchurch from 34 to 36 miles per hour, Boscombe was passed in 37 minutes 10 seconds before a signal check.

The 08.30 ex Waterloo on Monday 23rd May with 11 coaches, 400 tons and rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34024 passed Winchester in 78 minutes 27 seconds after signal checks to 30 miles per hour at Basingstoke and to walking pace at Winchester Junction in addition to the two PWR slacks. There was a signal stop at Shawford, the Southampton arrival was four and a half minutes late, 97 minutes 39 seconds. The Bournemouth crew ran to a stop at Hinton Admiral in 27 minutes 5 seconds; there was a 13 minutes wait for the single line section, the final time to Bournemouth 52 minutes 43 seconds. The overall Waterloo to Bournemouth time was 154 minutes 50 seconds [schedule 135 minutes], 79 and 34 minutes Net.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Waterloo to Bournemouth, May 1966

The same day's 15.30 ex Waterloo with 11 coaches [400 tons] had Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73080. The maximum before Woking was 54 miles per hour, the minimum at MP31, 44 and the maximum before Winchester 69. There were stops for three and a half minutes at MP33 and for 37 seconds at MP47¼ due to the brakes leaking on through low boiler pressure, Winchester was ultimately reached in 99 minutes 44 seconds [schedule 78½ minutes], with some 12 minutes booked against the locomotive. The scheduled running time to Bournemouth from Winchester was 62½ minutes, actual 62 minutes 40 seconds. Two and a half minutes was regained to Southampton and a good start made from there before a signal check at Lyndhurst Road to 10 miles per hour. Despite a recovery to 62 miles per hour before Brockenhurst, 71 seconds was lost on the 19 minutes schedule from Southampton. Number 73080 passed New Milton in 8 minutes 55 seconds, reduced to 28 miles per hour for the crossovers at Hinton Admiral and Christchurch, fell from 38 to 28 on the 1/99 to Pokesdown and reached Bournemouth in 26 minutes exactly, [schedule 25 minutes], 19 minutes 20 seconds late.

The Tuesday 16.35 ex Waterloo had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 with 11 coaches, 400 tons [plus an additional PWR slack to 23 miles per hour at Brookwood]. Driver Mills kept the 82 minutes schedule to Winchester with one and a quarter of a minute to spare, c65-66 minutes Net, with 70 miles per hour at Hampton Court Junction, 74 after Hook, 64 at Wootton after 61 at Worting Junction and 73 at Wallers Ash. The average from Farnborough to Wallers Ash was 68.5 miles per hour, [Hook to Wootton was 1,550-1,650EDHP average]. The continuation to Southampton was run to schedule in 20 minutes 11 seconds, with a signal check before St Denys.

The Wednesday 08.30 ex Waterloo achieved a rare distinction, Southampton on time. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35023 with the normal 11 coaches and Driver Lloyd had no out of course checks other than the two PWR slacks with the result he passed St Denys in 80 minutes 55 seconds. After a signal stop lasting 20 seconds Southampton was reached in 90 minutes 55 seconds, 82-83 minutes Net. Speeds were 55 miles per hour minimum at MP31, 67 maximum before Basingstoke at Fleet, 79 at Wallers Ash and 74 at Eastleigh. Driver Speary continuing to Bournemouth ran to a stop at Hinton Admiral in 28 minutes 12 seconds and after a wait of 11½ minutes reached Bournemouth in 56 minutes 12 seconds, 19 minutes late.

The same day's 15.30 with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34090 and 11 coaches was driven similarly by Driver Woods. A quick start to Clapham Junction, 6 minutes 57 seconds [nine seconds faster than Lloyd], Basingstoke passed in 55 minutes 20 seconds [six seconds slower], without exceeding 65 miles per hour before continual signal checks led to a Winchester arrival seven minutes late, 86 minutes 26 seconds. The succeeding stages to Southampton, Brockenhurst and Bournemouth took 16 minutes 53 seconds with a signal check before Northam Junction, 36 minutes 26 seconds with a 15 minutes stop at Totton and 27 minutes 38 seconds with an unchecked run through the single line section. Bournemouth was reached 25 minutes late.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth to Waterloo May 20th to 26th 1966

Eight trains over the six days reached Bournemouth: one minute late - two and a half minutes late [the Night Newspaper and the Sunday 10.30] - ten minutes late – the rest were between 19 and 25 minutes late. When these delays are added to the 15 extra minutes for the electrification works the then complaints from the good citizens of Bournemouth are understandable. Southampton was better served, the major relaying works between Woking and Basingstoke were complete, out of ten trains, three arrived on time, six were five minutes or less late and the other one was 17½ minutes adrift. The Saturday 15.35 ex Waterloo indicated the possibilities between Woking and Basingstoke when Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 with nine coaches ran the distance in 23 minutes 55 seconds [schedule 29 minutes].

The Up Mail on the Friday/Saturday night, 23.28 from Bournemouth Central, 270 tons to Southampton, 330 tons to Winchester and 390 tons from there with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35010 was driven gently, too easily in practice. Schedule running time Bournemouth Central to Woking, with seven intermediate stops was 131½ minutes [not including Southampton Central to Terminus], the actual was 9 minutes 21 seconds longer, Bournemouth to Woking overall was 219 minutes 55 seconds, schedule 212 minutes. The Saturday 07.23 ex Bournemouth stopped seven times between Bournemouth Central and Winchester, schedule running time 76½ minutes. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35013 with ten coaches, 360 tons, took 73 minutes 31 seconds. It lost time between Christchurch and New Milton due to single line working [57 seconds] and between Brockenhurst and Southampton due to a signal check, [one minute 40 seconds]. The 5.75 miles from New Milton to Brockenhurst took 8 minutes 1 second with 63 miles per hour maximum [schedule 9½ minutes] and the 8.4 miles from Southampton Airport to Winchester 13 minutes 37 seconds [schedule 15½ minutes], including a PWR slack at Eastleigh passed at 26. It reached 63 miles per hour before Winchester; Eastleigh pass to the stop took 8 minutes 48 seconds. The schedule to Waterloo was 81½ minutes, Brookwood, 38.8 miles was passed in 41 minutes 25 seconds including a PWR slack to 30 miles per hour at Roundwood with 63 miles per hour at Micheldever, 81 at Hook and 80 at Brookwood. Then with signal checks and a stop at Weybridge for 26½ minutes, Waterloo was reached in 108 minutes 15 seconds.

The 14.02 from Southampton [12.59 ex Bournemouth], schedule 84½ minutes running time to Woking had Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34018 with 10 coaches [370 tons Tare].. It took 76 minutes 21 seconds with time gained on all five stages, 59 miles per hour before Winchester, 56 at Micheldever before the PWR slack and 79 at Brookwood, [19.8 miles] passed in 18 minutes 41 seconds from Basingstoke. There was a signal stop at MP 25¼ for 50 seconds, without this Woking could have been reached in 22½ minutes, actual 26 minutes 18 seconds. The 17.13 from Bournemouth Central [15.50 ex Weymouth], with ten coaches plus two parcel vans, 430 tons Gross, the second heaviest Up train of the day had Standard Class 5 4-6-0, No.73169, in excellent condition. The schedule running time Brockenhurst to Waterloo was 134 minutes, actual 129 minutes 25 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Up Bournemouth semi-fast's, May 1966

The Class 5 lost time over one stage, Winchester to Basingstoke, there was a signal check before Basingstoke in addition to the PWR slack, actual 29 minutes 29 seconds [schedule 27½ minutes]. It passed Totton after 69 miles per hour in 12 minutes exactly from Brockenhurst, reached 46 before Southampton Airport, 48 at Micheldever and 69 at Fleet. It finally reached Waterloo two minutes early against the W.T.T., 31 minutes 27 seconds from Woking, including the PWR slack at Esher. EDHP between Southampton and Roundwood was 1,025-1,125.

The Sunday 18.54 from Bournemouth [17.48 ex Weymouth] stopped at Brockenhurst, Southampton, Southampton Airport, Basingstoke and Surbiton [schedules 24, 20, 10, 37, 39 and 19 minutes]. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34098 with 12 coaches after a stop before the single line section lost three minutes on the initial stage and recovered them on to Southampton. The short stop to the Airport station was completed with 18 seconds to spare including diversion to the Local line through Eastleigh station. It attained 52 miles per hour at Wallers Ash before the PWR slack and lost 93 seconds lost to Basingstoke. Number 34098 passed Brookwood in 19 minutes 33 seconds at 72 miles per hour, was checked to 42 before Woking, attained 78 at West Byfleet before diversion to the Local line, reached 64 at Esher and stopped at Surbiton in 39 minutes 34 seconds. The continuation to Waterloo, took 18 minutes 48 seconds, thanks to smart station work an on time arrival.

The following day, Monday, the 11.07 ex Bournemouth with ten coaches plus one van and Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34017 stopped at all stations to Brockenhurst. Schedule running time was 33½ minutes, actual two minutes longer, due to the single line section from Christchurch to Hinton Admiral where there was a PWR slack. Three and a half minutes were gained between Brockenhurst and Southampton with 70 miles per hour before Totton. There were five further stops between Southampton and Waterloo, [schedule 118½ minutes], actual running time 109 minutes 16 seconds with signal checks before Basingstoke, before Woking and at Wimbledon in addition to the two PWR slacks. Speeds were 50 miles per hour before Winchester, 53 at Roundwood, 80 at Fleet and Brookwood, 77 at Walton. Basingstoke to Woking took 23 minutes 35 seconds, 22½ minutes Net. Before the 1965 decelerations this train was allowed 94 minutes running time from Eastleigh to Waterloo, the Net figure for No.34017 was 85 minutes.

The 12.34 from Bournemouth on Wednesday 25th May with 385 tons and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35029 was held for 12 minutes at Christchurch, then after a signal check to 14 miles per hour at Lymington Junction it was 18½ minutes late into Southampton, 53 minutes 59 seconds. There was a signal check after Southampton and following the Eastleigh PWR slack 50 miles per hour was reached at Wallers Ash, Worting Junction passed in 41 minutes 25 seconds, there were three slight signal checks between there and Weybridge, the last, to 45 miles per hour. Number 35029 ultimately reached Waterloo in 95 minutes 58 seconds, one and a half minutes within schedule from Southampton but 15½ minutes late overall.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Up 18.35 from Bournemouth, May 24th to 26th 1966

The 18.35 from Bournemouth, [17.30 ex Weymouth] on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings had Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34104, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35023 and No.35026, Gross weights were 415, 380 and 365 tons and Weymouth crews up front as far as Southampton. The train was held at Christchurch on Monday and Wednesday for five and a quarter and five and a half minutes for the single line section. The Bournemouth to Southampton times were 46 minutes 9 seconds with No.34104 and 42 minutes 53 seconds with No.35026, from MP104¾ [west of Christchurch station] to Southampton, 34 minutes 5 seconds and 31 minutes 16 seconds, maxima through the New Forest 67 and 72 miles per hour.

The same Eastleigh Driver, Ash, relieved the Weymouth man each evening and after observing the Eastleigh PWR slack attained 53, 64 and 54 miles per hour at Wallers Ash. There were signal checks between Micheldever and Basingstoke as well as the PWR slack. [On Tuesday the train stopped twice, total 137 seconds, on Wednesday once for 27 seconds at MP50¾.], Ash passed Basingstoke in 47 minutes 29 seconds, 48 minutes 34 seconds and 47 minutes 1 second. Maxima afterwards around Fleet were 80 miles per hour at Fleet on Monday, 88 on Tuesday and 83 on Wednesday; the average on to Brookwood was 81.8 on Tuesday and 78.1 on Wednesday. This enterprise was rewarded with a signal stop before Woking on Monday and checks on the other two evenings. Waterloo was reached in 107 minutes 7 seconds, 96 minutes 54 seconds, [c.76-77 minutes Net, somewhat meaningless with 20 minutes delays] and 102 minutes 33 seconds. Overall Bournemouth to Waterloo on the Monday and Wednesday took 157¾ and 148½ minutes [schedule 138 minutes, 35½ and 96 minutes over the two stages].

The eight Waterloo arrivals over the six day period were on time or early twice, within five minutes twice and on the other four, ten and a half, 15½, 20 and 27 minutes late. Delays of 20 minutes and over made the fireman's job difficult, although perhaps overall less arduous, the driver, hardly enthused, often was content to drop more time, it was difficult for anyone to portion blame. As the "Railway Observer" reported in May "loss of time by engines is becoming all too common".

Another recurring theme was the shortage of serviceable motive power; Eastleigh often resorted to using locomotives from other Regions after attention at the Works. Britannia Class 7 4-6-2 No.70002 appeared on a Boat Train on May 2nd. Bournemouth depot readily availed itself at weekends of the LM Region Stanier Class 5 4-6-0 which worked south from Banbury on the Saturday. Number 45493 had the 08.55 ex Bournemouth on Sundays May 15 and 22 when due to Engineering Works it was diverted via Alton.

Bournemouth to Weymouth schedules remained essentially the same after June 1965 although departures from Weymouth were earlier and arrivals later due to the slower schedules east of Bournemouth. Locomotive work was often enterprising although with the exception of summer Saturdays the trains were normally light. Most Weymouth Enginemen enjoyed a good reputation.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Bournemouth to Weymouth, May 1966

The 18.30 Waterloo to Weymouth was ten minutes late at Bournemouth on Friday May 20th [schedule to Weymouth 58 minutes to Weymouth with stops at Pole, Wareham, Wool and Dorchester South]. On this particular evening the Weymouth Crew with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 working through from London and six coaches, 210 tons Gross, took 50 minutes 13 seconds, running time 47 minutes 29 seconds [schedule 54 minutes] The initial 5.75 miles to Poole were run in 9 minutes 18 seconds with 74 miles per hour attained before the stop - the 7.1 miles to Wareham in 9 minutes 9 seconds with 73 - the 5.0 miles to Wool in 6 minutes 56 seconds with 64 at Worgret Junction and 69 maximum after - the 10.0 miles to Dorchester in 11 minutes 28 seconds with 67 at Moreton and 78 before the stop - the 6.95 miles to Weymouth in 9 minutes 38 seconds with 59 on the 1/91 falling to 56 entering the Tunnel and 77 on the steep descent past Upwey. The crew were clearly keen to get to bed. The Merchant Navy, with this light train developed 1,800-1,850EDHP climbing from Wool to Moreton and 1,700-1,750 from Dorchester Junction to Bincombe Tunnel signal box.

The Up Postal, 22.13 ex Weymouth, seven coaches, 270 tons Gross had Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34036 and Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73016 as pilot to Dorchester South. The Weymouth crew on the Class 5 apparently keen to reach Dorchester a.s.a.p. and return home reached 44 miles per hour at Radipole Halt, fell to 31 on the 1/50 and 1/52 to the Tunnel and touched 63 before Dorchester Junction, passed one and three quarters of a minute inside the 13 minutes schedule, the stop before reversing into the station made in 12 minutes 39 seconds. The Bournemouth Crew then proceeded on their way sedately, 49 minutes 51 seconds running time to Bournemouth [43 minutes schedule] two minutes was lost from Poole to Bournemouth with a fall from 40 to 23 miles per hour on Parkstone bank.

The 13.30 ex Waterloo on Sunday May 22nd, left Bournemouth two minutes late with three coaches, 105 tons and Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75065. The actual running time to Weymouth was 54 minutes 2 seconds [schedule 60½ minutes with seven stops]. Poole to Wareham took 8 minutes 51 seconds with 62 miles per hour before, the uphill stages Wool to Moreton and Dorchester to Upwey, 6 minutes 28 seconds [schedule 9 minutes], 52 miles per hour on the 1/100 falling to 48 and 6 minutes 54 seconds [schedule 9 minutes] 49 on the 1/91 to Bincombe falling 42.

Standard Class 4-6-0 No.75065 piloted Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34098 on the 17.48 ex Weymouth with, eight coaches, 280 tons Gross. Following a five and a half minutes stop for signals after leaving Weymouth they reached 36 miles per hour at Radipole Halt, fell to 22 at the Tunnel, reached 50 before Dorchester Junction, passed in 20 minutes 1 second and stopped before reversal in 21 minutes 21 seconds. Number 34098 on its own left Dorchester seven minutes late and reached Wareham in 15 minutes 38 seconds [schedule 18] with 75 miles per hour between Moreton and Wool, lost 51 seconds to Poole [schedule ten minutes] with a PWR slack to 40 at Holton Heath] and gained 13 seconds to Bournemouth, schedule ten minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Last Summer steam service, 1966

Leaving Poole Number 34098 reached 42 miles per hour at the bottom of Parkstone bank, only fell to 39 afterwards and passed Gas Works Junction in 6 minutes 20 seconds. Time was saved at all stations, overall from Weymouth to Bournemouth was 63 minutes 57 seconds, with four minutes from Dorchester to the locomotives credit..

The 10.51 from Bournemouth [08.30 ex Waterloo] on Wednesday 25th left 20 minutes late with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35029 plus five coaches and contrived to lose 22 seconds to Poole and 8 seconds to Wareham, maximum 64 miles per hour, [schedules ten minutes]. The 11.25 ex Weymouth arrived Wareham on time with Merchant Navy No.35029 and 175 tons, lost 41 seconds to Poole through a PWR slack at Holton Heath and recovered this on to Bournemouth, 9 minutes 29 seconds. Speeds were 44 miles per hour maximum leaving Poole, 39 minimum at Parkstone and 49 at Branksome

The last summer of steam operation on the Bournemouth and Weymouth service started with major track renewal works complete, specifically no single track sections west of Southampton, a major recent cause of poor punctuality.

Thirty-seven steam locomotives were observed at Worting Junction over a ten hours period on July 2nd 1966: 14 Battle of Britain/West Country Class - nine Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's - nine Standard Class 5 - two LMS Class 5 - one Standard Class 4 4-6-0's - two Standard Class 4 2-6-0's. There were also 45 diesel locomotives, many on West of England trains. There were 46 Main Line departures on a peak Saturday from Waterloo to Bournemouth and the West of England, half scheduled for steam.

The following Saturday there were two PWR slacks in force between Waterloo and Southampton, between Walton and Weybridge and Wallers Ash and Winchester Junction. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35014 with 12 coaches on the 10.30 ex Waterloo, 450 tons Gross, lost 11½ minutes [schedule 93 minutes] to Southampton. There were signal checks at Basingstoke, Wallers Ash, Eastleigh and before Southampton, without these time might have been kept. The two PWR slacks were taken at 14 and 20 miles per hour.

There was only one PWR slack in force in the Up direction and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 with 370 tons maintained schedule easily on the 15.20 [15.21½ in the W.T.T.] from Southampton. The average from Winchester to Roundwood was 59 miles per hour and the time to pass Worting Junction was 35 minutes 27 seconds. The Junction was passed at 33 miles per hour after observing the PWR slack at 23. There were signal checks before Basingstoke and after a maximum of 77 miles per hour after Fleet MP31 was passed in 54 minutes 43 seconds and following two stops for signals before Woking lasting three and three quarters of a minute in total, the station was passed in 69 minutes 59 seconds at seven miles per hour. The remaining 24.4 miles to Waterloo were run in 28 minutes with a maximum of 74 miles per hour. The overall time from Southampton to Waterloo was 97 minutes 51 seconds, c.81 minutes Net [schedule 193½ minutes].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 08.30 ex Waterloo week commencing July 25th 1966

Engineering Works, between Waterloo and Southampton, during the week commencing Monday July 25th, required slacks to 15 miles per hour at Oatlands and at MP63, between Wallers Ash and Winchester Junction, [eased to 40 on Friday]. There were restrictions to 40 miles per hour over the flyover at Worting Junction and to 15 at Esher in the Up direction. The 08.30 ex Waterloo loaded to 11 coaches, c.400 tons, for the first four days of the week and to 470 tons on the Friday, the two extra coaches were kept locked, presumably so passengers unable to find seats had something extra to grumble about. Motive power Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35008 and 35029 on Monday and Tuesday and Rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34037, 34040 and 34052 on the next three days.

The Monday start was brisk, Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 50 seconds and after a slight signal check before Surbiton, Esher in 17 minutes 35 seconds at 67 miles per hour before the Oatlands slack. Subsequently 62 miles per hour was attained at MP31, 71 at Winchfield, MP47 passed in 52 minutes 6 seconds followed by signal checks culminating in a stop before Worting Junction. Then after 77 miles per hour past Micheldever another signal stop, [four and a quarter minutes], further signal checks at Eastleigh after the PWR slack and a Southampton arrival 13¾ minutes late, 107 minutes 18 seconds. Driver Jackson on Tuesday was 27 seconds slower to Clapham Junction but by Esher with 79 miles per hour was five seconds ahead. He reached 54 miles per hour after the Oatlands check, at West Byfleet signals caused a reduction to 14, recovered to 47 at MP31, reached 72 before Basingstoke, fell to 59 at Wootton and touched 80 after Micheldever. There was a check to walking pace at Wallers Ash, a recovery to 75 miles per hour at Eastleigh after the PWR followed by a 52 seconds stop at Mount Pleasant and 99 minutes 50 seconds to Southampton, 79 minutes Net.

Wednesday's start was slower, Esher 18 minutes 24 seconds at 70 miles per hour and after the slack 56 at MP31, 89 miles per hour before Basingstoke, 56 minimum at Wootton and after 76 at Weston a signal check to ten. The maximum after the PWR slack was 76 miles per hour, followed by a signal check to 31 at Eastleigh, further checks and a stop for one and three quarters of a minute before entering Southampton, reached in 98 minutes 23 seconds.

Driver Hendicott on Thursday passed Esher in 18 minutes 3 seconds at 76 miles per hour, was checked slightly for signals before Woking, the recovery from the Oatlands slack was the best of the week, Woking passed at 59 and MP31 at 61. Basingstoke was passed in 52 minutes 27 seconds after 70 miles per hour; there was a check to 20, then 75 before the slack and 82 before Eastleigh. St. Denys was passed in 84 minutes 21 seconds before two signal stops [142 seconds in total] and Southampton reached in 95 minutes 48 seconds. Inspector Smith accompanied Driver Hendicott on Friday. Certain Nine Elms Enginemen, who were known to favour exploiting the power of the rebuilt Bulleid Pacific's at this time found themselves accompanied by an Inspector, not to help them drive, assess their abilities or the condition of the locomotive but to restrain any exuberance.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region Causes of late running. 1966

Driver Hendicott passed Esher in 19 minutes 8 seconds at 67 miles per hour with the 470 tons train, recovered from the slack briskly as far as West Byfleet, then fell to 51 at MP31, shortage of steam or perhaps Inspector Smith's restraining arm. Speeds afterwards were 71 miles per hour maximum before Basingstoke, 55 minimum at Wootton, 78 before the MP63 slack [taken at 36] and 77 before Eastleigh. Despite a signal check to 20 miles per hour at Southampton Airport, St. Denys was passed in 87 minutes before a check at Mount Pleasant resulted in a Southampton arrival three minutes late, 96 minutes 23 seconds, Net times for Driver Hendicott were 76 and 81 minutes.

The 08.30 [W.T.T.] schedule was seven minutes to Clapham Junction, 18 to Hampton Court Junction, 60 to Worting Junction, 76 to Winchester Junction, 84½ to Eastleigh, 90 to Northam Junction and 93½ to the stop at Southampton, [before June 1965 seven, 18, 52, 66½, 74, 79 and 82 minutes]. The actual levels of lateness (L) or early running (E) during the week were;

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Clapham Jct.	10secs(E)	17secs(L)	28secs(L)	20secs(L)	8secs(L)
Hampton Ct. Jct.	83secs(E)	81secs(E)	31secs(E)	50secs(E)	6secs(E)
WortingJct.....	50secs(L)...	18secs(L)...	18secs(L)...	4¼min(E)...	4mins(E)
Winchester Jct.	10¾min(L)	3mins(L)	2½min(E)	2½min(E)	2¼min(E)
Eastleigh	12¼min(L)	3mins(L)	½min(E)	3mins(E)	2½min(E)
Northam Jct.	13mins(L)	6¼min(L)	45secs(L)	30secs(L)	2¼min(L)
Southampton.	12¾min(L)	6¼min(L)	5mins(L)	2¼min(L)	3mins(L)

Poor punctuality was frequently ascribed to inadequately maintained steam power and inferior fuel. In practice it was due to operating conditions, particularly, the three junctions, Woking, Basingstoke and Southampton and heavy occupation of the twin tracks between Worting Junction and Shawford

Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No. 34012, 11 coaches, 400 tons Gross and Driver Baker with the 15.30 ex Waterloo ran to Winchester, Southampton, Brockenhurst and Bournemouth in 78 minutes 59 seconds, 16 minutes 47 seconds, 19 minutes 49 seconds and 22 minutes 21 seconds. Maxima were 71 miles per hour before Basingstoke, 65 at Swaythling, 61 before Brockenhurst and 63 before Christchurch, signal checks 45 at Basingstoke and 26 at Weston [Schedules 78½, 19, 19 and 24½ minutes]. On Wednesday another Bournemouth driver with 420 tons and rebuilt Battle of Britain No.34087 took, 79 minutes 51 seconds, 15 minutes 57 seconds, 17 minutes 40 seconds and 20 minutes 55 seconds with 72 miles per hour at Wallers Ash, 76 before Eastleigh, 69 before Brockenhurst and 73 before Christchurch.

The Tuesday "Bournemouth Belle", [12.30 ex Waterloo, ten Pullman's plus two luggage vehicles, 485 tons Gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030] ran to Southampton in 97 minutes 51 seconds unchecked, other than the two PWR slacks. Maxima were 69 miles per hour at Hampton Court Junction and 72 at Shawford, [schedule 92½ minutes], the lost time attributable to the Bournemouth driver.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, easy semi fast schedules, 1966

Thursday's 13.30 ex Waterloo on Thursday with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34090 and ten coaches plus three vans, 445 tons, almost kept time to New Milton, on time at Brockenhurst it lost 50 seconds to New Milton [schedule 10½ minutes]. With stops at Basingstoke, Micheldever, Winchester, Southampton Airport, Southampton and Brockenhurst and New Milton, actual running time was 137 minutes 29 seconds [schedule 143 minutes]. It reached Basingstoke in 59¾ minutes with 71 miles per hour at Esher, 48 minimum at MP31, 62 maximum before Basingstoke and 64 maximum after. The following day No.34034, with 67 miles per hour at Esher, 51 at MP31 and two slight signal checks reached Basingstoke in 61 minutes 3 seconds. These performances kept time but were unlikely to set an enthusiast's fire alight.

A Bournemouth crew continued from Southampton with the 8.30 ex Waterloo on Monday. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35008 was checked by signals to 12 miles per hour at Totton and again to 19 at Brockenhurst, in between it accelerated to 59 miles per hour on the 1/150 between Lyndhurst Road and Beaulieu Road, at least 1,840-1,890 EDHP. Following the second check the crew realising there was another train in front ran easily to Bournemouth in 41 minutes 4 seconds [schedule 37½ minutes]. There was no relieving crew at Southampton on Wednesday, the Nine Elms crew continued to Bournemouth. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34037 passed Brockenhurst in 16 minutes 13 seconds at 59 miles per hour after 67 at Beaulieu Road and fell to 53 before Sway. Hinton Admiral was passed in 24 minutes 8 seconds before the driver slowed to 40 for a PWR slack, in practice removed six days previous, he had only read the notices to Southampton and was disappointed when informed at Bournemouth. Without the check, all of a late start from Southampton could have been recovered, actual time 33¾ minutes.

The 17.23 ex Waterloo on the Friday, 29th, 11 coaches with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73169 and Driver Plumb, from Nine Elms Depot apparently passed MP31 at 56 miles per hour and reached 81 after Micheldever.

Personal policy was normally to take potluck rather than follow the footplate "stars". [In practice other commitments invariably left no other choice] Saturday July 30th was an exception; Driver Hooper was rostered for the 10.30 ex Waterloo and fancied a run. The train consisted of 12 coaches, packed out, probably 455 tons Gross with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34024. The times to Clapham Junction and Esher were 6 minutes 47 seconds and 17 minutes 28 seconds with a maximum before the PWR slack of 73 miles per hour. Hooper braked hard for the check, to four miles per hour and then opened the Regulator and accelerated through the restricted section. MP31 was passed in 36 minutes 46 seconds at 64½ miles per hour after 61½ at Brookwood, at least 1,560-1,610 EDHP. He reached 76 miles per hour after Farnborough, passed Basingstoke in 50 minutes 56 seconds and Worting Junction in 53 minutes 27 seconds at 59 miles per hour, where he was six and a half minutes early. Speed rose on the 1/249 afterwards before the inevitable signals and a stop at MP52¾ in 57minutes 38 seconds from Waterloo.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Driver Hooper with a rebuilt West Country 1966

The average EDHP from Woking to Basingstoke was at least 1,390-1,440 and before the Regulator was closed, 1,550-1,600 after Worting Junction. The stop at MP³/₄ lasted 83 seconds and from the restart Wallers Ash, 9.0 miles, was passed in 10 minutes 13 seconds at 85 miles per hour before the brakes were applied for the PWR slack. There was a further signal check to three miles per hour before Shawford, a brief rush to 78 miles per hour after Eastleigh, a stop for one and a half minutes at MP⁷/₆ and an arrival at Southampton 79 seconds late [schedule 93 minutes]. It is difficult to assess a Net time, could the boiler have sustained the evaporation rate without the pauses, the likely time however assuming the 85 miles per hour speed limit was adhered to from Roundwood to Eastleigh was 74 to 75 minutes. The Southampton to Bournemouth schedule was a generous 46 minutes; Hooper took five seconds more, Net was somewhat less. There were persistent signal checks after Southampton plus the PWR slack to 20 miles per hour. Lyndhurst Road was passed at ten miles per hour in 12 minutes 15 seconds and Beaulieu Road at 50 miles per hour after 47 to 49 on the 1/150, in excess of 1,600-1.650EDHP. Subsequent speeds were 70 miles per hour at Woodfidley, 68 through Brockenhurst, 59 minimum at Sway and 71 before New Milton when a distant was sighted. The stop at MP¹/₀ took 28 minutes 19 seconds from Southampton; the 15.1 miles from Lyndhurst Road passed at ten miles per hour had taken 16 minutes 4 seconds. From the restart Christchurch was passed at 60 miles per hour, increased to 63 on the short stretch afterwards before further signal checks frustrated any heroics on the ascent to Pokesdown, there was a two minutes signal stop after Boscombe.

Eleven Up journeys were made during the week from Southampton to Waterloo. The Wednesday 10.12 from Southampton, [10 13¹/₂ in the W.T.T, 09.24 ex Bournemouth, schedule 103¹/₂ minutes] had nine coaches, 335 tons Gross, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34044 and Driver Adams from Bournemouth. He ran to Waterloo in 98 minutes 38 seconds. With signal checks between Winchester and Micheldever and the PWR slack before it took 45 minutes 10 seconds to Worting Junction [schedule an absurd 45¹/₂ minutes]. Subsequent speeds were 82 miles per hour at Farnborough, 81 at MP 31 and 85 at Brookwood, [63 minutes 27 seconds], 37 for a signal check, 76 at Walton, 18 for the PWR slack and 61 at Wimbledon.

The 11.15 from Southampton [11.16¹/₂ in the W.T.T] had an even more generous allowance, 106¹/₂ minutes. Loads on Thursday and Friday were 400 tons Gross, with rebuilt Battle of Britain No.34087 and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35013; the driver, Harry Pope, a most engaging man, seldom pushed locomotives uphill, with quick starts, good braking and fast finishes he often achieved smart times. He passed Swaythling in 6 minutes 47 seconds and 6 minutes 53 seconds. On Thursday he reached 60 miles per hour at Shawford, eased for a signal, averaged 54 to Roundwood, took the PWR at 37 and passed Worting Junction in 34 minutes 31 seconds at 43. Afterwards with 79 miles per hour attained twice, signal checks either side of Woking to 64, 71 at Walton and 17 for the PWR slack he arrived at Waterloo 17 minutes early, 90 minutes 9 seconds from Southampton.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, No porters at Waterloo 1966

On the Friday there was a signal check before Eastleigh to four miles per hour followed by a steady rise to 59 at Roundwood and 70 before Wootton, then 17 for the PWR slack resulting in a time of 38 minutes 11 seconds to Worting Junction. Subsequent speeds, after 44 miles per hour at Worting were 75 at Fleet, 30 for signals at Farnborough, 81 at Brookwood and 68 for signals at Woking. There were further signal checks, the PWR slack between Weybridge and Hampton Court Junction then with a clear road Waterloo was reached in 94 minutes 46 seconds, 12 minutes early. The Net time on both Mornings c 79-80 minutes, Driver Pope enjoyed arriving Waterloo a quarter of an hour ahead of the published time. There are pleasant memories of sharing a mug of tea, probably purloined by Harry from his fireman, whilst he [Pope] joined a passenger in bemoaning the absence of any porters on the platform.

The Monday 12.33 from Bournemouth [12.34 in the W.T.T, schedule 35½ minutes to Southampton and 97½ minutes to Waterloo] with driver French from Bournemouth, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34077 and ten coaches plus a van, 390 tons was delayed initially. There were signal stops at MP's 104 and 84 and a PWR slack to 12 miles per hour at New Milton, with the result that Southampton was reached almost 20 minutes late. The continuation to Waterloo took 98¼ minutes with two PWR slacks and two signal checks, to 35 and 32 miles per hour.

Driver Woods on Wednesday with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030 and 395 tons did better. After 26 miles per hour for the PWR after Hinton Admiral he attained 71 twice after Brockenhurst and reached Southampton in 36 minutes 2 seconds. Speeds after Southampton were, 59 miles per hour at Shawford reduced to 41 for signals at Winchester Junction, 55 at Roundwood reduced to 40 at Wootton and then between 70 and 75 before the slack for the PWR at Esher. There were signal checks at Wimbledon, the arrival at Waterloo affected in 90 minutes 2 seconds, 82 minutes Net.

The Tuesday 15.15 from Southampton [15.16 in the W.T.T. 13.25 ex Weymouth], 11 coaches with Driver Holloway and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35008 plus Inspector Brewer, passed Eastleigh in 9 minutes 50 seconds. Then with 160 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and 25 percent cut off it reached 58 miles per hour at Roundwood, the average from Eastleigh was 56.3 and passed Worting Junction in 34 minutes 48 seconds after slowing to 39 for the PWR. With a clear road, Waterloo was reached in 86 minutes 26 seconds after 78 miles per hour maximum and a reduction to 21 for the Esher PWR slack, a nine minutes early arrival. Driver Holloway claimed that Inspector Brewer had "pushed me on". Brewer said, with so few engineering slacks in progress it was sensible to attempt to pass Woking in the path of the previous two hours schedule.

The last Up non-stop of the day from Southampton to Waterloo was the 18.33, [18.35 in the W.T.T.] from Bournemouth [17.35 ex Weymouth, schedule Bournemouth to Southampton 35½ minutes and from there to Waterloo 96½ minutes].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Driver Hooper celebrates World Cup victory, 1966

The 18.33, 11 coaches plus a van on Monday, July 25th and Wednesday, July 27th, weighed 420 and 435 tons Gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35026 and Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34008. Both Weymouth drivers started briskly from Bournemouth, 5 minutes 58 seconds and 6 minutes 28 seconds to Christchurch. The PWR slack after Hinton Admiral caused a reduction to 15 and 20 miles per hour with Sway passed in 18 minutes 38 seconds at 56 miles per hour and 19 minutes 23 seconds at 55. Maxima after Brockenhurst were 75 and 72 miles per hour; times 27 minutes 36 seconds and 28 minutes 33 seconds to Lyndhurst Road and Southampton in 36 minutes 56 seconds after a signal check to 30 miles per hour and 36 minutes 11 seconds, the Net times 30-31 and 31-32 minutes respectively. There was a signal check to 15 miles per hour before Eastleigh on Monday, afterwards 57 at Roundwood, 40 for the PWR slack before Worting Junction, 81 before Brookwood, 55 due to signals at Woking and 15 for the Esher slack. With signal checks on the London approaches the Eastleigh driver stopped at Waterloo in 92 minutes 38 seconds. The Wednesday time was 90 minutes 16 seconds with 54 miles per hour maintained from Winchester to Roundwood, 36 minutes 2 seconds to Worting Junction [38½ minutes on Monday] 18 for the Esher slack and 74 maximum before the slack, 83 and 85 minutes Net.

Most trains were diesel hauled on Sunday, July 24th but the 15.23 from Bournemouth had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34040 and only eight coaches. There was a signal check at Christchurch, a stop for signals before Lyndhurst Road, 48 minutes to Southampton. The continuation to Waterloo took 98 minutes 18 seconds with a signal check to walking pace at Shawford and further checks either side of Byfleet, the maximum after Basingstoke was 75 miles per hour, [schedules 41 and 102 minutes].

The following Saturday Driver Hooper, with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34044 and ten coaches, 355 tons Gross on the 14.40 from Bournemouth took 36 minutes 49 seconds to Southampton and 105 minutes 14 seconds to Waterloo [schedule 36½ and 103½ minutes], there any similarities ended. The start from Bournemouth was brisk, Christchurch in 5 minutes 23 seconds at 63 miles per hour, increased to 65 at MP102¼ before slowing to 14 for the PWR slack. Recovering from the slack he reached 68 miles per hour at Sway, passed in 16 minutes 49 seconds, reduced to 61 for the Lymington Junction slack, touched 76 before Lyndhurst Road, reduced to 20 for the PWR slack and finally reached 63 before Totton, there was a signal check near Millbrook The restart from Southampton was quick, Eastleigh in 8 minutes 55 seconds at 64 miles per hour and Winchester in 15 minutes exactly at 69½ miles per hour, 1,520-1,570 EDHP at least at Shawford. The result of such enthusiasm signals at Wallers Ash followed by two strops, lasting three minutes, the second at MP57. Despite the checks and the PWR slack to 33 miles per hour before, Worting Junction was passed in 41½ minutes at 42 miles per hour. The 29.9 miles to Byfleet and New Haw were then run in 21 minutes 52 seconds with 82 miles per hour before Hook, 81 from there to Winchfield, 89 on the level stretch before Farnborough, 84 at MP31 and 89 at Brookwood, the speedometer in the cab indicated 85.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 1966 performance assessed

There was a signal check before Weybridge, further checks afterwards culminating in a stop for one and a half minutes at MP15½, a check to 16 miles per hour at Esher and another stop for 45 seconds before Clapham Junction. From the MP57 restart Wootton, 4.4 miles was passed in 6 minutes 34 seconds at 68 miles per hour, Byfleet and New Haw, 36.6 miles, in 31 minutes 27 seconds and the signal stop at MP15½ effected in 41 minutes 27 seconds including time lost for the slack before Worting and the signal checks after Byfleet Junction. The Southampton Waterloo Net time is difficult to compute, but if 69 to 70 miles per hour had been maintained from Winchester to Roundwood, Worting Junction would have been passed in even time from the start, 29 minutes and Waterloo reached comfortably in 71 minutes. The Net time from Bournemouth to Southampton was less than 30 minutes giving Hooper an overall Net time from Bournemouth to Waterloo of c.100 minutes. England's victory in the World Cup Football final against Germany was announced over the Waterloo Station loud speaker system on arrival.

The heaviest regular train between Waterloo and Bournemouth in summer 1966, as for some years previous, was the "Bournemouth Belle", around 485 tons Gross. Tuesday July 28th was the last day Driver Woods was booked to work to London from Bournemouth prior to retirement. With rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34040 he brought the "Belle" Up from Southampton to Waterloo in 91 minutes 36 seconds, five minutes less than schedule. Speeds were 45 miles per hour at Roundwood, 52 at Worting passed in 38 minutes 36 seconds, 76 at Fleet and 82 before Woking. There was a slight check for signals at West Byfleet and after taking the Esher PWR slack at 22 adverse signals sighted all the way to Waterloo. Walton was passed in two seconds over 66 minutes, 85 minutes Net.

The schedule from Southampton to Worting Junction prior to June 1965 was 37 minutes. During the week at the end of July this time was improved on four times out of 11 noted, two were inside 35 minutes, two in less than 37 and another one in 37½ minutes. In all cases this included slowing for the PWR slack before the Junction and on two occasions there was a check in the Winchester area costing one or two minutes. Of the other six runs, four had Net times between 29 and 35½ minutes, one was continuously checked by signals resulting in a time of 45½ minutes and Woods on the Belle took 38½. Steam locomotive performance on the Bournemouth line was often dismissed as pitiful in 1966, it was actually significantly better than ten years previous.

Other trains noted during the week included Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34036 with six coaches plus one van on the 12.59 semi-fast ex Bournemouth when time was kept easily. West of Bournemouth a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73022 with five coaches on the 10.49 from Bournemouth [08.30 ex Waterloo] maintained the ten minutes schedules between Bournemouth and Poole and from there to Wareham on the Monday and the Wednesday. The 18 minutes schedule to the next stop at Dorchester South, on Wednesday was just kept with maximum and minimum of 60 and 53 miles per hour between Wool and Moreton and a final 64 before the stop.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Dorchester South to Bournemouth, 1966

Starting from Dorchester South at 11.42 Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030 with 160 tons ran the to Wool, Wareham, Poole and Bournemouth stages in 10¼ minutes, 6 minutes 51 seconds, 10¼ minutes and 9 minutes 42 seconds [schedule 12, eight, ten and ten minutes]. Speeds were 75 miles per hour before the Wool stop, 63 before Worgret Junction, 63 after Holton Heath, 40 at the foot of Parkstone Bank and 37½ minimum on the grade with Gas Works Junction passed in 6¼ minutes from Poole.

Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34077 with 175 tons on the 12.06 from Wareham attained 66 miles per hour before a signals intervened resulting in a loss of 19 seconds on the ten minutes schedule to Poole. From the restart it was three quarters of a minute quicker to Gas Works Junction than No.35030 with 43 miles per hour before the Bank and 39 minimum afterwards, Bournemouth was reached one minute late after a signal check. On Saturday, Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34024 with ten coaches, 360 tons Gross reached 62 miles per hour from the Wareham start before signals led to an arrival 90 seconds late at Poole. It passed Gas Works Junction in 6 minutes 58 seconds from Poole with 39 miles per hour before the Bank and 31 minimum, signals caused a one minute loss on schedule to Bournemouth.

There were still some steam hauled stopping trains in 1966, mainly between Eastleigh, Bournemouth and Weymouth. Although Standard Class 4 2-6-0's took over many of the duties from T9 Class 4-4-0's in the 1950's other Classes appeared regularly. The Sunday 12.38 Southampton to Bournemouth, three coaches, for instance taken by Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34040, schedule running time with ten stops was 61 minutes, actual 53 minutes 55 seconds. The 14.02 Eastleigh to Bournemouth on July 28th with five coaches sported Standard Class 4 2-6-4 tank No.80139. In the Up direction the 13.52 Bournemouth Central to Southampton, three coaches had a Standard Class 4 2-6-0, No.76059 and the 15.52, also three coaches, No.76014. Number 76014 exceeded the scheduled running time from New Milton to Southampton, 34 minutes, by three and a quarter minutes.

There were three PWR slacks in force on Saturday August 20th between Waterloo and Southampton i.e. after Surbiton, between Fleet and Winchfield and before Winchester Junction. The 10.30 ex Waterloo, 12 coaches, 445 tons Gross, had Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34077. Driver King of Nine Elms observed the three slacks at 18, 15 and 40 miles per hour, maximum before Basingstoke was 63, afterwards 77 at Shawford, [84 minutes 56 seconds]. Following signal checks at Allbrook and before St. Denys, he reached Southampton three and three quarters minutes late, 96¾ minutes.

Driver King returned on the 14.40 from Bournemouth with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35008 and ten coaches, 370 tons Gross. From Southampton he reached 58 miles per hour by Eastleigh, 9 minutes 33 seconds, before signals after Shawford caused an easing to 49, following which he reached 59 after Micheldever before another slowing to 50. Signals were sighted again before Worting but the Junction was still passed in 34 minutes 58 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, a poor performance on November 4th 1966

Speed rose steadily after Worting Junction to 89 miles per hour before Farnborough, passed in 47 minutes 48 seconds. There were signal checks to 47 miles per hour before Woking, to three after Esher and a final one to eight plus a PWR slack to 15. The maximum between Woking and Waterloo was only 62 miles per hour despite which the Waterloo arrival was 13½ minutes early, 90 minutes 25 seconds, 80 minutes Net.

Engineering works on Friday November 4th necessitated slacks before New Malden and on the Through line past Brookwood in the Down direction with the added complication of fog in the Woking area. The 10.30 ex Waterloo, 390 tons Gross, with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35026 was checked to 18 miles per hour before New Malden, diverted to the Local line at Woking, checked for signals at Basingstoke and again at Eastleigh, the maximum was 72 miles per hour at Wallers Ash. It finally reached Southampton 11¼ minutes late, 104 minutes 12 seconds from Waterloo. The 11.30, seven coaches with a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73080 arrived on time at Southampton and continued to Brockenhurst, the next stop in 16 minutes 38 seconds with a maximum of 67 miles per hour, a gain on schedule of nearly three minutes.

The 13.52 Bournemouth to Southampton consisting of Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76005 with three coaches plus a van, 140 tons Gross kept the ten minutes schedule from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst Road, 7.4 miles, with 33 seconds to spare and a maximum of 65 miles per hour. The overall 22 minutes schedule to Southampton was improved on by a quarter of a minute. The 15.13 Southampton to Waterloo, 12 coaches, 435 tons Gross with Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34060, after a signal check to 23 miles per hour at Swaythling only reached 48 up to Roundwood and after passing Worting Junction in 41 minutes 18 seconds, only 69 before MP31. At Brookwood it was diverted to the Local line and back, the time to Woking was 76 minutes, maximum at Walton was 66 miles per hour, further signal checks after New Malden and Vauxhall passed in 103¾ minutes. The agony continued with a prolonged stop for signals outside Waterloo, finally reached in 121 minutes 31 seconds, Was this how steam would finish on the Southern one wondered?

Driver Prikett was in charge of the 10.30 ex Waterloo on Friday 16th and Thursday 29th December, the locomotives Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 and Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34088, the latter although a fairly recent Royal train engine, in December 1966 rated a very poor machine. Loads were 11 and nine coaches, 400 and 330 tons Gross. There was a clear road to Hook on the first day, passed in 45 minutes 3 seconds after 70 miles per hour at Esher, 55 minimum at MP31 and 68 before Fleet. There was a signal check to 23 miles per hour before Basingstoke, another to walking pace before Micheldever, despite which Shawford was passed in 75 minutes 53 seconds at 74 miles per hour before slowing for the PWR slack at Eastleigh, taken at 32. Northam Junction was passed in 91 minutes 5 seconds after further signal checks, the final mile to Southampton took nine and a half minutes, 100 minutes 36 seconds overall.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, variable performance in December 1966

Driver Prikett was luckier on the second occasion; there was an eight minutes late start from Waterloo, the time to Clapham Junction slow, 8 minutes 7 seconds following which he had a clear road to Micheldever, other than a signal check before Woking to 54 miles per hour. Speeds were 78 miles per hour at Esher, 61 at MP31, 76 before Winchfield and before Basingstoke and 59 minimum at Wootton. Roundwood, 56.2 miles was passed in 57 minutes 3 seconds and after signal checks at Micheldever and Winchester Junction, an intermittent maximum of 75 miles per hour, 70 at Eastleigh, Southampton was reached in 85 minutes 38 seconds. The gain on schedule was seven and a half minutes, the arrival half a minute late against the Public timetable. The continuation to Bournemouth saw the position on the two days reversed with respect to out of course days. There was a clear road on the 16th, with the one PWR slack to 22 miles per hour at Sway. Bournemouth was reached in 35 minutes 32 seconds. Maxima were 69 miles per hour before Brockenhurst and 71 before Christchurch, the minimum before Sway 57. On the 29th in addition to the PWR slack there were signal stops lasting three minutes at MP92½ and two and a quarter minutes at MP103 plus an additional PWR slack to 15 miles per hour at Christchurch, 54 minutes 23 seconds.

In the Up direction on the 16th Prikett with the 14.34 from Bournemouth, 12 coaches, 440 tons and Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34089 started slowly as was his custom, seven and a half minutes to Christchurch. Speeds were 56 miles per hour at Christchurch, 51 minimum after Hinton Admiral and 69 at Beaulieu Road, 29 minutes 13 seconds to Totton and after a signal stop for 75 seconds at Millbrook 36 minutes 54 seconds to Southampton. With one coach less on the 29th, 400 tons Gross and No.34056, Prikett passed Christchurch in 7 minutes 12 seconds at 57½ miles per hour, increased to 64 afterwards before 59 minimum at MP100. There was a signal stop at Totton, 29 minutes 6 seconds after a maximum of 69 miles per hour for two and three quarters minutes, Southampton was reached in 39 minutes 27 seconds.

The first restart from Southampton was normal, 54 miles per hour at Eastleigh before a two and a quarter minutes stop for signals after Winchester and a further check before Micheldever. Worting Junction was passed in 45¾ minutes at 64 miles per hour, the 43.1 miles to Wimbledon run in two seconds under 38 minutes with 76 maximum at Esher and Waterloo reached in 95 minutes 35 seconds after a slight signal check. Four days previously Driver Porter ran somewhat faster, 33¾ minutes for the 43.1 miles including a PWR slack to 32 miles per hour at Woking. Maxima were 103 miles per hour at Winchfield and 94 at Walton with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 with 365 tons. News of the event, whispered in awe on platforms, encouraged belief steam still had something to offer. [Ref.62] Driver Prikett, on the 29th, was delayed badly between Swaythling and Shawford including two signal stops and took 52 minutes 55 seconds to Worting Junction. He then ran the 38.3 miles to Surbiton in 32 minutes 8 seconds with 79 miles per hour maximum after West Byfleet. Then with further signal checks it took 106 minutes 33 seconds to reach Waterloo.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, What hopes for the last months of steam?

Driver Prikett was typical of many of the older drivers who came up through the links over many years, he was personable, cautious and very professional. The run down of the steam locomotive was difficult for these men occurring as it did at what should have been the apogee of their careers.

Punctuality during the last months of 1966 was bad. The Railway Observer noted "it must have reached the lowest ebb since the War". The intended last steam hauled "Bournemouth Belle" on December 31st 1966 had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34093 Down and No.34047 Up, 11 coaches, 435 tons Gross. Porter ran Bournemouth to Southampton in 31¼ minutes with a signal check before Southampton 60 miles per hour minimum at MP100. A peak hours electric service was introduced to Basingstoke on January 2nd 1967.

The 15.14 from Southampton on Saturday 21st January ran to Waterloo in 93½ minutes [schedule 96 minutes], rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34052 with 330 tons, maximum near Weybridge 77 miles per hour. The following Saturday the Down 11.30 consisted of rebuilt Battle of Britain No.34090 with ten coaches, 355 tons Gross. Waterloo to Southampton running time, with stops at Basingstoke, Winchester and Southampton Airport was 107 minutes 26 seconds, [schedule 100½ minutes]. There were PWR slacks after Farnborough and at Weston, taken at 19 and 14 miles per hour. Maxima were 69 miles per hour at Esher, 71 before Micheldever and 74 before Winchester. The 15.14 from Southampton, 11 coaches plus a van, 430 tons Gross with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35013 experienced PWR slacks at Weston, Farnborough and before Clapham Junction. After 70 miles per hour maximum it passed Clapham Junction six minutes late in 94 minutes 55 seconds, from there to Waterloo took 6 minutes 35 seconds with 45 miles per hour at Clapham and 62 before Vauxhall, the only piece of lively running!

The Down 13.30 and 11.30 on February 17th and 18th, 400 tons and 355 tons Gross with Rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34034 and 34052 ran to Basingstoke in 61 minutes 3 seconds and 61 minutes 5 seconds. There was a PWR slack before New Malden and signal checks before Basingstoke, Net times 56 and 58 minutes. The Saturday 13.13 from Basingstoke, [11.07 ex Bournemouth] with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 kept the 28 minutes schedule to Woking, with three minutes to spare without exceeding 70 miles per hour.

So far personal experience in 1967 indicated punctual performances but no end of term celebrations. However the "grape-vine" suggested greater things. Driver Hooper on February 28th achieved 73 minutes Net from Southampton to Waterloo with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34044 and 400 tons with 68 miles per hour at Roundwood and an average of 93 from Fleet to Farnborough.

Driver Walker of Nine Elms had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35013 on the 10.30 ex Waterloo on March 9th with ten coaches, 370 tons Gross and passed Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 40 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, things are looking up, March 1967

There was a PWR slack to 13 miles per hour before Wimbledon followed by 75 at Esher, a reduction to 20 miles for signals, then 71 before West Byfleet, 69 at the station, 74 at Woking. Between 70 and 71 miles per hour was maintained to MP31, passed in 36 minutes 4 seconds from Waterloo at 71, 1,510-1,560EDHP. Speeds after this were moderate, 72 miles per hour at Fleet, 56 minimum at Wootton and 75 at Wallers Ash, even so Winchester Junction was passed ten and a half minutes early, 65½ minutes from Waterloo, 60-61 minutes Net. There was a PWR slack to 14 miles per hour before Eastleigh, Northam Junction was passed six minutes early and after a signal stop for four minutes outside the station Southampton reached 26 seconds late. There were bad delays after Southampton, two signal stops lasting eight minutes in total before Redbridge plus a PWR slack with another to 3 miles per hour before Brockenhurst, all of which resulted in a loss of 15¾ minutes between Southampton and Bournemouth. Maxima between checks were 69 miles per hour before Brockenhurst and 77 before Christchurch.

Driver Walker had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35008 with 11 coaches, 400 tons Gross, on the 15.14 from Bournemouth. He started slowly, Christchurch in 7 minutes 23 seconds passed at 64 miles per hour but then ran on to Sway [8.8 miles] in 7 minutes 53 seconds with 60 minimum at MP100, 67 at New Milton and 74 at Sway, average 1,300-1,350EDHP Christchurch to Sway. With easy running afterwards Lyndhurst Road was passed in 24 minutes 14 seconds, before a stop at Totton for three and a half minutes, 27 minutes 50 seconds and Southampton reached seven minutes late, 42 minutes 35 seconds. The restart from Southampton was good, Eastleigh in 9 minutes 43 seconds at 59 miles per hour and 70 attained after Winchester Junction before a fall away to 54 at Roundwood, the time to Worting was 31 minutes 28 seconds. One remembers Walker as a fireman building up a large fire before Southampton and then letting it burn down on the rise to Roundwood with boiler pressure dropping after Winchester; was this a repeat? Whatever, the locomotive developed 1,700-1,750EDHP at Winchester. There was a PWR slack to 60 miles per hour after Worting Junction, 83 maximum at Winchfield, 76 minimum at MP31, the time 46¾ minutes and to Woking 51 minutes 52 seconds. Following a PWR slack to 40 miles per hour at Weybridge, the maximum before New Malden was 73 and after a signal check to 24 before Clapham Junction, Waterloo was reached in 80 minutes 1 second, 76 minutes Net.

The 10.30 ex Waterloo on the 22nd had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 with 370 tons. With a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour before Wimbledon, a check to 40 at Worting for signals, another before Eastleigh, maxima of only 65 miles per hour before Basingstoke and 74 before Winchester Junction it reached Southampton, four and three quarters minute late, 90 minutes Net. The previous day Hooper took 89 minutes with No.35028, 74 minutes Net. Speeds were 80 miles per hour after Weybridge, 66 at MP31, 75 at Fleet and 82 at Shawford. Personal journeys made when work and other commitments permitted reflected the general level of performance, but to miss Driver Hooper by a mere 24 hours was unforgivable.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, before Easter 1967

The 11.07 ex Bournemouth on the 22nd March, only seven coaches plus a couple of vans, 295 tons Gross allowed Driver Fordrey to easily gain time between Southampton and Basingstoke with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34037. It stopped at Southampton Airport, Eastleigh and Winchester. He reached 60 miles per hour before Winchester and 61 at Roundwood, there was a PWR slack to 25 at Worting Junction. The 13.30 ex Waterloo schedule allowed 71½ minutes running time from Basingstoke to Brockenhurst with stops at Micheldever, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport and Southampton. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 with 400 tons took 78 minutes 50 seconds, with two PWR slacks to 15 miles per hour and only reached 60 miles per hour once. The 15.30 ex Waterloo with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 and 365 tons Gross lost two and a half minutes on the 19 minutes schedule from Southampton to Brockenhurst as a result of the PWR slack at Woodfidley and recovered the loss to Bournemouth, 20 minutes 10 seconds [schedule 24½ minutes].

The Weymouth driver on the 18.33 from Bournemouth had nine coaches plus a van, 360 tons Gross and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007. He passed Christchurch in 5 minutes 53 seconds at 62 miles per hour and after 65 at Hinton Admiral and 62½ minimum at MP100, Sway in 13 minutes 53 seconds at 70. The maximum through the New Forest was 72 miles per hour, Totton was passed in 26 minutes 7 seconds and after two checks [PWR and signals] Southampton was reached in 33 minutes 29 seconds, 31 minutes Net. Driver Boyce of Nine Elms made a brisk start, Eastleigh in 8 minutes 55 seconds at 66 miles per hour, the average on to Roundwood 65.4, 1,410-1,460EDHP, the maximum at Wootton was 71, with a PWR slack after, he passed Worting Junction in 30 minutes 24 seconds. The maximum at Fleet was 81 miles per hour, the time to MP31, 46 minutes 28 seconds, 17 seconds faster than Driver Walker. The 11.9 miles from MP31 to Weybridge then took 23 minutes, signal checks and a PWR slack, Waterloo was ultimately reached four minutes early, 92 minutes 26 seconds, 75-76 minutes Net. Number 35007 returned to London in somewhat better style than it departed that morning.

Number 35007 reappeared the next morning, Maundy Thursday, with the 10.30, only eight coaches, overflowing with passengers, probably 300 tons Gross, stock was held back for later in the day, those who wisely elected to travel early suffered for their foresight. There was a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour at Wimbledon, a signal check to 48 at Weybridge, three signal checks between Wallers Ash and Shawford and a 25 seconds stop for signals at Allbrook. The Southampton arrival was half a minute late, 93 minutes 28 seconds, maximum 71 miles per hour between Fleet and Winchfield.

The 11.07 from Bournemouth left Southampton with nine coaches, 355 tons Gross and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 with Driver Turner. The Southampton to Basingstoke running time was 48 minutes 39 seconds with 50 miles per hour before Winchester, 62 at Roundwood and 73 at Wootton, there was a PWR slack to 32 before Worting Junction and a signal check before Basingstoke.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, final steam rosters to Weymouth, April 3rd 1967

Basingstoke to Woking and the continuation to Waterloo were allowed 28 minutes and 33 minutes. MP31, 16.8 miles, was passed in 16 minutes 52 seconds, with 79 miles per hour maximum before Farnborough. There was a stop for one and a half minutes at MP28¼ and Woking was reached 73 seconds late. The restart to Weybridge was slow, a long PWR slack before to 16 miles per hour, 10 minutes 59 seconds from Woking. The maximum afterwards was 72 miles per hour and Clapham Junction was passed in 26 minutes 20 seconds, the last 3.9 miles took ten minutes with continuous checks. Waterloo was reached three and a half minutes over schedule from Woking, four minutes late by the Public Timetable.

The 15.30 ex Waterloo on Friday March 31st, 11 coaches plus a van, 435 tons Gross was entrusted to Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73043. There were signal checks twice in the early stages, before Wimbledon and Woking plus a PWR slack to 29 miles per hour near Walton. Woking was passed in 33 minutes 6 seconds at 49 miles per hour and with a clear road the 41.2 miles from there to Winchester run in 48¼ minutes. Speeds were 47 miles per hour at MP31, 60 at Fleet, 44 minimum after Worting Junction and 66 at Micheldever, the arrival at Winchester was three and a half minutes late. Two and a quarter minutes of the lost time were recovered to Southampton, 16¾ minutes including a PWR slack before Allbrook. Woodfidley crossing, 10.3 miles was passed in 14 minutes 40 seconds from the Southampton restart at 62 miles per hour before the long PWR, Brockenhurst was reached in 22 minutes 8 seconds [schedule 19 minutes]. The final stage to Bournemouth was delayed badly, adverse signals leaving Brockenhurst, before Christchurch and a stop for four and a quarter minutes before Bournemouth, reached in 30 minutes 1 second, 12 minutes late, 20-21 minutes Net.

The 18.33 from Bournemouth consisted of ten coaches plus two vans, 420 tons Gross, with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028. The Weymouth crew passed Totton, 25.5 miles, in 27 minutes 22 seconds, after 56 miles per hour minimum at MP100 and 70 maximum after Brockenhurst, and following a PWR slack to 22 at Millbrook reached Southampton in 33 minutes 25 seconds. There was a 54 seconds signal stop at Swaythling, then 56 miles per hour at Winchester Junction, 49 at Roundwood, 75 maximum before Hook, a signal check to five at Woking and a PWR slack to 40 at Weybridge Waterloo was reached in 99 minutes 28 seconds. The loss from Southampton was three minutes, with only one PWR slack in force a poor effort by both the footplate crew and the operating regime.

Steam hauled rosters were reduced further with effect from April 3rd, the only remaining main line trains were; the 02.45, 08.35 and 17.23 [Fridays only] ex Waterloo, the 08.46 ex Bournemouth and the 11.14, 17.30 and 18.15 ex Weymouth. In practice if a diesel locomotive failed steam substituted, the only good news for steam enthusiasts, confirmation of the four weeks delay in the inauguration of the new electric timetable, July 11th. Diesel or electric replacements were normally 4-6-2's, on May 8th however a Standard Class 5 4-6-0, No.73043 hauled the Down "Bournemouth Belle".

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Spring Bank Holiday Weekend, 1967

The next personal experience was with the 18.33 ex Bournemouth on Saturday May 6th, a light train, nine coaches plus a van, 355 tons Gross with rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34024. The Weymouth crew passed Totton in 26 minutes 55 seconds at 47 miles per hour after a signal check before the station, previous speeds were 54½ minimum at MP100 and 72½ maximum before Lyndhurst Road. There was a PWR slack to 38 miles per hour after Redbridge and a stop for 49 seconds before entering Southampton station, finally reached in 34 minutes 49 seconds, 31-32 minutes Net. The restart from Southampton by the Nine Elms crew was initially slow but by Eastleigh, passed in 9 minutes 41 seconds speed was 62 miles per hour. There was a long PWR slack to 20 miles per hour at Shawford, then 64 at Micheldever, 62 at Roundwood and 71½ at Wootton with the result Worting Junction was passed in 37 minutes 22 seconds. The only checks afterwards were PWR slacks to 60 miles per hour at Basingstoke and 25 before Farnborough, with 88 before Fleet, 82 before Weybridge and 80 at Walton Waterloo was reached in 85 minutes 42 seconds, 77 minutes Net.

The extra trains to Bournemouth and Weymouth over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, May 27th and 28th were steam hauled. On the Friday evening: 16.22 Waterloo to Weymouth, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34034 - 17.23 to Bournemouth, Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73043 - 18.14 No.34037 - 18.22 No.73065 - 19.24 Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003. The electro-diesel on the 16.35 was unlikely to have been delayed by the 16.22; Driver Fordrey, with a light train of eight coaches, 280 tons Gross ran somewhat faster than the schedule required. He passed Surbiton in 14¼ minutes at 79 miles per hour; then because of various checks it took another 16 minutes 50 seconds to Woking. The 42.2 miles from Woking, passed at 58 miles per hour to the Winchester stop were run in 33 minutes with 75 miles per hour at MP31, 90 at Hook, 64 at Worting Junction, 68 at Wootton and 97 at Wallers Ash. The actual overall time from Waterloo to Winchester was 64 minutes 7 seconds, 22 minutes less than schedule. If Fordrey had averaged 80 miles per hour from Surbiton to Brookwood the time to there from Waterloo would have been 26¼ minutes and the overall time to Winchester a somewhat surprising 56 minutes, an average of 72½ miles per hour start to stop.

The 15.30 ex Waterloo on the Saturday was steam hauled with rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34060 with 12 coaches, 430 tons Gross. It reached Winchester three and a half minutes late. There was a PWR slack to 19 miles per hour before West Byfleet, diversion to the Local line at Basingstoke and a signal check at Winchester Junction, the maximum was 77 miles per hour at Wallers Ash. One minute was regained to Southampton despite a PWR slack to 40 miles per hour before Shawford and signals after Eastleigh. Eighty-one seconds were lost to Brockenhurst, after a PWR slack to 18 miles per hour it took eight and a quarter minutes to pass Totton. Four minutes was recouped on to Bournemouth. New Milton passed in 10 minutes 3 seconds at 61 miles per hour, 72 the maximum before Christchurch, 50 minimum at Pokesdown. Bournemouth was reached in 20 minutes 22 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 08.35 ex Waterloo, June 19th to 21st 1967

The 18.33 ex Bournemouth had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No. 35008 with 11 coaches plus one van, 440 tons Gross. Totton was passed in 26 minutes 39 seconds, after 55 miles per hour minimum at MP100 and 74 maximum twice between Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst Road, Southampton was reached after a slight signal check in 31 minutes 54 seconds. There were three PWR slacks on the continuation to Waterloo, 40 miles per hour at Shawford, 16 at Wallers Ash and 54 before Basingstoke. With 55 miles per hour at Winchester, 51½ at Roundwood and 77 at Brookwood, Waterloo was reached in 92 minutes 38 seconds.

The weekdays 08.35 ex Waterloo stopped at Surbiton, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton Airport, Southampton and Brockenhurst, [schedule running time to Bournemouth 159½ minutes]. On the first three days of the week commencing June 19th the train consist was ten coaches plus one van, 390 tons Gross, ten coaches plus two vans, 390 tons and eight coaches plus one van, 330 tons. Running times from Waterloo to Bournemouth were 145 minutes 32 seconds, 156 minutes 49 seconds and 152 minutes 48 seconds, 133¾, 131 and 133 minutes Net. Before the 1965 decelerations the schedule was 143½ minutes with one less stop, Southampton Airport. Driver Groome was in charge on the Monday and Wednesday and driver Giles accompanied by an Inspector on the Tuesday.

The best start from Waterloo was on Tuesday, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35023 passed Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 20 seconds and Wimbledon in 10 minutes 19 seconds before slowing for the PWR slack. The three starts from Surbiton were similar until Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No. 35007 on Monday was checked for signals at Weybridge. The other two reached 69 and 68 miles per hour before West Byfleet and stopped at Woking in one and four seconds over 15 minutes. There was a PWR slack at Hook, taken at 23, 12 and 18 miles per hour; speeds before at MP31 were 60, 59 and 65 miles per hour. Number 35023, reached 66 miles between signal checks, No.35007 attained 75 before the Hook slack and reached Basingstoke in 28 minutes 51 seconds and No.35028 on Wednesday was one minute slower between Woking and Basingstoke. From the Basingstoke restart they reached 54, 52 and 51 miles per hour at Wootton and 94, 85 and 86 at Wallers Ash, Driver Giles restrained by the Inspector. Times to Winchester were; 20 minutes 12 seconds; 21 minutes 32 seconds after a signal check before and 20 minutes 38 seconds. With a PWR slack to 40 miles per hour in force before Shawford, the stop at Southampton Airport was made in 12 to 12½ minutes. The continuation to Southampton took nine and three quarters minutes on Monday, on the other two days signals caused delays of ten and three quarters and five and a quarter minutes.

There was a PWR slack in force between Totton and Lyndhurst Road, observed at 15, ten and 20 miles per hour. On Monday and Wednesday the loss on the 19 minutes schedule to Brockenhurst was three, with a signal check at Totton and one and a quarter minutes, Driver Giles kept schedule with six seconds to spare.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 12.34 ex Bournemouth, June 19th to June 22nd 1967

Driver Giles recovered well from the PWR slack, 45 miles per hour at Lyndhurst Road, 60 on the easy stretch to MP86¾, falling by only one mile per hour on the 1/150 to Beaulieu Road, 70 at Woodfidley and a final slow approach, 16 minutes Net from Southampton. Schedule to Bournemouth was a generous 25 minutes, Driver Groome improved on this by four and a half minutes on Monday and four and three quarters minutes on the Wednesday, [without the signal check after Boscombe 18¾ minutes]. He passed New Milton in 9 minutes 14 seconds and 8 minutes 13 seconds at 56 and 62 miles per hour, maxima before the Christchurch slowing were 74 and 76 miles per hour, Giles took 8 minutes 47 seconds at 67 miles per hour, attained 85 before Christchurch, carefully observed the Christchurch check and reached Bournemouth in 18 minutes 52 seconds.

Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35007 on July 7th with nine coaches, 320 tons on the 08.35 ran Brockenhurst to Bournemouth in 17 minutes 40 seconds with 65 miles per hour at Sway, 75 at New Milton and 84 before Christchurch.

The 12.34 from Bournemouth on June 19th to 22nd had ten coaches on Monday and Tuesday, nine on Wednesday and eleven on Thursday with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35023, 35007, 35023 and 35028 with Driver Giles on Tuesday, Groome on the other three days. A PWR slack before Lyndhurst Road was observed at 18, 21, 14 and 20 miles per hour. Times to Beaulieu Road were; 22 minutes 11 seconds, 21 minutes 38 seconds, 22 minutes 28 seconds and 21 minutes 48 seconds. Christchurch was passed at 58, 61, 57 and 58 miles per hour, minima after Hinton Admiral were 56, 62, 58 and 57, [No.35028 ran Christchurch to Sway in 7 minutes 56 seconds, with 75 miles per hour before Sway], maxima before the PWR slack were 71, 73, 71 and 75. There was a further PWR slack before Totton on the Monday, a signal check before Redbridge on Tuesday and a further slack on Wednesday. Bournemouth to Southampton times were; 37 minutes 51 seconds, 36 minutes 42 seconds, 37 minutes 22 seconds and 35 minutes 30 seconds, on all four approximately 31 to 32 minutes Net.

There was a PWR slack at Winchester Junction, observed at 21, 24, 21 and 18 miles per hour and another after Farnborough, taken at 66, 56, 61 and 60. Driver Groome attained 62, 60 and 63 miles per hour before the Winchester Junction slack [he passed Winchester in 16 minutes 32 seconds on the Thursday] and after recovered to 55, 47 and 60. Times to Worting Junction were 38 minutes 26 seconds, 40 minutes 20 seconds and 36 minutes 53 seconds after a signal check to 43 miles per hour before the Junction. A further PWR slack came into force [taken at 60 and 56 miles per hour] before Basingstoke on the Wednesday and the Thursday. Maxima before the Farnborough slowing were 90, 83 and 85 miles per hour. There was a stop at MP25½ for seven minutes on Monday [he ran to Waterloo in 28 minutes 6 seconds with 85 miles per hour maximum at Esher from the restart], the overall time from Southampton was 97 minutes 56 seconds, 80 minutes Net. On Wednesday with a signal check at Hampton Court Junction to 40 miles per hour he reached Waterloo in 89 minutes 16 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Driver Giles aims higher on June 20th, 1967

On Thursday there was, apart from a signal check to 60 miles per hour, a clear road to the Terminus and with 81 miles per hour maximum at West Byfleet, Waterloo was reached in 84 minutes 12 seconds, 79½ minutes Net.

Driver Giles aimed a little higher, he attained 69 miles per hour before Winchester Junction, 71 at Roundwood, 77 before Wootton and passed Worting Junction in 35 minutes 23 seconds. He then reached 96 miles per hour at MP39 after the PWR slack before catching up the preceding Boat Train at MP37; subsequently he reached 82 at both West Byfleet and Walton. There were signal checks at Surbiton, 29 miles per hour, New Malden, 41 and a PWR slack to 16 before Clapham Junction, Waterloo was reached in 86 minutes 40 seconds, c.73 minutes Net. The average from MP's 44 to 37 was 90.3 miles per hour. Number 35028 developed 1,470-1,520 EDHP at 63 miles per hour at Shawford, No.35007, still accelerating at 69 miles per hour at Shawford and at 71 past Roundwood, 1,575-1,625 and 1,740-1,790 at least.

Driver Giles is credited in 1965 with achieving an average of 84.8 miles per hour between Micheldever and Roundwood with nine coaches plus a van, 340 tons Gross [The author has seen no log several people attest to the fact], 2,040-2,090 EDHP. This was a similar figure to that obtained by Driver Hendicott with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35011 and 455 tons some four weeks after Hooper's effort. [Ref.63] It is perhaps invidious to compare driving techniques but some of the performances in 1967, particularly at high speeds involved the use of long cut-offs, which probably hindered the attainment of even higher speeds. Number 35007 with the cut off shortened might have reached 100 miles per hour between MP's 37 and 44.

The 18.33 from Bournemouth had, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35028 and 35007 on Monday and Thursday, rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34024 and 34018 on Tuesday and Wednesday. Loads were ten coaches plus a van on the first three days, 375, 400 and 390 tons Gross, with an additional coach on Thursday, 430 tons Gross. Weymouth drivers, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, ran inconsistently i.e. to Beaulieu Road in 21 minutes 38 seconds, 24 minutes 6 seconds and 23 minutes 18 seconds. On Tuesday Christchurch was passed at 66 miles per hour, the minimum at Hinton Admiral was 56 and the maximum after Brockenhurst 69. Comparative speeds on Wednesday were 62, 48 and 62 and on Thursday 60, 55 and 56. Actual and [Net times] to Southampton were: 35 minutes 44 seconds [31½], 37 minutes 31 seconds [34] and 38 minutes 5 seconds [33].

Driver Dente of Nine Elms was on duty from Southampton to Waterloo on all four evenings [achieved by swapping a Diesel duty with one of the older Drivers in the link] the situation on the footplate was different every evening.

The Monday departure was on time, the reward a 22 seconds signal stop at MP74, there was a recovery to 61½ miles per hour before slowing for the slack at Winchester Junction, then 56 before signal checks and three stops, at MP's 55¼, 52¾ and 51¾, lasting in total six and a half minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Driver Dente on the 19.15 ex Southampton, June 19-23

It took 65 minutes 11 to pass Worting Junction, after which Dente reached 85 miles per hour at MP44, fell away to 82 at Winchfield and reached a maximum of 91 at MP35. Farnborough, 18.5 miles from the restart at MP51 $\frac{3}{4}$ was passed in 15 minutes 47 seconds before easing for the PWR slack. Brookwood was passed at 77 miles per hour, Woking at 20 after a signal check to walking pace before, Walton at 77, the PWR slack after Wimbledon was taken at 15 and the stop at Waterloo made in 32 minutes from Woking. The actual time from Southampton to Waterloo was 122 $\frac{3}{4}$ minutes.

The Tuesday departure was also on time and there was a clear road but the locomotive was steaming badly, speeds were 54 miles per hour at Winchester and 49 at Roundwood with 120 pounds per square inch in the steam chest and 25 percent cut off. When it reached 57 miles per hour after Roundwood the Regulator was closed, speed fell to 50 at Wootton and rose downhill to 56 at Worting Junction. The Regulator was reopened after Worting, albeit with only 120 pounds in the steam chest, sufficient to reach 87 miles per hour between MP's 38 and 39 before the Regulator was closed again, speed fell to 67 at Farnborough, 60 at Sturt Lane and 56 at MP31. By Brookwood, passed at 71 miles per hour the boiler pressure had rallied and subsequent speeds were 81 at Woking, 90 at West Byfleet and 92 maximum afterwards. Hampton Court Junction was passed in 72 minutes 14 seconds [28 minutes 52 seconds from Worting Junction] at 78 miles per hour and Waterloo reached, after ten miles per hour for the PWR slack and a signal check at Vauxhall, in 89 minutes 35 seconds. Net time by normal reckoning was 80 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes but in practice the PWR slacks at Winchester and Farnborough furnished an opportunity to save steam and effect an improvement in boiler pressure.

Southampton was left three minutes late on Wednesday thanks to the poor running from Bournemouth. There was no problem with maintaining boiler pressure and with full Regulator and 25 percent cut off 60 miles per hour was attained at Winchester and after the PWR slack to 13, 58 at Roundwood. The exaggerated slowing for the slack partly attributed to the fact that Dente was firing at the time and his fireman was taking no risks. There was a signal check to 19 miles per hour at Worting Junction and then 82 at Fleet, unlike No.34024 the previous night this was as fast as No.34018 would go. There was a signal check to 37 miles per hour at Sturt Lane Junction, a stop for a minute at Brookwood, another check to 30 at West Byfleet, the final time to Waterloo, after the PWR slack, eight and three-quarters minutes over schedule, 105 minutes 18 seconds, 12 minutes late.

Driver Dente finally struck lucky on Thursday, a locomotive steaming well, running freely, a reasonably clear road and a brisk start before signals caused a slowing to 16 miles per hour at Southampton Airport. He reached 62 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour before Winchester Junction, 60 at Micheldever and 64 at Roundwood, at least 1,675-1,725 EDHP on full Regulator and 25 percent cut off, subsequent speeds were 70 at Wootton, 60 at Worting Junction and after a gradually acceleration, 89 at Fleet.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, high speeds east of Basingstoke June 1967

The recovery from the Farnborough PWR slack taken at 52½ miles per hour was steady, 76 at Brookwood, 90 at Woking, 92 at West Byfleet, 85 at Oatlands and 90 at Hersham before the locomotive was eased. Hampton Court Junction was passed in 67 minutes 32 seconds, [27 minutes 52 seconds from Worting Junction] and after a 51 seconds stop for signals at MP7½ and checks both sides of Vauxhall, Waterloo was reached in 88 minutes 50 seconds. It was six minutes and three-quarters within schedule and two minutes early. The fast running on all four days was achieved with the Regulator half to three quarters open, average speeds, MP44 to MP35 86.4 miles per hour on Monday, MP44 to MP37 on Tuesday 81.8 and on Thursday 84.0. The ten miles from Woking to Esher were run at 86.6 and 87.6 miles per hour on the Tuesday and Thursday.

The running of No.35007 was not the end of fast running on the Thursday evening, the 18.15 ex Weymouth with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34060 and the usual light load, 230 tons Gross reached 75 miles per hour in three miles from the Brockenhurst start. The 7.4 miles from Eastleigh to Winchester the next stop were run in 8 minutes 52 seconds with 72 miles per hour maximum. From the Winchester start 75 miles per hour was attained after Micheldever before signals intervened. Basingstoke to Woking took 22 minutes 1 second start to stop including the PWR slack after Farnborough and a signal check before Woking, the average from Hook to Winchfield was 81.3 miles per hour and from there to Fleet 92.7 with a maximum of 95.

The final few weeks of steam operation on the Southern Region witnessed some variations in locomotive rosters, the 11.25 ex Weymouth for example had a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 from Weymouth to Bournemouth, the usual load three coaches. The ten minutes Poole to Bournemouth schedule was exceeded by 13 and 42 seconds on the 19th and 20th June, whereas on Wednesday No.76005 ran the distance in 8 minutes 47 seconds. Speeds were 40 miles per hour at the bottom of the 1/60, 37½ at Parkstone, 45 at Branksome and 61 before Bournemouth.

The Friday 17.23 ex Waterloo on the last day of June, 12 coaches, 430 tons Gross and rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34087 with Driver Turner, was delayed initially, a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour before Surbiton, a signal check to 29 at Woking and another PWR slack to 38 before Hook. He passed Basingstoke in 63 minutes 5 seconds and then with 47 miles per hour minimum at Wootton and 78 maximum before the stop reached Winchester three minutes early, 81 minutes 53 seconds. There was a PWR slack to 40 miles per hour at Shawford, 80 at Eastleigh and Southampton reached three and a quarter minutes early, 17 minutes 40 seconds from Winchester.

The Up 18.15 ex Weymouth that evening had rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34021 with three coaches plus five vans, some of which were 75 miles per hour limited, 220 tons Gross and Driver Burrige. He had distinguished himself the previous two evenings by some very fast running between Basingstoke and Woking.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, fastest authenticated speed with steam, June 1967

He passed Farnborough in 11 minutes 2 seconds and 11 minutes 18 seconds with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 and 175 tons. The times from Winchfield to Fleet were 1 minute 54½ seconds and 1 minutes 57 seconds, average 105.3 and 103.0 miles per hour, maximum at MP38 reckoned at 106 and 105, probably equalling the highest ever by steam on the Southern Region.

The nearest contenders were; Merchant Navy No.35028, 104 at Axminster with the Down "Atlantic Coast Express", [the driver was Burrige!] and No.35005, 105 past Winchester Junction on the 21.20 ex Waterloo. Basingstoke to Winchester start to stop in 18 minutes 50 seconds with 76 miles per hour at Roundwood, 90 at MP59 and after MP63 103 and 106 over successive miles, [104 miles per hour over the two miles, successive miles timed in 35 and 34 seconds, the driver was Rabbetts. [There is an unsubstantiated claim for 110 by No.35028 on 14/12/66 at Winchfield. The timing seen by the authour does not withstand rigorous examination] [Ref.64]

The 18.15 ex Weymouth, 20.12 from Southampton was allowed 118 minutes running time from Southampton to Waterloo, with stops at Southampton Airport, Eastleigh, Winchester, Basingstoke and Woking. Driver Buridge with No.34021 cut this to 94 minutes 35 seconds, 88¼ minutes Net. [Driver Hendicott's figures on the 22nd June were 101 minutes 6 seconds, 93 minutes Net]. The start from Winchester was delayed by the PWR slack at the Junction but he then attained 75 miles per hour at Micheldever, 79 at Roundwood and 82 at Wootton, 1,300-1,350EDHP, with this light train at Roundwood. Hook was passed in five and three quarter minutes at 88 miles per hour from Basingstoke, averages from there to Winchfield and on to Fleet were 90.5 and 96.5 miles per hour with a maximum of 97. Basingstoke to Woking took 19¼ minutes including slowing to 62 miles per hour for the PWR slack after Farnborough, the final maximum at Brookwood was 87. Woking to Waterloo took 27 minutes 4 seconds, Hampton Court Junction passed in 10 minutes 7 seconds at 60 miles per hour with adverse signals sighted after 85 maximum at Walton. [Driver Hendicott was 44 seconds quicker to Hampton Court Junction but the log in the Author's possession quotes no speeds.]

The last personal experience of the Bournemouth steam passenger service was on the 4th July 1967. The 12.33 from Bournemouth, ten coaches with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35023 experienced a PWR slack at Pokesdown and passed Christchurch in seven and three quarters minutes at 64 miles per hour. It then reached 70 miles per hour at Hinton Admiral, fell to 67 at MP100, passed Sway in 15 minutes 11 seconds at 80 before signals and a reduction to 55 at Brockenhurst with a final 73 at Woodfidley. After a PWR slack to 38 at Beaulieu Road, Southampton was reached in 34 minutes 8 seconds, 29 minutes Net. Seven minutes 26 seconds for Christchurch to Sway with ten coaches and the slack observed may well be a record. The start from Southampton was also a little above the norm but not a record, 75 miles per hour at Shawford, when the Regulator was closed for the PWR slack, observed at 62, the safety valves lifted immediately. Winchester was passed in 15 minutes 9 seconds at 67 miles per hour and 69 reached before slowing for the second long PWR slack at Winchester Junction, taken at 19.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Driver Prior achieves 2,000 EDHP, July 4th 1967

Speeds after this were 64 miles per hour at Micheldever, 69 at Roundwood and 80 at Wootton, before the Regulator was closed at Shawford at least 1,950-2,000EDHP. [Speeds at Allbrook, Eastleigh and Shawford were 64, 73 and 75 miles per hour]. Worting Junction was passed in 32 minutes 28 seconds, without the two PWR slacks and assuming 75 miles per hour maintained from Shawford to Roundwood it could have been 28 minutes. There was a signal check to 30 miles per hour before Basingstoke and then a clear road to Waterloo other than the PWR slack to 60 after Farnborough. Maxima were 94 miles per hour at MP38 and 88 at Woking. Hampton Court Junction was passed in 63 minutes 14 seconds, [Hook to Hampton Court took 21 minutes 51 seconds, 37 seconds longer than Driver Dente with No.35007 in each case including the PWR slack after Farnborough.] Waterloo was reached in 79 minutes 39 seconds, 71-72 minutes Net. The Driver was Prior,

Driver Prior's climb to Roundwood alongside his performance in 1965 when he averaged 67.6 miles per hour from Winchester to Bournemouth with a 400 tons and rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34001 puts him in the top rank with Hendicott and just behind Hooper. On the occasion in 1965, 69 miles per hour was noted after Winchester, 1,675-1,725EDHP. [Ref.65]

The 18.33 from Bournemouth, 19.14½ in the W.T.T. from Southampton consisted of ten coaches plus a van, 400 tons Gross with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34025. Driver Bennett had apparently run from Southampton to Waterloo in 80 minutes the previous evening but with No.34025 it was not to be. Speeds before Worting Junction were 52 miles per hour at Winchester and 44 at Roundwood, and afterwards 75 at Basingstoke, before Fleet and at Esher. Esher was passed in 71 minutes 39 seconds before a stop at MP13¾, diversion to the Local line and back to the Through line at Surbiton. Waterloo was reached in 98 minutes 17 seconds, without the diversion 89 minutes, 86 minutes Net.

The 18.15 ex Weymouth on July 4th, hauled by the last Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35030 with 220 tons, ran up from Woking to Waterloo in 28 minutes 28 seconds with 72 miles per hour maximum, this the last personal experience of Southern steam.

There were many claims made for locomotive performance during the last six months of operation on the Bournemouth route including that the level was the highest ever. The best performances with the Bulleid Pacific's almost certainly occurred after they were rebuilt and particularly in the period 1963-65, overall performance in these years was not particularly good but the very best were the best ever. The overall performance in 1967 was superior but the best performances were not as good. Bearing in mind the conditions the footplate crews were operating under this was no disgrace.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Southampton to Waterloo in 1967

The Author made 17 journeys on non stop trains between Southampton and Waterloo in 1967, they were all random, made when other commitments permitted and although they have been discussed a resume will perhaps act as a suitable valedictory for Southern express steam locomotive performance.

Train; 13.25 Weymouth to Waterloo

Departure; Southampton 15.16

Schedule to Waterloo; 96 minutes

Date	Gross Train Weight	Locomotive	Actual Time	Net Time
21/1	330 tons	34052	93½ minutes	87 minutes
28/1	430 tons	35023	101½ minutes	85 minutes
9/3	400 tons	35008	80 minutes	76 minutes
19/6	365 tons	35023	98 minutes	80 minutes
20/6	365 tons	35007	86¾ minutes	73 minutes
21/6	325 tons	35023	89¼ minutes	81 minutes
22/6	400 tons	35028	84¼ minutes	79 minutes
4/7	365 tons	35023	79¾ minutes	72 minutes

Train; 17.30 Weymouth to Waterloo

Departure; Southampton 19.14½

Schedule to Waterloo; 96½ minutes

Date	Gross Train Weight	Locomotive	Actual Time	Net Time
22/3	360 tons	35007	92½ minutes	76 minutes
31/3	430 tons	35028	99½ minutes	85½minutes
6/5	355 tons	34024	85¾ minutes	77 minutes
27/5	440 tons	35008	92½ minutes	87½minutes
19/6	375 tons	35028	122¾ minutes	80 minutes
20/6	400 tons	34024	89½ minutes	81 minutes
21/6	390 tons	34018	105¼ minutes	80 minutes
22/6	430 tons	35007	88¾ minutes	76 minutes
4/7	400 tons	34025	98¼ minutes	86 minutes

Notes and References Chapters 20 to 26 inclusive

- Ref.1 Railway Magazine [RM] Vol. 97 C.J.Allen quoting A.J.Baker
Ref.2 Trains Illustrated [TI] Vol. V. p.189-190
Ref.3 [RM] Vol.101 p.265-267
Ref.4 [RM] Vol. 101 C.J.Allen quoting N.Harvey
Ref.5 "Ace Enginemen" N.Mackillop Thomas Nelson 1963
Ref.6 [TI] Vol. IX p.424
Ref.7 Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society [SLS] Vol. XL
Railway World [RW] Vol. XVIII
[TI] Vol. X
Ref.8 [RW] Vol. 28
Ref.9 [SLS] Vol. XXXIX p. 368-370
Ref.10 Full details of the four journeys timed by A.J.Baker are included in
D.W.Winkworth. "The Bulleid Pacifics". G.Allen & Unwin 1974
[DWW]
Ref.11 [RW] Vol.17 p.255-258
Ref.12 [SLS] Vol. XL & [RW] Vol. XVIII p.36-37
Ref.13 [RW] Vol. 28 & [SLS] Vol. XXXIX p. 368-370.
Ref.14 Journal of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society
[RO] Vol. XXIV p. 302 & [SLS] Vol. XLII p.178
Ref.15 [RM] Vol. 98
Ref.16 "The Locomotives of R.E.L.Maunsell" O.S.Nock Edward Everard
1954
Ref.17 D.H.Landau & J.C.Clay [RW] Vol.37
Ref.18 [RM] Vol. 96
Ref.19 [RM] Vol. 96 p.549
Ref.20 [RM] Vol. 101 p.703-705
Ref.21 [TI] Vol. XIII p. 383-284
Ref.22 [RM] Vol. 107 O.S.Nock quoting A.J.Baker
Ref.23 [TI] Vol. IX
Ref.24 [SLS] Vol. XXXVII
Ref.25 [RW] Vol.25
Ref.26 & 27 [SLS] N.Harvey
Ref.28 [TI] Vol. IX p.153
Ref.29 [SLS] Vol. XLV N.Harvey quoting D.A.Locke
Ref.30 [SLS] Vol. XXXI
Ref.31 [TI] 1951 p.329-330 C.J.Allen quoting various correspondents
Ref.32 [SLS] Vol. XXV p.91
Ref.33 [RM] Vol.96 & [RW] Vol.26
Ref.34 Railway Pictorial [RP] Vol.2 p.134-135
Ref.35 [TI] 1951 p.329-330 C.J.Allen quoting various correspondents
Ref.36 [SLS] Vol. XXXIX N.Harvey quoting J.G.Webber
Ref.37 [RO] Vol. XXIV p.16
Ref.38 [RO] Vol. XXIV p.146
Ref.39 [RO] Vol. XXIV p.328
Ref.40 "A Footplate Summary" R.I.Nelson Ian Allan 1979
Ref.41 [RM] Vol. 103 p.319

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- Ref.42 There are differences between the logs published in [RO] Vol. XXVI p.163 and by C.J.Allen in [TI] Vol.22 partly because the average and quoted maximum speeds do not equate.
- Ref.43 [RO] Vol. XXVI p.240-242
- Ref.44 "Railway Reminiscences of Three Continents" Baron G.Vuillet p.292
- Ref.45 "On Engines in Britain and France" P.R.Wallis
- Ref.46 [SLS] Vol. XXXV p.36-37
- Ref.47 "Locomotive Performance" R.I.Nelson & "Ace Enginemen" N.MacKillop
- Ref.48 [RO] Vol. XXIX [TI] Vol XII [RM] Vol. 106
There are two detailed logs available, both by experienced recorders, G.F.Bloxham & D.W.Winkworth. The variations are considerable and not explained by different locations in the train. Bloxham gave 24 minutes 53 seconds to Woking at 76 miles per hour, 30 minutes 5 seconds MP31 at 75 miles per hour and 45 minutes 17 seconds to Worting Junction. Winkworth gave 24 minutes 54 seconds to Woking, 30 minutes 3 seconds to MP 31 at a pedantic 75½ miles per hour and 45 minutes 25 seconds to Worting Junction. These are not untypical instances.
- Ref.49 [TI] Vol. 38 p.48
- Ref.50 [RW] Vol.23 p.68
- Ref.51 [RM] Vol.109
- Ref.52 [RO] Vol. XXXIII p.345
- Ref.53 [RW] Vol.24 p.123 N.Harvey quoting R.A.H.Weight
- Ref.54 [RW] Vol.25 N.Harvey quoting J.G.Webber
- Ref.55 [DWW]
- Ref.56 [RW] 1990 p. 530-534
- Ref.57 [RO] Vol. XXXIII p.390
- Ref.58 [SLS] Vol. XXXXI p.226-230 N.Harvey quoting J.G.Webber
[RW] Vol.25
- Ref.59 [RM] Vol. 111 p.332
- Ref.60 British Transport Bulletin No.20
- Ref.61 Details of Driver Saunders runs are in [RW] July 1987. The June 4th performance with No.35005 features in [DWW] tables 36 & 51
- Ref.62 [DWW] Full log of Porter's effort reproduced in table 64
- Ref.63 Modern Railways Vol. XXI p. 406
- Ref.64 [SLS] Vol. XLIV
- Ref.65 [RW] Vol. 29 p.8

Chapter 28: RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The Residential services for long distance Commuters on the Chatham and South Eastern main lines were generally easily identifiable; they ran to or from Cannon Street. The Working Time Table [W.T.T] for May 23rd 1949 included 14 weekday main line departures from Cannon Street in the period commencing 16.38 finishing 18.23. Seven ran via the former South Eastern main line, the others via the former London Chatham and Dover route.

The 16.38 and 17.41 ran non stop to Sevenoaks and Knockholt respectively and then served all stations to Folkestone and Ashford. The 17.00 and 18.18 ran to Ramsgate via Ashford and Dover, first stop Ashford, first stop Sevenoaks, then Tonbridge respectively. There were Hastings trains at; 17.06 and 18.03 first stop Tunbridge Wells Central and 17.18 which served Sevenoaks and most stations after. The principal trains to Margate and Dover via the Chatham route were the 16.45, 17.15 and 18.15, respective first stops at Faversham, Whitstable and Faversham. The other four, the 16.32, 17.22, 17.45 and 18.23 were semi-fast, the 16.32 and 18.23 first stop Rochester the other two Chatham. The 16.32 and 17.45 ran to Margate and Ramsgate the others to Canterbury and Dover. Although actual times changed slightly the overall pattern remained until first the introduction of diesel multiple units on the Hastings then the electrification of the Chatham and South Eastern lines.

There were 12 arrivals at Cannon Street in 1950 commencing 08.20 and finishing at 10.14. Trains left Ramsgate at 06.06, 06.29, 07.20 and 07.35 and arrived at Cannon Street at 08.20, 08.54, 09.19 and 09.36, there was also an 08.20 ex Herne Bay due in at 09.56. The 06.44 ex Ramsgate and 07.03 ex Margate ran via Dover and Tonbridge reaching Cannon Street at 09.30 and 10.14 respectively. The 06.06, 06.29, 06.46 and 07.20 ex Ramsgate were invariably hauled by a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2, the 07.27 ex Ashford by a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 which regularly ran late. There were four trains from Hastings, departure 06.58, 07.27, 07.40 and 08.10 due Cannon Street 08.47, 09.09, 09.47 and 09.49, the 06.58 usually had a St Leonards based Schools Class 4-4-0.

Locomotive performance on these services was characterised by the need in the Up direction to run closely to the schedule to ensure occupying the allocated path through the Suburbs. There was little point in running ahead of schedule and conversely if you were late prospects were bleak, schedules tended to reflect this situation and were generous. In the Down direction there was more chance of a late departure but once clear of the Suburbs it was possible to make up lost time and even arrive early at the first stop.

The same locomotive often appeared on the same train over a long period; the Down 17.41 in 1948 for instance invariably had King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.800. Number 800 was allocated to Hither Green depot, kept in pristine external condition and handled their only main line passenger duty. When it was out of service during August L Class 4-4-0 No.1764 deputised.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, punctuality on the evening Cannon Street Residential's The 17.22 ex Cannon Street, allowed 45½ minutes to the first stop at Rochester, was the only winter train entrusted to a rebuilt Wainwright 4-4-0 Class D1/E1 4-4-0. S.A.W.Harvey who had a particular affection for the Maunsell rebuilds travelled regularly on it, the make up was usually eight coaches. D1 No.1509 in 1948 improved on the schedule to Rochester by three and three quarter minutes. It passed New Cross in 7 minutes 50 seconds at 50 miles per hour and then after a signal check, Swanley in 24 minutes 56 seconds, one and a half minutes late. This and more was recovered with 70 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 50 minimum at Sole Street and 78 at Cuxton Road. Inevitably with trains running closely together, high performances often occurred only briefly, two such instances were on the 14th October and the 2nd December. On the first D1 No.31502 with 265 tons passed Hither Green at 54 miles per hour and ran the 4.0 miles to Chislehurst in five minutes exactly. On the second the 3.5 miles from Fawkham to Sole Street took only 3 minutes 36 seconds with a minimum of 56 miles per hour.

Punctuality on the Down evening trains was usually good although matters could become frenetic at peak periods of the year. The 16.38 ex Cannon Street on Friday July 31st 1954, 11 coaches with King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30802 was checked badly at Chelsfield and Knockholt. [Checks on the double track section South of Orpington were common; recovery of speed on the adverse gradients was slow, resulting in increasing delays to following trains.] On this particular evening the 17.00 ex Cannon Street to Ramsgate had a Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 with 11 coaches, the 17.06 to Hastings Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30910 which was closely followed by a nine coach relief to Dover with Schools No.30907. Perhaps not surprisingly the 17.18 ex Cannon Street with 11 coaches and another School's reached Tonbridge 13 minutes late. This train split at Tonbridge, only the front six coaches continued to Hastings. The 17.40 had N Class 2-6-0 No.31876. [The 17.00 in 1957 stopped at Tonbridge and the 16.38 left six minutes earlier.]

The "Man of Kent", the 16.15 ex Charing Cross on the 2nd July 1954 hauled by a West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34073 with 355 tons reached Folkestone the first stop from Waterloo in 79 minutes 27 seconds, including a signal stop, 69½ minutes Net. The lost time was subsequently recovered and it would have reached Margate on time but for a PWR slack before the station. This punctual running enabled the traveller to note the arrivals of the 16.32, 16.45 and 17.15 ex Cannon Street via the Chatham route. They were two minutes early, L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31787 with eight coaches, one minute early, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34086 and ten coaches and on time, No.34076 also with ten coaches, the 17.00 ex Cannon Street via Ashford and Dover arrived punctually behind No.34078.

Locomotive performance on the Residential's was usually competent, just occasionally flamboyant. A D1 Class 4-4-0 was still rostered in 1955 for the 17.21 Down, on the 22nd July No.31506 with eight coaches, 280 tons Gross, passed Swanley at 40 miles per hour, after a PWR slack and then averaged 50 from Farningham Road to Fawkham.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, locomotive performance on Down Residential's 1955 and 6 Number 31506 attained 70 miles per hour at Cuxton Road and reached Rochester in 45½ minutes, 43 minutes Net [schedule 46½ minutes]. The 18.23, often a U1 Class 2-6-0 in the same year, on June 24th with No.31899 lost six and a half minutes to Chislehurst and only regained half a minute to Rochester with 72 miles per hour maximum at Cuxton Road. A Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30926 on the 16.23 with seven coaches, 230 tons Gross, initially gained time, three minutes, following a PWR slack to 15 miles per hour and a signal check at Fawkham it reached Rochester on time.

The Pacific's had power in reserve on the Residential's. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34100, with ten coaches on the 17.45, [despite a 230 pounds per square inch restriction on the boiler], gained five minutes Net to Farningham Road with ten coaches. A Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 on the same train with 350 tons on the 9th July 1956 with a defective Reverser, it stuck at 45-50 percent cut off, was driven with this long cut off and 70 pounds per square inch in the steam chest. Chislehurst was passed at 46 miles per hour on the Local line, St Mary Cray at 64, Swanley at 58, Farningham Road at 70 after a PWR slack to 15 and Cuxton Road at 72 after a signal check. Chatham was reached in 47½ minutes, 43½ minutes Net [schedule 46 minutes]. A good example of how a defective steam locomotive with a keen crew can muddle through. A novelty on the Kent Residential's in 1956 was a Standard Class 4 4-6-0 on the 07.20 ex Ramsgate.

Norman Harvey published details of four runs in 1956-57 from Cannon Street to Chatham on the 17.45, which confirm drivers vaguely adhered to schedule and how if they ran ahead signals soon interfered. The train weighed 360 tons each evening with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's Nos.34090, 34075, 34080 and 34079 and Drivers Todd, Jakes, Giles and Deverill. The schedule to Hither Green was 11½ minutes, actual times; five and 15 seconds under, 57 and 90 seconds over. There were signal checks on the first, third and fourth between Cannon Street and London Bridge. Hither Green was passed at 40 miles per hour on three evenings, at 44 on the other. The schedule to Swanley was 25 minutes, Todd was 70 seconds down after a signal check at St. Mary Cray, Jakes 43 seconds ahead, Giles 90 seconds down and Deverill two and a half minutes adrift. Line congestion eased somewhat after Swanley, schedule on to Sole Street was ten minutes which Todd cut by one and a quarter minutes with 81 miles per hour maximum at Farningham Road and 56 minimum at Sole Street. Jakes rode his luck, no doubt with Norman's encouragement and passed Sole Street over two and a half minutes early, 32 minutes 25 seconds after maximum and minimum of 84 and 58, Giles was 64 seconds late with 75 and 58 and Deverill 95 seconds down after 80 and 54. The schedule to Rochester Bridge was 43½ minutes and with speeds in the mid seventies on the descent from Sole Street actual times were 41 minutes 5 seconds, 39 minutes 25 seconds, 43¼ minutes and 43 minutes 25 seconds. There were signal checks before Chatham each evening, severe on the first two nights when the train was early, final times to Chatham were 46 minutes 25 seconds, 44 minutes 56 seconds, 46 minutes 53 seconds and 46 minutes 53 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Cannon Street Signalbox fire, 1957

The Cannon Street signal box fire on April 5th 1957 caused mayhem initially and there were Timetable changes for some months afterwards. The 16.46 ex London Bridge in June [diverted from Cannon Street] had Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30916 with 340 tons Gross. It passed New Cross in 5 minutes 40 seconds at 45 miles per hour as usual on the Local line, St Mary Cray at 64 miles per hour and Swanley in 22 minutes 50 seconds [schedule 22 minutes]. It was on time at Chatham, 42 minutes, after 74 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 48 minimum at Sole Street and 67 at Cuxton Road. It then gained time on to the Faversham stop as was often the case. On this particular evening, 19 minutes 53 seconds from Chatham, the arrival was three minutes early, after 35 miles per hour at Gillingham and 76 maximum after Sittingborne. Some six weeks later the 16.46 with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34081 and 325 tons was 12 minutes late leaving London Bridge and 25 minutes adrift past Gillingham after various delays, culminating in a signal stop between Chatham and Gillingham. J.R. Skinner was a passenger and Driver Gingell on the footplate exhibited his natural flamboyance. He passed Gillingham slowly and ran the 16.0 miles to Faversham in 15 minutes 52 seconds, thus recovering five minutes; the maximum at MP47 was 92 miles per hour.

The 17.46 to Dover was a regular N Class 2-6-0 duty, usually No.31855.

The last steam hauled 17.14 ex Cannon Street to Ramsgate ran on June 12th 1959, with West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34013, Driver Moody and 11 coaches, 395 tons Gross. He passed New Cross in 7 minutes 47 seconds and with the customary signal checks Swanley three quarters of a minute late at only 35 miles per hour for a PWR slack. Then with 70 miles per hour at Farningham Road, 51 minimum at Sole Street and 77 at Cuxton Road he was a quarter of a minute early at Chatham. He was three and a quarter minutes early at Faversham passed at 27 miles per hour with signals on following a maximum of 81 after Sittingborne and reached Whitstable three and a half minutes early, after 65 maximum, 72 minutes 28 seconds, 71 minutes Net.

Whilst early running was not normally feasible on the London side of either Chatham or Tonbridge there were possibilities to the east, particularly with the later evening trains. One evening Driver Kennet, with A.F.Mercer accompanying him on the footplate and Norman Harvey recording the proceedings from the train, achieved a little more than normal between Tonbridge and Ashford on the 18.21 ex Cannon Street. With seven coaches only after Tonbridge, full Regulator and 18 percent cut off Kennett passed Paddock Wood in six and a half minutes, then with lengthened cut off he attained 90 miles per hour at Headcorn and passed Chart Signal box, 24.5 miles, in exactly 20 minutes. The cut off at Chart was 28 percent. Norman Harvey commented that boiler pressure dropped with full Regulator working and 30 percent cut off at 90 miles per hour, perhaps with a shorter cut off a higher speed would have been reached, 25 percent at Paddock Wood and slight reductions afterwards might have achieved more. Ashford was reached in 23 minutes 9 seconds; the driver was rewarded with a "bollocking", from an Inspector standing on the platform at Ashford for running ahead of time.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 17.06 Cannon Street to Hastings

Mr Winkworth gave details of another footplate trip by Mr. Mercer. Driver Hobday with Dente as his fireman, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34025 and 11 coaches ran to Sevenoaks in 26 minutes 25 seconds, a four and a half minutes gain on schedule, whether or not after a late departure is not noted. The average from New Cross to Knockholt was 47.9 miles per hour, average 1,230-1,280EDHP, cut off varied between 28 and 40 percent with 100 to 195 pounds per square inch in the steam chest, [100 pounds at Chislehurst, boiler pressure was falling, increased to 195 at Orpington]. Speed fell from 53 to 46 miles per hour up to Knockholt with the cut off increased from 28 to 32 percent. On the 2nd June 1961, with steam working drawing to a close on the South Eastern section a rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34013 with eight coaches was four minutes late at Orpington from Cannon Street. It then ran to the Tonbridge stop in exactly 15 minutes with 51 miles per hour at Orpington, 50 maintained on the 1/120 to Knockholt, 76 at Dunton Green, 60 at Sevenoaks and 88 maximum before the stop. The EDHP between Orpington and Knockholt was 1,330-1,380.

The 17.06 Cannon Street to Hastings with a Schools Class 4-4-0 made its first stop at Tunbridge Wells Central and usually had 11 coaches, 380 tons Gross, [reduced to eight after the Cannon Street fire]. F.S.Bond, a regular traveller over the previous eight years, some 350 journeys, wrote in 1957 that some ten percent [34] of his journeys resulted in Net times of 45 minutes or less, the fastest only 42½. The quickest time from New Cross to Knockholt was with No.30900 in July 1950, passed in 6 minutes 40 seconds and 20 minutes 14 seconds from Cannon Street. Speeds were 60 miles per hour at New Cross, 46 at Elmstead Woods, 60 at Orpington before a signal check before Knockholt. Subsequently with 69 miles per hour before Tonbridge, 35 at High Brooms, it reached Tunbridge Wells in 44 minutes 14 seconds. The actual New Cross to Knockholt time, 13 minutes 34 seconds represented 1,300-1,350EDHP average and if [a big word] there had been no signal check with the performance level sustained, 1,350-1,400. Number 30907 on another occasion passed New Cross in 6 minutes 26 seconds and Elmstead Woods in 12 minutes 31 seconds after which, not surprisingly signal checks intervened. Bond produced a list of the shortest times between adjacent stations. The run by No.30900 was the quickest between each of the four stations from Elmstead Woods to Orpington, the minimum of 46 miles per hour at Elmstead the highest noted. The driver was Bond. The second best performance between New Cross and Knockholt appears to have been with No.30922, 14 minutes 7 seconds,,1,150-1,200EDHP.

The highest downhill speed noted at Dunton Green was 76 miles per hour by Driver Dalling with No.30907 on October 4th 1956 and at Hildenborough 88 by Harvey with No.30909 on 19th July 1956. Dalling was checked by a bad PWR slack at Sevenoaks but then ran Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells in 8 minutes 48 seconds. [Ref.2] Bond considered the best performance between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells was with driver Bond on 22nd July 1954 when with No.30910 there was an acceleration from 28 to 37 miles per hour on the gradient up to High Brooms, 1,325-1,375EDHP.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Basingstoke Residential's

The 17.06 ex Cannon Street, after reduction to eight coaches occasionally had a U1 Class 2-6-0. On the 2nd September No.31900 with the normal formation, five corridor and two non corridor coaches plus one Pullman Car, lost time to Tunbridge Wells. A week later there was some good running before delays caused by the late running 16.56 with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30908. The following day, September 10th, No.31890 passed Sevenoaks in 28½ minutes, Tonbridge in 37 minutes and reached Tunbridge Wells in 46 minutes. The 17.06 schedule was six and a half minutes to New Cross, 19 to Orpington, 29 to Sevenoaks, 37 to Tonbridge and 47½ to Tunbridge Wells.

C.J.Allen published in 1957 details of Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30909 with 11 coaches on the 18.03 ex Cannon Street [schedule 48 minutes to Tunbridge Wells]. After delays initially for signals at New Cross, passing times were, Sevenoaks 27 minutes 14 seconds, Tonbridge 33 minutes 56 seconds and 43 minutes 35 seconds to the stop at Tunbridge Wells.

There were mid-day Saturday trains from Cannon Street, the five and a half-day week continued. The 13.02 [schedule 39 minutes to the Tonbridge stop, 12 minutes to Tunbridge Wells] with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30909 and 310 tons, checked initially by signals, was three and a half minutes late at Orpington, 23 minutes 26 seconds. With controls set at two-thirds open Regulator and cut off at 40 percent the minimum at Knockholt was 48 miles per hour; with mid valve and 30 percent, 75 at Dunton Green, after slowing to 60 for Sevenoaks and 84 at Hildenborough, Tonbridge was reached ten seconds late. From the restart full Regulator and 60 percent cut off, reduced to 40 was employed. This produced 40 miles per hour on the 1/95, 1,310-1,360 EDHP and Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells in 11½ minutes.

The Western Section Residential service to Basingstoke from Waterloo was less identifiable than from Cannon Street, the three evening trains remained essentially the same throughout the British Railways period. In May 1949 for instance the 17.09 and 18.09 ran to Woking in 31 minutes, on to Farnborough in 14 minutes, [Through line to Sturt Lane Junction] and then stopped all successive stations, Basingstoke 18.25 and 19.25. The 17.39 stopped at Brookwood also and continued to Salisbury after Basingstoke, following the 18.00 Waterloo to Plymouth. [The 17.30 Waterloo to Bournemouth and the 18.00 both stopped at Basingstoke, the 17.00 to Exeter also at Woking].

There were trains ex Basingstoke in 1960 at 06.37, all stations to Woking, Weybridge, Walton and Surbiton, 07.30 and 08.24, all stations to Woking then Waterloo. These were complemented by the, 06.04 ex Southampton Terminus, all stations Basingstoke to Farnborough then Woking and Waterloo, the 06.45 ex Salisbury, effectively the return working of the Down 17.39 served the same stations plus Brookwood and the 07.49 ex Salisbury, ran Basingstoke to Waterloo non stop. The 17.39 Down was re-timed in 1961, Waterloo four minutes later with a new electric service to Alton at 17.39, first stop Woking to relieve overcrowding. The growth in Commuter traffic 25-40 miles distant from Waterloo was a feature of the sixties.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Motive power on the Basingstoke Residential's

The change to diesel traction on the West of England service in 1964 changed the nature of Salisbury depot steam locomotive workings, effectively those to London were Residential's. The April 1966 timetable for instance included trains from Waterloo at - 07.18, Surbiton, Woking and all stations - 17.41, Woking, Farnborough and all stations - 18.00 first stop Basingstoke and 18.54 Woking and all stations. In the Up direction - 06.49 [ex Salisbury] all stations Basingstoke to Farnborough and Woking - 07.46 non stop Basingstoke to Waterloo - 18.35 Basingstoke Woking and Waterloo.

King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, both Urie and Maunsell varieties were normal motive power on the Basingstoke Residential's in 1949, U Class 2-6-0's and Nine Elms based N15X Class 4-6-0's had appeared regularly before. A T14 Class 4-6-0 regularly hauled the 06.35 ex Basingstoke during summer 1949 after the remaining five members of the Class were returned to Service from winter storage. The 17.09 and 18.09 Down in 1950 regularly featured a Basingstoke based King Arthur with a Salisbury based one on the 17.39. The Nine Elms based Standard Class 5 4-6-0's introduced in 1956 led to the demise of first the Urie Arthur's and later the Maunsell ones. Guildford depot was responsible for the 07.05 ex Basingstoke and the Down 18.09 in 1965, it usually provided a Standard Class 5, sometimes a Standard Class 4 4-6-0 and occasionally a Standard Class 4 2-6-0. Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76061 had ten coaches on September 24th, No.76064, 11 on the 17.09 on November 23rd. Even as late as 1967 when the trains were normally entrusted to Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's a Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75075 hauled the 06.29 ex Basingstoke. Perhaps the most unlikely Motive Power was a LM 8F 2-8-0 No.48408 on 17th June 1965 on the 08.21 Basingstoke to Waterloo and the corresponding Down 17.09. How would Eastleigh know this was not the usual type of running in turn for an 8F ex Works?

Locomotive performance, particularly in the Down direction at times was very good. Up, punctuality was the issue, the writer changed trains at Clapham Junction daily between September 1962 and May 1965, the 07.08 ex Basingstoke invariably passed Clapham Junction, [W.T.T 08.15], before the Down Channel Islands Boat train, [W.T.T. 08.17]. The locomotive was usually a Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2, occasionally a Standard Class 5 4-6-0, schedule Woking to Clapham Junction was 23 minutes. D.J.Maidment, was a regular traveller in the period 1957-1961 between Woking and Waterloo on the 06.04 ex Southampton Terminus, the predecessor to the 07.08 ex Basingstoke, departure at 07.09. The locomotive during this period invariably an Eastleigh based Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0, the Woking to Waterloo schedule was 30 minutes, a minute longer in the Public Timetable. He noted arrivals to the Public time on 50 percent of his journeys, early 30 percent and late 20 percent. He travelled 300 times; a good run was 29 minutes, anything less would have engendered checks for signals.

Early Woking arrivals were possible. Whilst the Bulleid Pacific's were temporarily withdrawn from service in 1953 borrowed London Midland Stanier Class 5 4-6-0's worked some Residential's.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Urie and Maunsell 4-6-0 performance

A LM Stanier Class 5 4-6-0 on the 17.39 with 400 tons and a Feltham crew passed Clapham Junction in 7 minutes 59 seconds and Surbiton in 17 minutes 32 seconds. Speeds were 68 miles per hour at Esher, 65 minimum at Oatlands and 68 at Byfleet, Woking was reached one and a quarter minutes early, 29 minutes 41 seconds from Waterloo. A comparison with a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30781 gave Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 57 seconds, Surbiton in 15 minutes 42 seconds and Woking in 27 minutes 54 seconds. The Stanier 4-6-0 was quicker between Surbiton and West Byfleet, 8 minutes 46 seconds compared with 9 minutes exactly. Number 30781 reached 66 miles per hour at Esher and 68 at Byfleet after a fall to 63 at Oatlands. The King Arthur gain compared to the Class 5 probably had more to do with crew familiarisation, a quicker start and faster finish, than any intrinsic advantage, the Feltham crew had never previously driven a Class 5. [Ref.3]

The Basingstoke based Urie King Arthur Class 4-6-0's for many years performed competently on the Down 17.09 and 18.09. Three journeys shortly before they were withdrawn, one timed by R.C.Riley, two by R.J.Doran are probably representative of day to day performance. Number 30754 with nine coaches, 330 tons, on the 17.09 passed Clapham Junction in 7 minutes 8 seconds and Hampton Court Junction in 18 minutes 9 seconds at 60 miles per hour. The 8.35 miles to West Byfleet took 8 minutes 17 seconds with 65 miles per hour maximum, Woking was reached one and a quarter minutes early, 29 minutes 46 seconds. On the 18.09 with an additional coach, 365 tons Gross, No.30754 took 8 minutes to Clapham Junction and 19 minutes 33 seconds to Hampton Court Junction, passed one minute late at only 56 miles per hour. The time to West Byfleet was 8 minutes 33 seconds, 69 miles per hour the maximum, Woking reached exactly to schedule, 31 minutes 1 second. Number 30755, always considered the best of the Urie Arthur's, after the Bulleid modifications, passed Clapham Junction in 7 minutes 43 seconds, Hampton Court Junction in 18 minutes 22 seconds at 60 miles per hour and without exceeding that, reached Woking 40 seconds ahead of schedule. The Hampton Court Junction to West Byfleet time was 8 minutes 27 seconds. Schedule to the next stop at Farnborough was 14 minutes; actual times were 12 minutes 41 seconds, 14 minutes 52 seconds, [diverted from the Through line to the local line at Brookwood and not at Sturt Lane] and 13 minutes 37 seconds. Numbers 30750 and 30755 attained 53 and 52 miles hour on the first and third runs by MP31, EDHP of 875-925 and 920-970 at least. [Ref.4]

The introduction of the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's heralded a new level of performance. A correspondent writing to the Railway Observer couldn't resist the temptation to compare trips on the 17.39 on May 4th and 17th when Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73116 required 29 minutes to reach Woking whereas Maunsell King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30770 was half a minute quicker. In practice, what could be achieved by a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 was indicated by two experiences in 1955 behind Nos.73110 and 73111 with 400 tons. The times to Clapham Junction and Hampton Court Junction were 7 minutes 37 seconds and 7 minutes 33 seconds and 17 minutes 43 seconds and 17 minutes 6 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the BR Standard Class 5 4-6-0's

Speeds were 68 and 71 miles per hour at Hampton Court, 74 maximum at Esher, 66 and 69 minima at Oatlands and 72 and 75 the final maxima at West Byfleet. The Hampton Court Junction to West Byfleet times were 7 minutes 19 seconds and 6 minutes 53 seconds with Woking reached in 27 minutes 48 seconds and 27 minutes 1 second [schedule 31 minutes]. A regular commuter in 1958 noted his fastest time between Waterloo and Woking with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73119 and 395 tons. Clapham Junction passed in 6 minutes 52 seconds, Hampton Court Junction in 16 minutes 35 seconds at 71 miles per hour and Woking reached in 26 minutes 25 seconds with 70 minimum at Oatlands and 80 maximum at West Byfleet. The average from Hampton Court Junction to Byfleet, according to the passing times 71.5 miles per hour, 68.4 and 72.6 by Nos.73110 and 73111, which suggests either the speeds quoted for No.73111 were low or the Hampton Court Junction to Byfleet time for No.73119 was too long.

Norman Harvey [Ref.5] sampled some Maunsell King Arthur Class 4-6-0 performances. On May 15th 1959 No.30794 with 345 tons passed Wimbledon in 10 minutes 54 seconds, reached 70 miles per hour at Esher, was checked by signals, recovered to 67 at West Byfleet and reached Woking in 30 minutes 20 seconds, 30 minutes Net. Some two years later, actually May 27th No.30795 with a light train, 225 tons, was checked by signals at Berrylands and with 66 miles per hour at Byfleet reached Woking in 30 minutes exactly, 28½ minutes Net.

The fastest personal time noted to Woking was not on a Residential but on the 17.00 West of England. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34022 with 400 tons Gross ran to Woking in three seconds over 26 minutes. It passed Clapham Junction in 6 minutes 42 seconds at 49 miles per hour, Hampton Court Junction in 15 minutes 44 seconds at 75 [6 minutes 43 seconds on to Byfleet with 81 maximum]. The finish to Woking was leisurely, with one from West Byfleet similar to No.73119 the time could have been 25¼ minutes. The continuation to Basingstoke was sedate by comparison, MP31 passed in 10 minutes 1 second at 60 miles per hour, 74 maximum at Fleet, Basingstoke reached two and a quarter minutes early in 25 minutes 43 seconds.

The 18.00 ex Waterloo, as already noted previously a West of England Service, ran only to Salisbury after 1964, most passengers alighted at Basingstoke the first stop transforming the 11 coaches from sardine cans to empty pea tins. Sixteen random journeys, made between 15th January and 3rd June 1965, indicate the general performance levels before the schedule was eased for the Bournemouth electrification works. The schedule was 55 minutes to the first stop at Basingstoke, passing times: Clapham Junction seven minutes - Hampton Court Junction 18 minutes - Woking Junction 28 minutes. Locomotives were rebuilt Battle of Britain/ West Country Class 4-6-2's except on March 12th when unmodified No.34076 appeared. The standard formation was eleven coaches, except May 27th when an empty Refreshment Car was attached, but kept locked despite an overcrowded train as a result of a previous cancellation.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the 18.00 ex Waterloo 1965

18.00 Waterloo to Basingstoke, 1965

Date	Gross weight	Locomotive	Actual time	Net time
15/1	395 tons	34012	57mins 36secs	52 mins
21/1	395 tons	34089	51mins 26secs	51½mins
08/2	395 tons	34005	50mins 42secs	49½mins
12/2	400 tons	34108	52mins 50secs	51¼mins
25/2	395 tons	34012	53mins 35secs	50 mins
11/3	395 tons	34012	48mins 37secs	48½mins
12/3	400 tons	34076	52mins 09secs	51½mins
18/3	400 tons	34059	62mins 53secs	55 mins
23/3	395 tons	34005	55mins 00secs	50½mins
06/4	395 tons	34082	57mins 32secs	56½mins
09/4	400 tons	34056	59mins 05secs	59 mins
14/5	400 tons	34089	57mins 48secs	49¼mins
20/5	395 tons	34032	56mins 46secs	56¾mins
24/5	390 tons	34013	54mins 59secs	55 mins
27/5	435 tons	34056	53mins 05secs	52½mins
03/6	395 tons	34052	47mins 37secs	45½mins

Number 34076 with a signal check after Vauxhall took 8 minutes 26 seconds to Clapham Junction, reached 71 miles per hour at Weybridge and sustained 60 past Brookwood to MP31, 35 minutes 21 seconds from Waterloo. There were problems with a jammed Regulator, speed fell to 59 miles per hour at Farnborough, then with the Regulator freed reached 72 at Winchfield.

The April 6th and 9th and May 20th runs, when time was lost, appeared to be entirely the result of desultory driving characteristics, the same gentleman on the April days, when the maxima were 63 miles per hour. On the first there was a signal check before Clapham Junction and the minimum at MP31 was 55 miles per hour, on the second there were no out of course delays and with 46 minimum at Brookwood, Basingstoke was reached four minutes late. On the 20th May after 69 miles per hour at Esher, there appeared to be steaming difficulties, speed fell to 50 at MP31 and did not reach 60 until Hook.

Time was kept exactly once, on May 24th, intermediate times were: Clapham Junction, 7 minutes 29 seconds - Hampton Court Junction, 17 minutes 58 seconds, 60 miles per hour - Woking 29 minutes 33 seconds, 55 - MP31 37 minutes 33 seconds, 55 - maximum before Basingstoke 64 at Hook.

Basingstoke was reached twice in less than 50 minutes. Number 34012 on March 11th passed Hampton Court in 17 minutes 59 seconds at 68 miles per hour, reached 73 at Esher and 75 at Weybridge, and MP31 in 33 minutes 20 seconds at 64. Seventy-five miles per hour was attained at Winchfield and after Hook, the Commuters were delivered six and a half minutes early at Basingstoke. The 23.6 miles from Woking to MP47 took 19 minutes 55 seconds. The driver of No.34052 on June 3rd was definitely trying; the introduction of the new slower Timetable was only nine days away.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the 17.09 ex Waterloo in 1967

Number 34052 passed Clapham Junction in 7 minutes 4 seconds and Hampton Court Junction in 16 minutes 48 seconds at 72 miles per hour, Esher at 79, Oatlands at 75 and West Byfleet at 80 before a signal check to 48. Subsequent speeds were 48 miles per hour at Woking, 63 at MP31 and 83 at Winchfield and after Hook. Times to Woking and MP31 were 26 minutes 6 seconds and 33 minutes 3 seconds, the punters were delivered home seven and a half minutes early, 45 to 46 minutes Net. The best performance from Woking to MP31 was by No.34089 on January 31st; a rise from 63 miles per hour at Woking to 65 at Brookwood, maintained to MP31, 1,400-1,450EDHP, No. 34052 developed 1,360-1,410 average and No.34012 1,225-1,275.

Three other runs had Net times to Basingstoke inside 50 minutes. On the 5th February No.34005, checked by signals before Hampton Court Junction to 46 miles per hour reached 72 at West Byfleet, the minimum at MP31 was 64, and maximum 75 between Fleet and Winchfield. Number 34012 on February 25th passed West Byfleet in 25 minutes 22 seconds at 72 miles per hour, before a long signal check to 31 and reached 75 before Basingstoke. There were operational difficulties on May 14th with electric services delayed badly, No.34089 was stopped for signals at Vauxhall and checked to 16 miles per hour at Malden. Hampton Court Junction was passed five and a half minutes late, 23 minutes 29 seconds. It then reached 71 miles per hour at West Byfleet, passed Brookwood in 36 minutes 44 seconds before it caught up the late running 17.43. There were checks to 36 and 32 miles per hour before Farnborough was cleared in 43 minutes 50 seconds at 56 miles per hour. There followed a vigorous attempt to secure an on time arrival with 77 miles per hour attained at Hook.

Number 34056 with 435 tons after an initial check passed MP31 at 59½ miles per hour and without exceeding 64 reached Basingstoke two minutes early. The Basingstoke arrival was on time or early 62.5 percent of the time and using the five minutes late criterion as an on time arrival, 93.7 percent of the runs were to time.

The 17.09 Down was the last evening Residential to remain steam hauled, diesel locomotives took over on June 12th 1967 and electric multiple units four weeks later. Five random journeys illustrate performance during the last few months. The schedule to Woking, the first stop was 34 minutes. The schedule running time from there to Basingstoke with stops at Farnborough, Fleet, Winchfield and Hook was 40 minutes. Locomotives were rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. There were delays before Basingstoke on the first four. The Net times are in brackets.

Date	Gross weight	Loco.	Waterloo Woking	Woking Basingstoke
09/3	370 tons	34098	32mins 42secs [28½]	43mins 43secs [40¼]
28/4	395 tons	34021	27mins 23secs [27½]	42mins 46secs [38½]
02/5	400 tons	34108	30mins 44secs [27]	49mins 00secs [45¾]
01/6	395 tons	34060	33mins 06secs [27¾]	43mins 33secs [38½]
08/6	395 tons	34016	36mins 04secs [30]	40mins 51secs [41]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the 18.35 ex Salisbury 1965 to 1967

The drivers involved were all from Nine Elms depot. Knight with No.34060 kept time exactly from Woking to Hook with 51 miles per hour at MP31, 50 between Farnborough and Fleet, 50 before Winchfield, 56 after Hook 56 at MP45 before signals intervened. Chapman with No.34021 made a slow start to Brookwood, perhaps delayed by an Alton electric but then improved on schedule with 53, 52, 54 and 61 miles per hour. Passed fireman Thomb with No.34108 made the best running between Surbiton and Woking, 12.4 miles in 11 minutes 22 seconds and 75 miles per hour before West Byfleet. The stopping stages however proved difficult, Bulleid Pacific's were far from ideal for working stopping train services with 400 tons trains. The driver of No.34098 was Gale.

The 17.09 was hauled by unrebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102, one of only two left in service, on May 18th and 19th, with 385 and 350 tons. On the first day it reached Woking in 28½ minutes, with a PWR slack to 24 miles per hour at Clapham Junction and 76 maximum before West Byfleet. On the second Woking to Farnborough took 12 minutes 3 seconds with 65 miles per hour at MP31, in excess of 1,300EDHP at MP31, and 68 before the stop.

The Nine Elms crew from the 17.09 in 1967 relieved the Basingstoke crew on the 18.35 ex Salisbury. The 18.35 was not strictly a Residential, in fact judged by patronage it wasn't necessary, but it provided the crews with some fun. Personal memories of the 18.35 go back to 1965. In January Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34100 with 215 tons Gross, ran Basingstoke to Woking in 24 minutes 42 seconds with 83 miles per hour at Brookwood. Malden was passed in 14 minutes 48 seconds from the Woking restart after 80 miles per hour. The following month No.34005 ran to Woking in 24 minutes 13 seconds without exceeding 73 miles per hour.

The stakes in 1967 were higher. Driver Gale on March 8th, with Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73093, six coaches plus a van, 250 tons Gross, passed Hook at 74 miles per hour, Fleet at 82, MP31 at 76, 15 minutes 18 seconds, Brookwood at 85 and reached Woking in 21 minutes 19 seconds. The continuation to Waterloo took 29 minutes 49 seconds after PWR slacks either side of Weybridge, c.26 minutes Net, [schedules 27 and 32 minutes]. Driver Chapman, with Class 5 No.73043 on 28th April and five coaches plus a van, 215 tons Gross, passed Hook in 6 minutes 12 seconds at 76 miles per hour, and MP38 at 85. He was 47 seconds ahead at Fleet, but then eased, passed MP31 in 14 minutes 40 seconds and after a signal check reached Woking in 21 minutes 47 seconds. There was a PWR slack at Weybridge, 84 miles per hour at Esher and Waterloo reached in 26½ minutes, 24 minutes Net.

The previous evening Chapman had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 with six coaches plus a van, 245 tons Gross; a large locomotive with a small train, a situation he took advantage of. He passed Hook in 5 minutes 56 seconds at 87 miles per hour, MP37 at 100, MP36 at 101, MP31 in 13 minutes 3 seconds at 89, MP29 at 100 and reached Woking in 18 minutes 23 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, 18.35 ex Salisbury 1967

The average over the 15.0 miles from MP44 to MP29 was 93 miles per hour and over the ten from MP39 to MP29 95.8, the start to stop was 76.4 and the Woking arrival a rather surprising eight minutes early. The continuation to Waterloo was restrained with a PWR slack before West Byfleet, Local line running to Walton, 78 miles per hour at Surbiton and an arrival in 32 minutes 17 seconds from Woking.

Proceedings were not always so lively, Passed Fireman Thomb after wrestling with a 400 tons stopping train on the Down 17.09 found himself working back to Waterloo with Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No. 75068 and nine coaches, 315 tons gross via the Local line to Woking. MP31 was passed in 18 minutes after a maximum of 70 miles per hour after which there was a signal check followed by a stop for two minutes resulting in an arrival at Woking in four and three quarters minutes over schedule. The continuation to Waterloo was no better, there was a PWR slack followed by signal checks, it took nearly 12½ minutes to pass Weybridge, another five minutes lost between Woking and Waterloo.

This 18.35 ex Salisbury, together with the last Up Weymouth of the day, was definitely the “fun“ train in 1967, Railway enthusiasts usually outnumbered ordinary passengers. On June 14th unmodified West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102 attained 100 miles per hour at MP36. There were disputes over actual times, but several recorders agreed the “ton“ was attained and no rogue quarter mileposts involved. Ironic, the first recorded three-figure maximum with a Bulleid Light Pacific occurred four weeks before the demise of Southern Region steam,

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- Ref. 1 Trains Illustrated Vol XIII
Ref. 2 R.A.H.Weight was on the train as well as F.S.Bond. This may explain driver Dalling's sense of urgency. Weight noted 8 minutes 52 seconds Tonbridge Tunbridge Wells, discrepancy from Bond's timing can be explained by Weight sitting further forward in the train. However they gave 6 minutes 59 seconds [Bond] and 6 minutes 45 seconds [Weight] to New Cross and from there to Knockholt of 14 minutes 41 seconds and 15 minutes 2 seconds. These variations from two experienced recorders highlight the human error likely in train timing and one reason why quoting horse powers to 5 in 1,000 is unrealistic.
- Ref 3 Railway Magazine Vol. 99 p. 539-45
Ref 4 Railway World Vol. XIX p. 385-92
Ref 5 Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society Vol. XXXIX.

Chapter: 29 INTER REGIONAL SERVICES

The through services from the South and South East of England to other parts of the country were always operationally interesting. Prior to the 1948 Nationalisation Great Western and London Midland and Scottish carriage stock worked through to the Southern and the converse. There were regular through GW locomotive workings to various Southern destinations and less commonly LMS ones. Southern Railway locomotives worked daily to Oxford, sometimes further north and regularly to Bristol. Cross country train schedules were invariably generous, although at times trains were heavy, some of the Southern routes such as Reading to Redhill and Brighton to Eastborne were steeply graded and the locomotives used comparatively small. On the Central Section they provided steam hauled trains over electrified routes.

The regular weekday trains, some in the summer months only, ran from: Bournemouth to Birkenhead via Reading and Oxford - Bournemouth to Newcastle via Oxford - Hastings, Eastborne and Brighton to Birkenhead via Redhill and Reading, this combined with another train from Margate, Canterbury and Dover at Redhill - Brighton to Cardiff via Salisbury [plus Brighton to Bournemouth and Plymouth, these trains whilst not crossing Regional boundaries had operational similarities to the Cardiff service. Later on in the life of the Nationalised Railway the Plymouth service due to boundary changes, became an Inter-regional service] – Portsmouth to Bristol and Cardiff [the Brighton to Cardiff and Plymouth trains also included through coaches to and from Portsmouth]. Trains were often run in duplicate, or more, on summer Saturdays, the various portions e.g. Margate to Birkenhead and Hastings to Birkenhead ran as separate trains, over all or part of the route.

The least number of inter-regional workings occurred on the Chatham and Kent Coast routes. The only scheduled service in 1949 [from Sheffield to Ramsgate on a Friday night returning from Ramsgate midday Saturday] operated from the last Friday in May to the last in September. The southbound train left Sheffield at 23.45, Kensington Olympia at 04.24 [Saturday morning], then non stop to Whitstable, arrival 06.00, schedule Herne Hill pass to Whitstable a sedate 74 minutes, and after six further stops reached Ramsgate at 06.56. The northbound train left Ramsgate at 12.10, after six stops Whitstable at 13.05, passed Herne Hill at 14.19 and reached Kensington Olympia at 14.37. On June 20th 1953, Longsight based Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70020, on loan to the Southern Region as a replacement for Bulleid light Pacific's., did the honours There were regular excursions from destinations North of London to the various Kent Coast resorts.

The weekdays Birkenhead to Margate traversed the former South Eastern route east of Tonbridge. The Southbound train left Birkenhead at 07.40 and Reading General at 14.38. It reversed and divided at Redhill, one portion for Brighton, Eastborne and Hastings the other to Ramsgate and Margate.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Redhill to Margate, 1949-59

The Margate section left Redhill at 14.38, the schedule to Tonbridge 19.9 miles the next stop was 28 minutes and from there to Ashford, 26.6 miles, 30 minutes. The train divided again at Ashford, one part ran to Shorncliffe and then stopped at all stations to Ramsgate via Dover and Deal, the other with stops at Canterbury West and Minster reached Ramsgate at 16.35 [32 minutes ahead] and Margate at 16.59.

The northbound train left Ramsgate in two parts; the first at 08.56 ran via Deal and Dover and reached Ashford at 10.30, the second at 09.35 [09.18 ex Margate] with the same stops as southbound, reached Ashford at 10.25. The combined train left Ashford at 10.36 and ran to Redhill in 60 minutes including a three minutes stop at Tonbridge. On summer Saturdays [June 4th to September 18th] the 07.40 ex Birkenhead ran to Ramsgate via Dover and Deal, the 10.35 ex Birmingham ran to Margate via Canterbury West and Minster balanced by the 09.10 ex Margate. The same arrangements as in 1949 remained in force with minor adjustments until the end of steam traction.

The Inter-Regional trains, prone to delays on weekdays, suffered even more on summer Saturdays. Observations on a typical summer Saturday made at Ashford in 1953: 10.20 Birmingham Snow Hill to Margate, 11 minutes late, nine coaches, Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30917 - 09.57 relief ex Wolverhampton, seven coaches, E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31067, 11 minutes late - 07.35 ex Birkenhead, 12 coaches, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34076, 24 minutes late, the front five coaches continued to Margate via Canterbury behind No.34076, the rest via Dover and Deal, behind LM Class 2-6-4 tank No.42094 - northbound 13.45 Margate to Leicester, nine coaches, U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31904 ran via Canterbury West, Ashford and Maidstone East.

The weekdays Birkenhead train east of Redhill, after detachment of the Sussex Coast portion, was a light and easy task for the 4-6-2 often rostered to the working. On the 25th April 1956 Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34078 left Redhill with seven coaches and passed Godstone [5.6 miles], in 9 minutes 39 seconds at 69 miles per hour, maintained on the favourable grades, and Lyghe Halt [17.2 miles] in 19 minutes 52 seconds. Tonbridge was reached after a signal stop in 27 minutes 18 seconds, 24 minutes Net. The 31 minutes schedule to Ashford was kept with four seconds to spare, maximum was only 65 miles per hour, Staplehurst, 12.4 miles was passed in 13 minutes 56 seconds before a PWR slack at Headcorn to 10. The summer Saturday loads, 11 or 12 coaches, were still well within Schools Class 4-4-0 capacity let alone the 4-6-2's. Schools No.30913 handled 13 coaches satisfactorily between Redhill and Margate via Canterbury West on August 28th 1951. On the second Saturday in August 1958 Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 was on time at Ashford with 12 coaches on the 10.20 ex Birmingham, it attained 72-73 miles per hour between Ashford and Canterbury and after a signal stop reached Ramsgate at 16.25, eight minutes early against the Public timetable. [Ref.1].

Diesel locomotives hauled the train between Redhill and Margate from the commencement of the 1959 summer service.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, inter Regional trains to Hastings, 1949

The former South Eastern Railway Tunbridge Wells to Hastings line's restricted loading gauge prohibited the use of Western or London Midland stock. The scheduled weekday "Birkenhead" ran from Redhill to Hastings via the former London Brighton and South Coast route whilst some through excursions from North London ran via Ashford and Rye. On the 14th May 1950 for instance a Watford to Hastings excursion, 330 tons, ran that way after Maidstone East with U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31905 from Kensington Olympia, 180 miles there and back by this circuitous route. On the return, H Class 0-4-4 Tank No.31328 banked the train up the 1/60 from Hastings to Ore. There were regular excursions in the early fifties from the LM Region; two sets were kept at Watford in 1951 solely for the service to the South and Essex Coasts. There was normally at least one train a day during the summer holiday period, motive power varied: LM Class 5 4-6-0's worked through to Brighton - Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's from Kensington to the Kent Coast - on June 27th H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32425 ran to Hastings from Kensington via Haywards Heath and Polegate. The Kent Coast trains usually ran via the Chatham route but if via Ashford they often took the steeply graded Maidstone East line. In 1950 U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31907 with ten coaches scheduled to run non stop from Kensington to Ramsgate via Maidstone East, Ashford and Canterbury West, a distance of 92½ miles, in practice as per the W.T.T. stopped at Maidstone "to take water and change footplate crews". [The thought of changing crews without stopping amuses].

The through train from Birkenhead to the Sussex and Kent coasts; already referred to with respect to the working east of Redhill was reinstated after the War on September 27th 1948. Locomotives on the first day northbound were: L Class 4-4-0 No.1766, Hastings to Eastborne - I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank No.32083, Eastborne to Brighton where the train reversed, [No.32083 worked the corresponding southbound train in the afternoon] - Schools Class 4-4-0 No.922, Brighton to Redhill, [also worked the southbound train] - King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.798 hauled the Kent Coast portion to Redhill - a School's worked the Margate to Ashford via Canterbury sector. The combined train was taken from Redhill to Reading by U1 Class 2-6-0 No.1895, the southbound working, eight coaches, from Reading to Redhill by U1 No.31891. The weekdays train left Birkenhead at 07.40, the Brighton portion Redhill at 14.45, schedule 40 minutes, after reversal 38 minutes to Eastborne, Hastings reached after another reversal at 16.53. It ran seven minutes later on Fridays and Saturdays; these schedules were those in operation during 1949.

On summer Saturdays the 10.15 ex Birmingham left Redhill at 14.07, 41 minutes to Brighton and 43 minutes on to Eastborne. A portion detached from the 10.35 ex Birmingham at Redhill ran to Eastborne via Plumpton non stop in 65 minutes and reached Hastings at 16.03. The 11.40 ex Birmingham and the 12.03 ex Leicester ran via Willesden and Kensington, the Birmingham left Clapham Junction at 14.12, stopped at East Croydon, ran to Brighton the next stop in 55 minutes, to Eastborne in 38 minutes and finally reached Hastings at 16.52. The Leicester took five minutes more from East Croydon to Brighton and one minute more to Eastborne and reached Hastings at 18.25.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, inter Regional trains to Hastings 1949-61

There were departures from Hastings on 1949 summer Saturdays to Birkenhead at 09.25, to Birmingham at 10.45, to Leicester at 10.51 and ex Eastborne at 09.42 for Birmingham [this combined with the 09.10 ex Margate at Redhill]. The fastest train on the Brighton Main Line was the Leicester, Brighton to East Croydon in 50 minutes. Schedules between Eastborne and Brighton varied from 37 to 40 minutes, there were some changes in 1950, in an apparent attempt to improve punctuality.

There were six trains on a summer Saturday in 1954, in addition to the "Birkenhead", between Eastborne and the North. Two of these were return workings of the Friday night southbound trains ex Manchester London Road, 23.40 and ex Sheffield, 23.55. These left Clapham Junction at 04.40 and 04.58 and reached Eastborne at 06.32 and 06.54, the Manchester train continued to Hastings. The other southbound trains were the: 07.28 ex Wolverhampton, 10.40 ex Birmingham, 11.45 ex Walsall and 12.35 ex Leicester. Typical schedules were 67 and 71 minutes Clapham Junction to Brighton, 60 minutes East Croydon to Brighton and 38 to 41 minutes Brighton to Eastborne. Departures from Hastings were at 08.48, 10.20, 10.45, 10.51, 12.18 and 12.30 to Wolverhampton, Sheffield, Walsall, Leicester, Birmingham and Manchester. The first third and fifth ran directly from Hastings to Brighton with an Eastborne portion attached at Polegate, the other three ran into Eastborne and out.

In 1961 there were trains at: 22.25 Friday Manchester Piccadilly to Hastings - 23.35 Sheffield Victoria to Hastings - 07.32 Saturday Wolverhampton to Hastings - 10.47 Walsall to Hastings - 12.35 Leicester to Hastings, all via Kensington, Brighton and Eastborne. The 10.45 ex Birmingham Snow Hill ran via Reading, Redhill, Brighton and Eastborne. Hastings departures were within a few minutes of those in 1954 i.e. 08.48, 10.14, 10.45, 10.53, 12.14 and 12.32.

Locomotive performance on the Brighton Main Line was seldom if ever exciting, schedules were slow, to secure a path between the intensive suburban service near to London and the equally difficult two track section south of Balcombe Tunnel Box. The through excursions from North of London were regularly hauled by Maunsell 2-6-0's, particularly the three cylinder U1's. In 1949 for instance U1 No.31910 hauled a 300 ton Harpenden to Brighton excursion from Brent Junction No.2 Box to Brighton and return. U1 No.31906 during August took 11 coaches from Canonbury to Brighton. An unusual locomotive on a Watford to Brighton excursion on the 3rd December was Hughes Class LMS 2-6-0 No.42812 and on Christmas Eve a B4X Class 4-4-0 No.2050 hauled a Birmingham to St. Leonards relief between Redhill and Brighton. Number 31910 ran Brighton to East Croydon in 53 minutes before a routing via Tulse Hill, Herne Hill and Longhedge Junction. A Q Class 0-6-0 No.30537 replaced the U1 at Clapham Junction. Another U1, No.31890 with a Hastings to Birmingham train left Brighton seven minutes late and lost more time to East Croydon with ten coaches through signal checks. N Class 2-6-0 No.31811 hauled the following eight coach Leicester service.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the Brighton Main Line, 1950-52

The following year the Saturday 12.15 from Brighton [10.45 ex Hastings] to Birmingham, rostered for a West Country Class 4-6-2, with a U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31894 gained five minutes of a late start between Brighton and Willesden with 350 tons. It reached East Croydon in 50½ minutes [schedule 54½ minutes] 48½ minutes Net, after a signal check and Local Line from Coulsdon North, 60-61 miles per hour on the favourable sections, maximum 65 and afterwards 60 before Clapham Junction. The Leicester train, nine coaches with H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32424, left Brighton 12 minutes later, two minutes behind the 60 minutes non stop Victoria electric, which passed the 12.15 between Coulsdon North and Windmill Junction.

London Midland Region Stanier Class 5 4-6-0's visited Brighton regularly in 1950, particularly on the Sunday excursion path, [in the May Timetable arrival Brighton, 13.33, departure 19.27]. The first two Sundays in May, Nos.44833 and 45025, on the third the excursion ran to Eastborne with No.44833. Eastern Region excursions were hauled by Southern Region locomotives from New Cross Gate, often a U1 Class 2-6-0 although on August 12th L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31753 had eight coaches on an Enfield to Brighton. The 12.30 Hastings to Manchester between Brighton and Willesden on August 25th had Q1 Class 0-6-0 No.33037. The through Birkenhead, like many inter-Regional trains was suspended temporarily from January 14th 1951, the previous day the northbound train left Brighton behind U1 Class 2-6-0 No. 31905.

Several Brighton Willesden return rosters were allocated to Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's in 1952 but Brighton apparently had even more difficulty than other depots in keeping its Pacific's in service.

H2 Class 4-4-2's appeared regularly on the; 08.48 ex Hastings to Wolverhampton from Brighton - 11.40 ex Birmingham return - northbound and southbound Leicester trains. Number.32424 was observed during the summer with ten coaches between Brighton and Redhill. Atlantic performance was variable, in August No.32426 with ten coaches on the 12.40 ex Eastborne to Birmingham via Plumpton and Redhill started competently from Polegate with Glynde passed in 12 minutes 10 seconds at 64 miles per hour, before persistent signal checks. Number 32424, with ten Eastern Region coaches struggled on a 65 minutes non stop schedule from Polegate to East Croydon, maximum at Horley was only 56 miles per hour, minimum at Quarry 46. Number.32422 on June 7th with 300 tons performed better, it regained five minutes of a seven minutes late start between Redhill and Brighton including a signal stop before Earlswood and check before Brighton. Speeds were 66 miles per hour at Horley and after a check to 55 at Wivelsfield, 52 minimum at Clayton, 825-875EDHP, 64 maximum before Preston Park.

The Brighton built London Midland Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's also appeared. On July 11th No.42082 with 11 coaches, 375 tons Gross, ran Brighton to Redhill in 44¾ minutes [schedule 39 minutes] producing "plenty of smoke". Speeds were 46 miles per hour at Clayton tunnel, Haywards Heath passed in 18 minutes 10 seconds, 45 at Balcombe and only 54 at Three Bridges.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, intense inter Regional traffic in 1952

Two weeks later Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80011 with ten coaches on the 11.40 Birmingham to Eastborne left East Croydon almost an hour late. After a signal check to 25 miles per hour at Earlswood speeds were; 64 at Horley, 50 at Balcombe Tunnel and 70 before a water stop at Haywards Heath. The Net time to Lewes [13.2 miles] was 16 minutes Net, with 72 miles per hour at Cooksbridge and the actual to Eastborne 21 minutes 20 seconds with 66 maximum at Berwick and a signal check at Glynde. [Ref.2], The Standard Class 4 Tank's invariably performed better the LMS ones, not explicable by design differences, probably footplate crew idiosyncrasies.

The first recorded working of an Eastern Region locomotive on the Southern occurred on June 15th, B1 Class 4-6-0 No.61139 hauled 11 coaches from Canonbury to Eastborne, six days later No.61138 was on a similar working.

The through traffic from the London Midland and Western Regions in 1952 was the most intense since before the War. Some trains loaded heavily, on August 2nd a Stoke to Brighton service had 15 coaches, worked from Willesden to Brighton by West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34039 with an N Class 2-6-0 No.31813 as pilot. All five members of the H2 Class 4-4-2 were noted at Willesden during the August Bank Holiday weekend, the previous weekend another elderly locomotive, LMS Compound 4-4-0 No.41167 hauled a ten coach excursion from Northampton through to Brighton. Excursions could at times, perhaps as befits their purpose, provide very gentle perambulations. A U1 Class 2-6-0 on a Hitchin to Eastborne excursion left Kensington at mid-day, passed Clapham Junction 15 minutes later, stopped to take water at East Croydon at half past twelve for five minutes, passed Lewes in 55 minutes from the restart and reached Eastborne in 78 minutes.

The easy schedules allowed the smaller locomotives to maintain time although their slow acceleration probably delayed the "electric's". A D or E Class 4-4-0 took the weekdays Hastings portion of the Birkenhead, usually four coaches, from Brighton to Redhill and return. The locomotive, from Tonbridge depot, worked the early morning Sevenoaks to Brighton train, ran to Redhill and back and returned home on the 21.30 Brighton to Tonbridge. They kept time, between Redhill and Brighton easily with the light loads and, with ten coaches on Saturdays, on July 4th No.31591 had 11 coaches.

The 11.40 ex Birmingham to Brighton on the same day had London Midland Class 5 4-6-0 No.45021 throughout, a precursor of through working from Manchester to Brighton. Commencing the following Friday evening a Manchester Longsight Class 5 took the Manchester to Hastings as far as Brighton and returned north with the Saturday mid-day departure. An ex LMS Jubilee Class 4-6-0 No.45595 no doubt surprised the relieving Southern crew at Mitre Bridge when it appeared on the duty on August 8th.

Saturday August 1st 1953 was a particularly busy day on the Central Section; there were 13 ordinary or relief trains between Sussex and the London Midland or Western Regions.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Brighton Main Line inter Regional practice, 1953-57

Ten trains were due to arrive at Brighton but in practice two were cancelled, the London Midland and Western Regions both ran out of carriage stock. Locomotives were also in short supply; the 07.28 Wolverhampton to Hastings hauled from Kensington by a pair of Q1 Class 0-6-0's Nos.33011 and 33023. The 10.40 ex Birmingham, 11 coaches had E Class 4-4-0 No.31315. A failed L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31758 was replaced at Three Bridges on the 09.00 Eastborne to Birmingham by K Class 2-6-0 No.32347 and another K No.32353 hauled the 12.40 from Brighton, a replacement for H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32425 stopped on the depot.

The 4-4-2's, although regularly on inter-Regional trains, were considered poor performers, perhaps they missed the ministrations of Newhaven depot staff.

The Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's frequently hauled Excursions in 1954, although three successive Brighton arrivals on Whit Sunday featured N Class 2-6-0's, all numbered in the 1400 series. A D Class 4-4-0 No.31737, with ten coaches on the northbound Birkenhead ran from Brighton to Redhill in 46 minutes with two minutes lost for a signal check [schedule 44 minutes]. However on the two days prior to Christmas the authorities decided that 11 coaches were too much for a Tonbridge D and H2 Class 4-4-2's Nos.32422 and 32424 were employed.

The following year the most surprising development was the use of an E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank on the Hastings portion of the Birkenhead between Brighton and Redhill. On the 26th October 1955 No.32508, built 1900 worked to Redhill and back and the following day No.32561, built 1901 appeared, maintaining schedule, the maximum load was five coaches. Locomotives on December 23rd, 24th and 28th with 11 coaches were H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32421 and N Class 2-6-0's Nos.31812 and 31819.

The H2 Class 4-4-2's, with the exception of No. 32424 were nearing the end of their useful life in 1956. R.A.H.Weight travelled behind No.32424 on the 4TH August with a ten coach relief, it lost a little time between Polegate and East Croydon. A novel locomotive on the northbound Birkenhead between Brighton and Redhill earlier in the year was Urie King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30753 after receiving attention at Brighton Works. The first through working from Manchester that year was on June 30th with LM Class 5 4-6-0 No.45441.

St. Leonards based Schools Class 4-4-0's regularly appeared between Eastborne and Kensington in 1957, minimising the use of the K Class 2-6-0's. The author remembers seeing School's between East Croydon and Purley and thinking this was how Eastborne expresses must have looked twenty-five years previously. The Manchester to Brighton turn was taken every weekend that year by LM Class 5 4-6-0 No.44937. The number of weekend excursions was particularly heavy, so much so that on August 18th a Romford to Eastborne train of eight coaches returned via the Heathfield route, the locomotive Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34073. The clientele hopefully enjoyed the scenery and accepted the slow journey home philosophically.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Brighton Main Line inter Regional practice, 1958-1960

The through excursions from the Midland Main line [Leagrave and Leicester for example] in 1958 were hauled to the Sussex Coast resorts by Standard Class 5 4-6-0's which unlike the LM Class 5's were permitted to work between Herne Hill and Tulse Hill, a detail often overlooked previously. The Glasgow to Eastborne Car Sleeper service commenced running May 30th with a Stewarts Lane based Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 rostered from Mitre Bridge to Eastborne, duty No.505, on the first day No.34066. The Clapham Junction to Eastborne schedule was 90 minutes with a stop for taking water at Three Bridges of three minutes. In 1961 the train left Clapham Junction at 06.05, stopped at Three Bridges from 06.41½ to 06.44½ on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Mondays it left Clapham Junction seven minutes later and stopped at Three Bridges from 06.49 to 06.53

Although there were less inter-Regional trains from Brighton in 1959 than in the previous year, after the withdrawal of the 4-4-2's there were at times locomotive shortages. Q1 Class 0-6-0's were occasionally used between Brighton and Redhill on the Birkenhead and on 15th August a D1 Class 4-4-0, eminently suitable but unusual, hauled nine coaches from Brighton to Kensington and reportedly produced a "lively performance". The favourite locomotive on the through working from Manchester that year was LM Class 5 4-6-0 No.45426. Although the Glasgow Car Sleeper was rostered for a 4-6-2 the only time one actually appeared was on September 14th, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34067. Fifteen long distance trains were noted during a four hours period on the Brighton Main Line on August 8th, those between West London and the Sussex Coast hauled by: one West Country Class 4-6-2 - three Schools Class 4-4-0's - one LM and two Standard Class 5 4-6-0's - three N Class, three U1 Class and one K Class 2-6-0's. There was one N and one LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank on the Brighton to Redhill workings.

The through Manchester to Brighton working ceased in 1960. The train was diverted via the ex Great Central route with a Stewarts Lane locomotive between Kensington and Brighton. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30924 from Brighton appeared on July 30th, proceeded by a Standard Class 2-6-4 Tank No.80085 with 11 coaches on a Wolverhampton via Redhill and Reading service. Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's hauled the Glasgow to Eastborne Car Sleeper, except 4th and 8th July when Standard Class 4 4-6-0's Nos.75074 and 75069 were used. [Stewarts Lane had no allocation of Class 5 4-6-0's, if no Class 7 4-6-2 was available it resorted to a Class 4]. Number 75074 on the 16th July headed the Sheffield to Brighton from Kensington onwards but from the middle of August a Schools' was employed. Despite the carriage stock shortage 15 inter Regional trains ran to South Coast Resorts on July 23rd and there were 16 departures two weeks later. K Class 2-6-0's, unlike in 1959, were seldom used, No.32347 worked Eastborne to Willesden on July 30th and returned south the following day without any problems reported, on the 6th August however No.32343 expired on the 12.32 Hastings to Manchester at Three Bridges after losing 29 minutes. The K Class 2-6-0's were mainly replaced by U1 Class 2-6-0's, Schools Class 4-4-0's based at Brighton and Standard Class 4 4-6-0's from Three Bridges.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, last years of Central Section steam, 1961-64

A LM Jubilee Class 4-6-0 No.45650 worked through to Brighton with an excursion from Leicester on May 21st 1961 and was promptly impounded. When used eight years previous, the Jubilee returned north without comment, this time it was held until June 3rd. The inter Regional services that Summer were mainly hauled by Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's or Maunsell 2-6-0's, the second phase of the Kent Coast electrification had released sufficient locomotives to avoid the use of the K Class 2-6-0's. The final running down of the inter-Regional trains had begun by 1962; the Leicester to Hastings service was one such casualty. The Glasgow to Eastborne Car Sleeper continued to be 4-6-2 hauled with Rebuilt Nos.34089 and 34100 regular performers, Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30929 appeared on August 11th. The next year some trains were diesel hauled, the rest by 4-6-2's or 2-6-0's except for the Glasgow to Eastborne, Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75068 performed for much of the summer. There were exceptions, on August 12th for instance a Q Class 0-6-0 No.30535 struggled to Redhill from Eastborne with a relief to the 12.14 Hastings to Birmingham.

The Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's could easily maintain the schedules. J.R.Skinner, who worked at Redhill station, noted the 12.14 ex Hastings with Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34057 comfortably gain one and three quarters minutes on the 39 minutes schedule from Brighton to Redhill, 37 minutes 11 seconds, with 350 tons. Clayton tunnel was passed in 8 minutes 42 seconds following which speed was held in the mid fifties on the favourable stretch to Haywards Heath, presumably adverse signals due to a closely preceding train. Haywards Heath was passed one minute late, 18 minutes 29 seconds, 55 miles per hour maintained up to Balcombe tunnel, Three Bridges in 27 minutes 20 seconds, ten seconds early and Earlswood in 34 minutes 52 seconds after 80 maximum and a signal check.

Steam working on the Brighton Main Line in 1964 was rare, the Glasgow and Newcastle Car Sleepers commenced on June 4th with LM Class 5 4-6-0's the normal motive power, although Standard Class 5 and Jubilee Class 4-6-0's appeared on the Glasgow train, Nos.45617 and 45672 were noted. A West Country Class 4-6-2 worked the Friday night Manchester to Brighton from Kensington returning on the 11.25 Eastborne to Walsall. One consequence of reduced use of steam was the absence of pilot or banking locomotives. LM Class 5 4-6-0 worked an 11 coach excursion from Dalston Junction to Rye and ascended the 1/60 from Hastings to Ore on its own in pouring rain. From July locomotives working to Newhaven or Brighton had to travel to Redhill for servicing, a return journey of 60 miles. Steam on the inter Regional services to Brighton, Eastborne and Hastings finished 32 years after electrification to Brighton and 29 after it was extended to Eastborne and Hastings, the final irony, most of the last steam rosters were for ex LMS locomotives.

The Hastings to Brighton section, particularly from Polegate to Brighton required a higher level of locomotive performance on the inter-Regional trains than the Brighton Main Line. Westbound, the 1/88 gradient up to Falmer after the enforced slow passage of Lewes station provided a challenge,

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Brighton to Hastings, 1948-50

Summer Saturdays loads approached 400 tons and schedules were tighter than on the Brighton Main Line, similar to pre electrification Eastborne expresses, local traffic was less intense. Immediately post Nationalisation ex LB&SC Railway locomotives often did the honours, indeed at the end of 1948 four I1X Class 4-4-2 Tank's were returned to service from store at Eastborne depot. Six days later No.2596 hauled the "Birkenhead" between Eastborne and Brighton and on at least five other occasions, No's.2008 and 2009 also appeared on the duty. The restriction on Schools Class 4-4-0's over the Willingdon curve was lifted in 1949 resulting in their use on two or three of St. Leonards depot's duties to Eastborne on summer Saturdays and at least one to Brighton. They usually worked the Birmingham and Leicester trains, the 10.35 ex Birmingham occasionally a K Class 2-6-0 from Redhill to Eastborne via Plumpton sometimes had a Bricklayers Arms based Schools.

Trains, destined for the Western Region in 1949 on summer Saturdays, were heavier than before the War, the 09.42 and 10.05 from Eastborne loaded to 11 coaches. The 10.05 had an I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank until July 10th when No.32085 required banking assistance from Lewes to Falmer, after this a K Class 2-6-0 from Three Bridges was used. The 09.42 was allowed 40 minutes for the 23.9 miles from Eastborne to Brighton, the 10.05 three minutes less. The K's appeared to run well on these duties, No.32348 with a 400 tons relief to Sheffield on July 30th reportedly performed credibly.

London Midland Region trains were lighter. The 10.45 ex Hastings one Saturday with ten coaches had Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30903 to Eastborne and L Class 4-4-0 No.31769 to Brighton. The L [which had reached Eastborne from Hastings earlier that morning with the Birkenhead train] laboured up to Falmer. The 10.51 ex Hastings to Leicester, eight coaches, had Schools' Class 4-4-0 No.30907 to Eastborne and K Class 2-6-0 No.32348 to Brighton. [Schedules from Eastborne to Brighton were 37 and 42 minutes].

Through trains also loaded heavily over the Christmas period. A J Class 4-6-2 tank on December 23rd hauled 11 coaches satisfactorily from Eastborne to Brighton on the 10.05 and on Christmas Eve ran well with an eight coach relief from Birmingham in the opposite direction. The 10.05 on December 28th again 11 coaches had an I3 Class 4-4-2, which primed badly before Lewes and took K Class 2-6-0 No.32347 as a banker to Brighton.

The 10.05 from Eastborne on 1950 summer Saturdays was a Tunbridge Wells West duty which reintroduced the previously disgraced I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank's. Number 32088 took 11 coaches on August 4th and on the Bank Holiday No.32086 with a similar load coped, a Q Class 0-6-0 also with 360 tons used the following day, did not climb to Falmer as well. On the Bank Holiday: 10.45 to Birmingham consisting of 11 coaches, ten of LM origin, one of Western, 340 tons Gross, had an I3 to Eastborne - the 10.51 to Leicester, nine coaches, eight Southern, one Western, a Q1 Class 0-6-0 - the 11.10 Town holiday special to Stoke, ten coaches, a K Class 2-6-0 - the 12.18 direct to Brighton, [Eastborne portion added at Polegate] L Class 4-4-0.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Brighton to Eastborne 1950-58

The 10.45, with a LM Class 2-6-4 tank after Eastborne, reached 60 miles per hour at Glynde and fell to 22 on Falmer bank, higher than R.A.H.Weight had often recorded with Maunsell and K Class 2-6-0's and L Class 4-4-0's. The Leicester train from Eastborne to Brighton had J Class 4-6-2 tank No.32325.

The Birkenhead service, like other inter-Regional's, was suspended in 1951 and on its reinstatement new motive power appeared more frequently. On June 23rd, Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80010 worked from Eastborne to Brighton and LM 2-6-4 Tank No.42092 kept time from Polegate to Brighton with 11 coaches on the Hastings to Manchester. The following Saturday however the 12.18 ex Hastings had an I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank No.32028, 11 coaches, 380 tons Gross from Polegate. It reached 42 miles per hour at Berwick, 56 at Glynde, fell from 21 to 17 on the 1/88 to Falmer and touched 50 at Kemp Town Junction. The overall time from Polegate to Brighton, 19.7 miles, was 36 minutes 40 seconds [schedule 31 minutes], this was by way of a valedictory, and No.32028 was withdrawn from service in September 1951.

The following year, the weekdays Birkenhead commenced on June 2nd, before this Fridays and Saturdays only. St Leonards Schools Class 4-4-0's worked through from Hastings to Brighton on the 08.48 to Wolverhampton and the 12.18 to Birmingham. A K Class 2-6-0 was rostered between Brighton and Eastborne on the southbound Leicester. A variety of motive power hauled the relief trains, on June 7th a relief "Birkenhead" from Brighton to Eastborne had L Class 4-4-0 No.31769 and to Hastings a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank. The following year Q1 Class 0-6-0's appeared regularly, they were available on summer Saturdays when freight traffic was minimal and were in many ways ideal, providing footplate crews were prepared to endure the vigorous movement in the cab when travelling in excess of 60 miles per hour.

A surprising locomotive between Eastborne and Brighton with 11 coach 1955 Christmas trains was LM Class 2 2-6-2 tank No.41319, on the 23rd and 28th December when it almost maintained schedule. The performance of Standard Class 4 2-6-4 tank No.80010 on the 24th was adjudged no better.

The decommissioning of the Hastings turntable prior to the summer of 1957, restricted the use of any locomotive into Hastings larger than a Schools Class 4-4-0 or Maunsell 2-6-0 [the St. Leonards table was only 50 feet in diameter]. The Q1 Class 0-6-0's had become frequent performers by 1958 but on February 18th the weekday Birkenhead left Hastings with C2X Class 0-6-0 No.32449. The weekday Brighton to Eastborne stage at this time was regularly an E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank with a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2 in the opposite direction. The 4-6-2 duty briefly in the summer of 1959 included: 03.27 London Bridge Brighton via the Main Line - 13.55 Brighton to Victoria via Eridge -18.10 return. One August weekday the Birkenhead, four coaches, one large van and two small vans had: N Class 2-6-0 No.31401 to Eastborne - West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34099 to Brighton - D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31487 to Redhill - Standard Class 4 2-6-0 to Reading, after addition of the Kent Portion, 11 coaches in total.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Eastborne to Brighton performance, 1959-64

The last 1959 Summer "Birkenhead" to Hastings, October 31st involved: standard Class 4 2-6-0 Reading to Redhill - LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank to Brighton - E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank No.32512 to Eastborne - N Class 2-6-0, rebuilt with modified steam pipes etc. to Hastings. [The Margate portion was diesel hauled from Redhill]. E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank's also hauled it in October 1960 between Brighton and Eastborne, in 1961 motive power between Brighton and Hastings was mainly Q1 and Q Class 0-6-0's, K, N, N1, U and U1 Class 2-6-0's and rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's with Schools Class 4-4-0's and 2-6-4 Tank's occasionally. The last southbound Wolverhampton, of the year, [Birkenhead was a destination of the past]: Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30924 Reading to Redhill with 13 coaches - N Class 2-6-0 No.31828 four coaches to Brighton - Q Class 0-6-0 No.30535 to Eastborne - UI Class 2-6-0 No.31891 to Hastings. The Q reached 62 miles per hour at Berwick. An unusual working in 1962 was a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 twice, Brighton to Eastborne and return.

Although larger locomotives were available, the Timetable between Hastings and Brighton [as with other Southern Region sections] remained unchanged.

The E4 Class 0-6-2 Tank's naturally attracted attention; the light trains were in fact within their capacity despite the small diameter driving wheels, the reason the E5 Class were introduced six decades previously! On the last day of operation in 1959 No.32512 with four coaches following an initial signal stop after leaving Brighton, reached 38 miles per hour on the 1/259 before further signal checks led to a reduction to 28. Maxima afterwards were 58 miles per hour before Lewes and again at Berwick, the Brighton to Eastborne time was 37 minutes Net, [schedule 39 minutes]. The following year No.32580 with five coaches was again stopped after Brighton following which comparative speeds were 26, 52 and 50 miles per hour, 44 minutes overall to Eastborne.

A few years previous R.A.H.Weight timed Driver Robinson twice westbound with Schools Class 4-4-0's, Nos.30900 and 30909 with 365 and 370 tons. Number 30900 starting from Polegate, passed Berwick in 6 minutes 52 seconds at 58 miles per hour, reached 69 at Glynde before signals at Southerham Junction, passed Lewes two minutes late, 17 minutes exactly, attained 36 miles per hour on the 1/88 and passed Kemp Town in 26 minutes 40 seconds [No.30909 took 27 minutes 6 seconds] and following a signal check reached Brighton in 28½ minutes Net. [Schedule 28 minutes to Kemp Town Junction, 31 to Brighton] [Ref.3]. A personal experience in 1963 with Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80032 with ten coaches, 360 tons on the 12.20 ex Hastings offers a comparison. Times and speeds starting from Polegate were, Berwick 7 minutes 15 seconds at 53 miles per hour, 64 at Glynde, Lewes 16 minutes 35 seconds walking pace after signals, 26½ at MP7 and 27¼ at the summit, Kemp Town Junction 30 minutes 8 seconds at 57 and Brighton in 32 minutes 39 seconds, 31 minutes Net. An N Class 2-6-0 No.31411 with 330 tons on a special from a start at Pevensey passed Polegate in 7 minutes 53 seconds at 41 miles per hour, increased to 58 before falling to 46 at Berwick. Lewes was passed at walking pace and on the 1/88 23 miles per hour was reached at MP7 and 24¼ at the summit.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Redhill to Reading 1949-54

Number 31411 reached Brighton in 18¼ minutes from Lewes. Number 80032 had left Hastings with only four coaches, was checked badly by signals and then stopped after Cooden Beach. It then reached 66 miles per hour at Pevensey and 71 before adverse signals approaching Polegate.

An assessment of power outputs on the 1/88 highlights the quality of Driver Robinson's effort with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30900: I3 Class 4-4-2 Tank No.32028 in 1951 with 380 tons developed 570-620 EDHP [In the original trails of the Superheated I3's the maximum IHP recorded was slightly over 1,000 at 40 miles per hour.] - LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42096 with 340 tons at 22, 720-770 - N Class 2-6-0 No.31411 with 330 tons at 24¼, 800-850 - Standard Class 4 2-6-4 tank No.80032 with 360 tons at 27¼, 960-1,010 - No.30900 at 36, 1,360-1,410. Number 30900, probably with full Regulator and 45-50 percent cut off, developed 49 EDHP per square foot of fire grate area. The fastest speed R.A.H.Weight noted at the summit was 40 miles per hour with a West Country Class 4-6-2 and only 200 tons, 1,050-1,100 EDHP.

Whereas motive power on the "Birkenhead" between Brighton and Eastborne varied, Redhill to Reading was for many years a Maunsell 2-6-0 preserve [they first hauled the train in the 1920's in their Tank engine form]. Variety was provided by former Great Western Railway locomotives on summer Saturdays. A 43xx Class 2-6-0 in 1949 was rostered for the 12.54 from Reading General [10.35 ex Birmingham], which was tightly timed to Redhill, 26 minutes to North Camp, 14 minutes to Guildford and 30 minutes to Redhill. A 43xx worked the 15.20 from Redhill [schedule, Guildford 38 minutes and to the next stop Reading 43 minutes]. The following year there were five Saturday return duties from Reading [July 2nd to September 10th] for Western Region locomotives to Redhill. These included the 10.20 and 10.40 ex Birmingham to Margate and Hastings, the Margate ran Reading to Redhill non stop albeit with a very generous 78 minutes allowance, the Hastings stopped at Guildford [41 and 32 minutes]. Northbound from Redhill: 10.49 [08.55 ex Margate to Birmingham], ran non stop to Reading in 70 minutes - 11.30 [09.10 ex Margate to Wolverhampton] non stop in 81 minutes - 14.20 [12.18 ex Hastings to Birmingham], 34 minutes to Guildford and 44 minutes to Reading were diagrammed for Western Region locomotives, actual ones noted during the summer were two off 53xx Class 2-6-0's, six off 63xx 2-6-0's and two off Manor Class 4-6-0's.

The "Birkenhead" became increasingly heavy north of Redhill, on the 6th August 1954 15 coaches with an S15 Class 4-6-0 No.30836, whereas on September 25th, again with 15 [540 tons Gross] an N Class 2-6-0 No.31865 sufficed. On the second occasion the N left Redhill 30 minutes late, was credited with keeping the 29 minutes schedule to pass Shalford Junction following which, the train being well out of its path, signal checks occurred. A 14 coaches Holiday special from Swindon to Margate, on July 3rd was taken by S15 No. 30836, two Maunsell 2-6-0's took over for the continuation east of Redhill. A novel locomotive on a weekdays Southbound "Birkenhead" relief in 1955 was Nine Elms based Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73115.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, "Birkenhead" practice Redhill to Reading, 1955-63

At the end of November the Reading turntable was out of use for a week and Tank engines were used, LM Class 4 2-6-4 No.42081 kept time from Reading to Redhill with nine coaches. The Maunsell weekday monopoly was broken with the allocation of Standard Class 4 2-6-0's to Redhill, the first one noted on the northbound "Birkenhead" on May 6th. Two years later Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75069 worked in one direction or the other commencing August 9th and was reported "making heavy work of it". A Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73083 from Stewarts Lane appeared over the New Year period 1959-1960 and hauled the southbound Birkenhead on December 30th. Diesel haulage was introduced east of Redhill concomitant with the first stage of the Kent Coast electrification on June 15th 1959. For the previous three weeks 43xx Class 2-6-0's hauled it between Reading and Redhill, from June 15th Standard Class 4 2-6-0's reappeared.

Schools Class 4-4-0's first appeared on the "Birkenhead" in the spring of 1960. Number 30910 was reported 23 minutes late at Reading on the 14th April with 13 coaches, 470 tons Gross and ten minutes late at Redhill. It is difficult to assess what this meant in actual running times as there was a 15 minutes allowance at Reading for engine changing, it perhaps suggests a School's could time a 13 coaches train. The Western Region provided Class 4 4-6-0 No.75006 on September 3rd on the 10.45 ex Birmingham and the following year in addition to the regular Manor Class 4-6-0's Nos.75006 and 75029 appeared. The Schools' continued on the Birkenhead until the last 18 members of the Class were withdrawn at the end of 1962. The "Wolverhampton", formerly "Birkenhead" was diesel hauled in each direction in 1963; the Saturdays "Birmingham" had Manor Class 4-6-0's.

Locomotive performance between Reading and Redhill on the inter-Regional's was often good, indeed with increasing train weights it needed to be. The N Class 2-6-0's were regular performers; on April 2nd 1949 Norman Harvey recorded No.31851 with 265 tons. The 12 minutes schedule to Dorking Town from Redhill was kept exactly, 63 miles per hour maximum before, 40 minimum at MP33¾ afterwards [summit of the 1/96], then without exceeding 58 and with a signal check before, Guildford was reached 27 seconds late, [schedule 31 minutes]. The W.T.T. allowance 13 minutes to the next stop at North Camp, a somewhat unrealistic booking, was exceeded by 30 seconds with 55 miles per hour maximum at Ash. Speeds continuing to Reading speeds were 59 miles per hour at Blackwater, 52 at Crowthorne and 60 at Earley, Reading General was reached five minutes late. [Ref.4] Ten years later the same recorder travelled behind N No.31861 on the 12.14 ex Hastings, with 11 coaches, 370 tons Gross and Driver Ripley. Reigate was passed in 6 minutes at 28 miles per hour, Dorking Town one minute late at 63, MP33¾ at 30 and with 63 on the descent Shalford Junction in 26 minutes 42 seconds and Guildford reached in 29 minutes 5 seconds [schedule 34 minutes]. From the Guildford restart Wanborough was passed in 9 minutes 50 seconds at 46 miles per hour, Ash at 38, North Camp at 52, Blackwater at 58 and Crowthorne at 50 minimum. Wokingham, 19.1 miles, was passed in 27 minutes 10 seconds at 54 miles per hour.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Redhill to Reading performance, 1949-61

The maximum at Earley was 60 miles per hour and Reading Spur Junction was reached in 36 minutes 15 seconds [schedule 47 minutes]. [Ref.5]. A former Great Western Railway 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.6386 with 365 tons on the same train was 20 seconds quicker to Wanborough, passed at 48 miles per hour, fell to 42 at Ash and without exceeding 50 afterwards reached Reading Spur Junction in 39½ minutes. [Ref.6]

The Standard Class 4 2-6-0's performed variably; some crews had difficulty maintaining a good fire. R.J. Dormer recorded a run behind No.76059 on the northbound "Birkenhead" with 325 tons in 1957. It passed Reigate in 5 minutes 20 seconds, attained 61 miles per hour at Betchworth, fell to 19 at MP33¾ and reached 68 on the descent and after a two and a half minutes signal reached Guildford in 34 minutes 54 seconds [schedule 32 minutes]. The next stage to North Camp took 16 minutes 40 seconds with a PWR slack to 20 miles per hour at Wanborough. It left North Camp eight minutes late and lost another minute to Reading, 26 minutes 5 seconds with 51 miles per hour at Blackwater, 39 before Wokingham and 60 at Earley. Dormer noted black smoke was the order of the day. [Ref.7] Mr. R.C.Edwards fared little better in the opposite direction some two years later behind No.76053 with 370 tons. The initial stage to North Camp took 27 minutes 17 seconds [schedule 28 minutes] with 58 miles per hour maximum at Sandhurst. Downhill to Guildford took 13 minutes 3 seconds [schedule 14 minutes]. Continuing to Redhill it reached 34 miles per hour at Shalford Junction, fell to 19 at MP33¾, reached 67 on the descent at Dorking, passed Reigate in 30 minutes 45 seconds and reached Redhill in 35 minutes 4 seconds [schedule 32 minutes]. [Ref.8]

The Standard Class 4 2-6-0's could and did perform better than this. A personal record southbound on November 1st 1957 No.76062 and 11 coaches, 375 tons Gross proves the point. It passed Shalford in 5 minutes 14 seconds at 36 miles per hour, Chilworth at 38, fell to 31 on the first stretch of 1/96, reached 52 at Gomshall, fell to 39 at MP33¾, and touched 71 at Deepdene. Betchworth was passed in 23 minutes 13 seconds at 54 miles per hour before a signal check before Reigate and a signal stop before Redhill, reached in 32 minutes 53 seconds, 30 minutes Net. The comparatively small 2-6-0 developed 1.025-1.075 EDHP between Shalford and MP33¾.

Norman Harvey's favoured locomotive for the Redhill to Reading route was a U Class 2-6-0, he understood [in 1961] Redhill footplate crews preferred six coupled to four coupled, i.e. a Maunsell 2-6-0 to a Schools Class 4-4-0. On August Bank Holiday 1961 he recorded No.31628, with rebuilt front end and 11 coaches, 375 tons Gross. Reigate was passed in 5 minutes 25 seconds at 30 miles per hour, then with 56 and 50 before and through Betchworth and 72 maximum, Dorking in 11 minutes 23 seconds. The minimum at MP33¾ was 36 miles per hour, the maximum on the descent 74, Shalford was passed in 23 minutes 27 seconds before a signal stop before Shalford Junction, the final stop at Guildford effected in 30 minutes 55 seconds. The 8.8 miles to North Camp the next stop took 14 minutes 14 seconds with 50 miles per hour at Wanborough, 40 afterwards and 54 before the stop.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region Schools Class 4-4-0 performance Redhill to Reading 1961
Wokingham, 10.8 miles from North Camp was passed in 13 minutes 25 seconds at 65 miles per hour, after 56 before Sandhurst, then 48 minimum and 68 maximum at Earley. It was two minutes and a quarter inside schedule at Reading Spur Junction, 19 minutes 42 seconds. Reading was reached after a signal check in 26 minutes 19 seconds. Net running times over the three stages were 27½, 14¼ and 22½ minutes, 64¼ total [schedule 72].

The author travelled twice in 1961 from Redhill on the "Birkenhead", July 24th and August 29th, in each case with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30920. On the first occasion No.30920 with 12 coaches, 430 tons Gross, passed Reigate in 5 minutes 8 seconds with 26 miles per hour attained on the initial 1/100 and with 62 and 53 before and through Betchworth, Dorking in 12 minutes 1 second after 63 maximum at Deepdene. The minimum at MP33¾ was 30 miles per hour and with 64 maximum on the descent Shalford was passed in 24 minutes 53 seconds, there was a signal check and a stop for two minutes before Guildford was reached in 32 minutes 10 seconds. Guildford to North Camp took 13 minutes 56 seconds with 31 miles per hour on the 1/100 to MP32½, 54 at Wanborough, 41 minimum at Ash Junction and 56 before the stop. Wokingham was passed in 13 minutes 36 seconds from the restart with 61 miles per hour at Blackwater, 51 minimum at Crowthorne, 64 through the station and afterwards 70 at Earley. Reading was reached in 25 minutes 29 seconds after signal checks, Net times were 29, 14 and 22 minutes, 65 total. On the second with 420 tons Gross the start was slow, perhaps why the Redhill crews preferred six coupled locomotives, 6 minutes 58 seconds to Reigate. It then reached 59 miles per hour before Betchworth, fell to 54 through the station and rose to 68 at Deepdene. Dorking was passed one and three quarters of a minute late, 13 minutes 50 seconds, the minimum at MP33¾ was 37½ miles per hour and with 64 on the descent, Shalford was passed in 25 minutes 33 seconds and Guildford reached after a signal check in 29 minutes 56 seconds.

Not all drivers extracted such performances from the Schools Class 4-4-0's. J.D.Truss timed No.30916 twice between Guildford and Redhill with 365 tons, it fell to 30 and 23 miles per hour between Shalford and Gomshall with Betchworth passed in 28 minutes 5 seconds, including a PWR slack at Gomshall and 25 minutes 31 seconds. Redhill was reached after signal checks in 52 minutes and 38 minutes 7 seconds, Net times were 36 minutes, by this time the Guildford to Redhill schedule had been eased to 38 minutes. Norman Harvey timed No.30916 in October 1961 with 12 coaches, 415 tons Gross, when Redhill was reached in 35¾ minutes including a PWR slack to 23 miles per hour at Chilworth. Speeds were 38 miles per hour at Gomshall, 30 minimum at MP33¾, 70 at Deepdene and 54 at Betchworth. In the opposite direction No.30915 with 11 coaches passed Betchworth in nine and a half minutes at 57 miles per hour, reached 70 at Deepdene and fell to 28 at MP33¾ before signals delayed it badly from Chilworth onwards.

The Manor Class 4-6-0's hauled the inter-Regional trains increasingly from 1960 onwards.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Manor Class 4-6-0 performance Redhill to Reading 1961-63

Norman Harvey noted Manor Class 4-6-0 No.7824 in 1961 with nine coaches, 310 tons Gross, reach 42 miles per hour after Shalford, fall to 30 on the first adverse section, reach 50 at Gomshall, fall to 38 at MP33¾ and touch 74 on the descent. The train was braked to 50 miles per hour at Dorking Town, passed Reigate in 27¾ minutes and reached Redhill after signal checks in 34 minutes 20 seconds. The Shalford to Gomshall time was 9 minutes 47 seconds compared with 9 minutes 34 seconds for Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76062 in 1957. Two years later he recorded No.7824 with ten coaches, 355 tons Gross. The Shalford to Gomshall time was 10 minutes 35 seconds with minima of 26 and 32 miles per hour, the maximum at Deepdene was 72 and Redhill was reached in 32 minutes 41 seconds. A personal experience, No.7818 with ten coaches, 360 tons Gross, took 12 minutes 33 seconds from Shalford to Gomshall with minima of 25 and 33 miles per hour. There was a PWR slack to 16 miles per hour at Deepdene, maximum before 68 and Redhill was reached in 40 minutes 9 seconds, 35 minutes Net, No.7824 31 and 32¾ minutes Net [schedule 34 minutes].

Manor Class 4-6-0 No.7805, on the last Saturday in August 1963 with ten coaches 360 tons Gross, passed Betchworth in 8 minutes 51 seconds from Redhill, before a PWR slack before Dorking Town to 24 miles per hour. It attained 26½ miles per hour on the 1/96, but with a signal check before Chilworth and a stop before, took 38 minutes 29 seconds to Guildford. There were further delays for signals after leaving Guildford; almost 11½ minutes to pass Wanborough, then with 38 miles per hour at Ash and 54 before the North Camp stop was made in 18 minutes 28 seconds. It left North Camp ten minutes late and recovered most of this against the generous allowance of 36 minutes to Reading, actual time 26 minutes 12 seconds with Wokingham passed in 14 minutes 56 seconds without exceeding 56 miles per hour.

The Guildford to North Camp schedule, whether 13 or 14 minutes was difficult. In August 1962 a Q1 Class 0-6-0 with 400 tons took 14 minutes 37 seconds with 55 miles per hour maximum at Wanborough.

Power outputs on the "Birkenhead" and Summer Saturday trains were at times fairly high. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30920 developed 1.075-1,125 EDHP past MP33¾ at 30 miles per hour and 1,125-1,175 when reaching 30 on the 1/100 after Guildford. Number 30920, when passing MP33¾ at 37½ miles per hour developed c.1,275-1,325, [Although it is difficult to assess the EDHP when speed is falling, the successive quarter mile times in this case enable a reasonable estimate to be made and as a check the work done against gravity less the kinetic energy available at the bottom of the gradient can be calculated]. There are no quarter mile post readings available for U Class 2-6-0 No.31628 but assuming a similar speed profile to No.30920 the EDHP would be 1,100-1,150 at MP33¾. Similarly the N Class 2-6-0's Nos.31851 and 31861 developed figures of 980-1,030 and 1.010-1,060. This compares with the Manor Class 4-6-0's, No.7824 developed 875-925 and 825-875 between Shalford and Gomshall southbound and No.7805, 850-900, northbound when it attained 26½ miles per hour on the 1/96 up to MP33¾.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Inter Regional Services West of Brighton

There were no regular steam hauled inter-Regional services via the Mid Sussex route although there were frequent Excursions from north of the Thames destined for Bognor or Littlehampton. The 1956 W.T.T. for example provided for a train ex the Western Region on Sundays; Clapham Junction departure 10.57, Barnham Junction, 62.0 miles, arrival 12.44 including three minutes stops at Dorking North and for water at Pulborough. Bognor was due to be reached at 12.54. Most excursions for Littlehampton ran via the Brighton Main Line, some of those for Bognor and even Littlehampton via Havant. However early in 1957 LM Class 5 4-6-0's Nos.45004 and 45188 travelled over the Mid Sussex route with excursions from Tring and Bletchley. On July 25th B1 Class 4-6-0 No.61329 hauled ten coaches over the route from the Eastern Region to Littlehampton. Locomotives destined for Littlehampton were serviced between journeys at Bognor depot, the week after the B1 arrived four Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's were serviced there.

A regular through service between Brighton and Cardiff operated for much of the British Railways steam period, the Brighton to Plymouth and Bournemouth trains were similar workings, indeed for many years the locomotive on the westbound Cardiff returned from Salisbury on the Plymouth train and vice versa. The westbound trains to Bournemouth, Cardiff and Plymouth in 1949 departed Brighton at 09.40, 11.00 and 11.30. They passed from the Central Section of the Southern Region to the Western Section at Farlington Junction at 10.40½, 12.06 and 12.35½. All three stopped at Worthing, Barnham Junction and Chichester, through coaches from Portsmouth were added to the Cardiff and Plymouth trains at Fareham, the Bournemouth ran non stop from Chichester to Southampton. Departures from Brighton in 1961 were the same as in 1949 and the times at Farlington Junction the same for two of the three, the Cardiff train passed at 12.09½.

Eastbound the 13.30 ex Bournemouth, 10.00 ex Plymouth and 13.00 ex Cardiff passed Farlington Junction at 15.44, 16.12½ and 17.37½ with Brighton arrivals at 16.54, 17.22 and 18.42 in 1949. The 1961 departures were at 11.10, 13.00 and 18.55 with Farlington Junction passed at 16.14, 17.15½ and 20.16½, Brighton arrivals 17.24, 18.24 and 21.24, interval steam on the old LB&SC West side. Trains were usually light between Fareham and Brighton; the Bournemouth normally had four coaches in winter and eight in the summer, the Cardiff and Plymouth six or seven including a Restaurant Car.

Three West Country Class 4-6-2's were allocated to Brighton for use on the through trains when they were reinstated in 1948, they normally appeared on the Cardiff and Plymouth. The "Bournemouth" usually had an H1 Class 4-4-2, although when Norman Harvey travelled on it that year the eight coaches were hauled by a B4X Class 4-4-0, which reached Southampton ten minutes late. A month later the locomotive to and from Bournemouth was H1 Class 4-4-2 No.2038. At the end of the year, all three trains had a West Country, one of four, Nos.21C137 to 21C140, then allocated to Brighton; there were exceptions, Schools Class 4-4-0 No.919 worked through to Salisbury on November 22nd.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, West of Brighton, 1949-52

The service remained essentially the same in 1949 and 1950, the "Plymouth" and "Cardiff" loaded to at least ten coaches after the addition of the Portsmouth portion at Fareham. Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's regularly hauled 12 coaches, No.34074 on July 22nd 1950 for example; a Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30932 took 12 plus a van on May 30th 1949. The following year on April 20th the "Plymouth" was observed with eight coaches ten minutes late at Southampton with an H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32422, another H2 No.32424 on August 9th had 11 coaches to Salisbury and back. The "Bournemouth" normally had a 4-6-2, sometimes an H2, No.32424 with eight coaches for the first three days of the week commencing July 1st, B4X Class 4-4-0 No.32072 on the next two.

Many inter-Regional services were suspended in 1951. On January 13th, pre cessation day, the "Bournemouth", "Cardiff" and "Plymouth" left Brighton behind West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34035, 34041 and 34037. The 4-6-2's were transferred away shortly afterwards, when the trains were reinstated for the summer LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's appeared, No.42088 noted working the 11.30 to Plymouth returning from Salisbury with the "Cardiff". With no 4-6-2's, U1 Class 2-6-0's used regularly could keep time west of Fareham with ten coaches. R.A.H.Weight travelled behind No.31891, 240 tons to Fareham and 350 tons after on the "Plymouth", it was one minute early at Southampton and on time at Salisbury. The following day the same locomotive kept time from Salisbury to Brighton with the "Cardiff". During the period when Brighton had no 4-6-2's T9 Class 4-4-0's Nos.30283 and 30710 and L12 Class 4-4-0 No.30427 appeared on the trains. The "Plymouth" was reportedly reduced to seven coaches on June 10th when LM Class 2-6-4 Tank No.42090 was rostered whereas two days later when T9 No.30710 was employed the load was nine. This probably reflected the views of a vociferous group of Railwaymen, egged on by the enthusiast fraternity, who considered the modern products of British Railways to be inferior, "clearly a T9 was a superior machine to a LM 2-6-4 Tank!", rather than operational logic.

Later that year West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34045, 34046 and 34047 were allocated to Brighton and timekeeping improved. U1 Class 2-6-0's still appeared frequently on one of the Salisbury workings and H2 Class 4-4-2's on the Bournemouth. Unusually D Class 4-4-0 No.31750 had the "Bournemouth" on October 30th and a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank worked to Salisbury on November 24th.

The next contretemps to affect the three trains was the stopping of West Country Class 4-6-2's for repairs, beginning June 1952. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30922 hauled the "Cardiff" on June 2nd and 3rd and then the "Bournemouth" on the next two days. LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's took the "Cardiff" on the 5th and 6th and an H2 Class 4-4-2 was taken out of store to work the "Bournemouth" until June 18th. West Country No.34045 developed valve gear problems on the 10th and on the next two days the "Cardiff" and "Bournemouth" were taken by L12 Class 4-4-0 No.30415 which in turn was replaced by U Class 2-6-0 No.31805.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, West of Brighton, 1952-64

The final serviceable 4-6-2 No.34039 was involved in a collision at Salisbury on the 11th, LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42093 was on the "Cardiff" on the 12th and Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No. 80016 on the 20th. The standard Tank's were increasingly used on the Brighton to Salisbury turns, the footplate crews preferred them to the LM variety. A D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31735 hastily provided as a replacement for 4-6-2 No.34047 derailed in the depot, was itself replaced at Southampton by a Standard Class 3 2-6-2 tank No.82012. What a way to run a Railway! The H2 Class 4-4-2's became regulars on the "Bournemouth" at the end of 1952, No.32421 on 34 out of 48 days between September 29th and November 15th, 32426 on four of the other days.

The Salisbury turntable was unavailable for the last two weeks in April 1956, resulting in through working between Plymouth and Brighton by Exmouth Junction and Brighton Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. The H2 Class 4-4-2's still hauled the "Bournemouth", although on July 6th a T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30728 appeared. The next day Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank, No.80139 headed the "Plymouth" with 12 coaches from Fareham to Salisbury. The "Bournemouth" loaded to 11 coaches in August of that year, Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76059 on August 5th and from 14th to 17th Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73115 ex Works were used.

Following the withdrawal of all bar one of the H2 Class 4-4-2's in 1956, two L Class 4-4-0's were allocated to Brighton and regularly used west of Brighton releasing the 2-6-4 Tanks to the Oxted lines. Number 31777 was noted keeping time both ways between Brighton and Salisbury with eight coaches.

Brighton depot again in June 1957 had no serviceable Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's. Amongst locomotives utilised west of Brighton were Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76029, Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73049, Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's Nos.80033 and 80147 and L Class 4-4-0 No.31776. An L regularly hauled the Bournemouth train the following year.

Despite the greater availability of Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's from 1960 onwards, others continued to appear, a U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31900 took the 11.30 "Plymouth" to Salisbury on February 24th 1962, the last time a U1 was used was on December 5th, No.31903. The Bournemouth train at times during 1962 featured Schools Class 4-4-0's and following the demise of the U1 Class, U Class 2-6-0's. The Author noted a U running 15 minutes late at Brockenhurst on August 19th 1964, the Brighton to Bournemouth and the Bournemouth to Newcastle trains were in the station at the same time.

The Brighton to Cardiff service ceased commencing winter 1963, the 1964 "Bournemouth" rostered for diesel haulage ran from June 15th to September 4th, the "Plymouth" had diesel traction in the summer with electric locomotives designated for the winter. In practice steam haulage, particularly during winter was resorted to frequently, normally a Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2, almost up to the end of steam power on the Region. This involved much "light engine" running between Fratton or Eastleigh and Brighton.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance West of Brighton

Schedules between Brighton and Fareham were generous, overly so when the light loads are considered, which produced a typical response from footplate crews; they took matters gently and regularly lost time. P.Ransome Wallis travelled on the footplate of H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32421 from Brighton to Bournemouth and back in 1955. Westbound with eight coaches, 290 tons Gross, 57 miles per hour was the maximum between Brighton and Fareham. Schedule running time with stops at Worthing, Barnham and Chichester was 65 minutes, actual 69 minutes 1 second. Two to three minutes were lost by a PWR slack and signal checks between Havant and Cosham. Matters were better eastbound, maxima 64 miles per hour before Chichester and at Goring. The scheduled running time between Fareham and Brighton with the same stops plus Cosham and Havant was 74½ minutes, actual 72 minutes 51 seconds. The Fareham departure was eight minutes late, a PWR slack and signal checks before both Havant and Barnham cost four minutes. [Ref.9]

West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34048 on the westbound "Bournemouth" reached 64 miles per hour at Angmering. Higher speeds were reached occasionally, 75 miles per hour on November 3rd of the same year by Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80126 on the "Plymouth" leaving Worthing and before slowing for the slack over bridge at Ford.

A lively run, albeit with only six coaches, 215 tons Gross was noted personally eastbound on 12th September 1961. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34027 ran Fareham to Chichester in 22 minutes 52 seconds [schedule 26 minutes]. There were signal checks before Portchester, after which the 8.9 miles from Havant passed at 55 miles per hour to the Chichester stop were run in 9 minutes exactly with 73 miles per hour maximum. Eighty seconds were then lost, after previously overcoming a late start from Salisbury, through signal checks before the next stop at Barnham Junction, maximum 64 miles per hour. Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34055 on November 9th 1962 with 215 tons ran from Barnham Junction to Chichester in 10¾ minutes including a PWR slack [schedule 9 minutes] and to the next stop at Fareham in 26 minutes 57 seconds [schedule 28 minutes]. Emsworth [7.0 miles] was passed in 8 minutes 46 seconds at 66 miles per hour before signal checks at Havant and Warblington to 22 and 9. A Rebuilt West Country No.34013 with 250 tons on August 30th 1963 lost one and three quarters minutes between Worthing and Barnham, 58 seconds from there to Chichester and two and three quarters minutes on to Fareham. Signals accounted for four minutes loss on the last stage. The locomotive appeared to be steaming satisfactorily, Havant pass to Fareham in 14 minutes 9 seconds, recovered two minutes.

There were no inter-Regional trains via the Portsmouth Direct and steam hauled excursions were rare. It was surprising the last steam hauled inter-Regional, the 11.26 Portsmouth Harbour to Colne return Holiday special ran that way on Saturday July 8th 1967. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34037 apparently reached the upper eighties descending from Haslemere on its way to Mitre Bridge. The previous Saturday another return excursion to Colne had Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75074.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Portsmouth inter Regional departures, 1951 and 1960

The Portsmouth to Salisbury route had the most inter Regional trains; the June 1951 and 1960 Timetables illustrate the point. In 1951 weekdays there were departures from Portsmouth at: 07.29 and 10.34 to Bristol, ten intermediate stops to Salisbury, 106 and 104 minutes for the 49.65 miles via Southampton - 09.33 Cardiff, seven stops, Salisbury 92 minutes - 11.37 and 12.15 to Fareham for attachment to the Brighton to Cardiff and Plymouth trains. [The W.T.T. provided a conditional path for a separate train to run on Mondays and Fridays from Portsmouth, departure 12.15 to Plymouth] - 17.37 to Cardiff, eight stops, Salisbury 104 minutes. Other inter-Regional trains passing over part the route were the 14.45 and 17.16 to Reading via Fareham and Eastleigh and the 10.10 and 16.36 Southampton to Cheltenham via the former Midland and South West Junction Railway route. There were three summer Saturday trains from Portsmouth to Cardiff: 10.34 ex Portsmouth and Southsea - 11.37 ex Portsmouth Harbour, Portsmouth and Southsea to Salisbury in 89 minutes with two stops - 17.37 ex Portsmouth and Southsea. There was a train to Cardiff from Fareham at 09.37. The 11.15 and 14.33 ran to Bristol with overall times to Salisbury of 91 and 95 minutes with two and three stops en route respectively - 09.03 to Plymouth, Salisbury in 98 minutes with seven stops - 12.15 to Ilfracombe, 94 minutes with three stops. There were trains to Wolverhampton from Portsmouth and Southsea at 09.10 and 15.30 and at 13.35 from the Harbour to Birmingham. The 17.18 ran to Reading General. There were two trains from Southampton to Cheltenham.

Although the implementation of diesel multiple units on Portsmouth area local services was complete by 1960 the Inter-Regional trains remained steam hauled, There were weekday trains from Portsmouth to Reading General at 07.30, 15.07 and 17.16, the through portions to Cardiff and Plymouth left at 11.45 and 12.15. There were two Bristol trains, 08.20 and 10.34, to Salisbury in 88 and 90 minutes with three and five intermediate stops and two to Cardiff, 09.30 and 17.45, 95 and 100 minutes to Salisbury with seven and eight stops. On summer Saturdays there were three trains from the Harbour station to Cardiff, 09.27, 11.37 and 15.57 and two from Portsmouth and Southsea 09.09 and 15.57. The 15.57 reached Salisbury in 80 minutes including a three minutes stop at Southampton. [There was an additional train ex Brighton 10.00 to Cardiff on the seven busiest Saturdays]. There were three from Portsmouth and Southsea to Bristol, 08.30, 10.34 and 14.45, the quickest to Salisbury the 14.45 in 83 minutes including a four minutes stop at Southampton. The 12.15 Ilfracombe had the same schedule as in 1951, the three Reading trains left at 07.30, 15.14 and 17.18, those to Wolverhampton from the Harbour at 09.11 and 15.40, to Birmingham Moor Street at 13.11 and to Birmingham Snow Hill 13.28. The 15.02 and 16.57 from the Harbour ran to Nottingham Victoria and Sheffield Victoria, the "Nottingham" was non stop Corsham to Basingstoke in 66 minutes the other over the 48.7 miles from Portsmouth to Basingstoke in 70 minutes.

Western Region locomotives occasionally worked through to Portsmouth in 1949. On the 8th October for instance the 16.45 Portsmouth to Reading had Hall Class 4-6-0 No.5973, with four coaches and two vans.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Portsmouth to Southampton performance 1958-63

A more unusual visitor to the South Coast on Whit Sunday 1950 was ex GWR Castle Class 4-6-0 No.5063 with an excursion from Kidderminster. A Western Region locomotive that summer hauled a Wolverhampton to Portsmouth Saturday train as far as Eastleigh. The first through working of a Western Region locomotive since the War from Salisbury to Portsmouth was on July 1st 1951, 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.6360. Through workings by 1954 were commonplace, on Summer Saturdays that year Western Region locomotives worked the 08.42 ex Wolverhampton and the 09.10 ex Reading to Portsmouth and returned North on the 13.35 and 15.30.

The Portsmouth to Salisbury route was not one for high average speeds, indeed between Portsmouth and Millbrook, west of Southampton the combination of Junctions, steep grades between Fareham and Bitterne and tight curves precluded even reasonable times. The schedules however, even accepting these difficulties, were generous and on summer Saturdays, reflecting traffic density even more so. Southampton was a major bottleneck; most inter-Regional trains ran late at that point. On Saturday August 23 1952 inter-Regional trains were five to 30 minutes late, those through Basingstoke for Portsmouth or Bournemouth averaged 20 minutes late.

The older locomotives ran between Portsmouth and Salisbury for many years, J.D.Truss as late as September 1958 noted T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30313 with six coaches, 200 tons Gross, on the 16.45 Bristol to Portsmouth. The elderly locomotive improved on the 31 minutes schedule over the 20.5 miles from Southampton to the next stop at Corsham by one and a half minutes, with 58 miles per hour before Swanwick, 40 minimum on the rising gradients after, 63 before Fareham and 61 at Porchester. Maunsell and Standard Moguls replaced the various 4-4-0's, active on the route in the early fifties. Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76005 with 210 tons on the Saturday 10.25 ex Cardiff in 1963 passed Sholing in ten and three quarter minutes from Southampton, fell from 54 miles per hour to 40 at Swanwick, passed in 18 minutes and stopped at Fareham in 23 minutes 36 seconds [schedule 25 minutes]. Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34055 with nine coaches on the "Plymouth" was ten seconds quicker to Sholing, with 36 miles per hour minimum at Swanwick and after a PWR slack, 50 seconds behind at Swanwick, it reached Fareham in 23 minutes 47 seconds. A personal observation two years previous with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34027 and 365 tons Gross on the "Cardiff" noted 64 miles per hour at Netley after an initial signal check, 33 minimum on the 1/81 and 24 minutes 25 seconds to Fareham.

Two personal experiences typify westbound performance, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34055, with 11 coaches, 390 tons Gross, in November 1962 and rebuilt West Country No.34013 with ten coaches, 365 tons, in August 1963, both on the "Cardiff". Bursledon [5¾ miles] was passed in 10 minutes 42 second and 9 minutes 59 seconds from Fareham with 33 and 31½ miles per hour on the initial 1/70 at MP11½. Number 34055 reached Southampton in 24 minutes 9 seconds after a signal check before Netley, No.34013 unchecked took 23 minutes 48 seconds [schedule 25 minutes].

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Salisbury to Southampton performance, 1951-61

The Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's kept time without being extended. An effort some years earlier with H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32422 and 300 tons was different, reported three minutes early past Bitterne with the "Plymouth", remarkable even if it left Fareham a minute early. The schedule was 18 minutes to St. Denys, 0.7 miles further than Bitterne from Fareham. Numbers 34055 and 34013 passed Bitterne in 19 minutes and 18 minutes 9 seconds, the "Cardiff" was allowed 20 minutes to St Denys. When P.R.Wallis rode on No.32421, it passed Fareham at 38 miles per hour, 25 minutes 40 seconds from Chichester after signal checks and a PWR slack and gained a minute on the 18 minutes allowance from Fareham to St. Denys. It fell from 44 to 38 miles per hour on the 1/70 with full Regulator and 45 percent cut off.

The Southampton to Salisbury section was very different, after the Millbrook slowing and a severe slack through Romsey there was a gradual rise for 11½ miles, [average 1/370, including three miles at 1/695 initially and culminating in four miles at 1/220 to a point West of Alderbury Junction.] The ensuing descent to Milford Junction included two miles at 1/150.

The D15 Class 4-4-0's appeared regularly in the early Nationalisation years between Portsmouth and Salisbury on Bristol and Cardiff trains. Number 30467 ran Salisbury to Southampton in 31 minutes 42 seconds with seven coaches, 230 tons Gross [schedule 37 minutes] with Alderbury Junction [5.0 miles] passed in 9 minutes 50 seconds and 72 miles per hour reached before the Romsey slack. Number 30470, with the same load was 20 seconds slower to Alderbury, full Regulator and 30 percent cut off on the 1/150 and after 65 miles per hour maximum passed Romsey one and a quarter minutes inside schedule, 21 minutes 45 seconds. Southampton was reached five minutes late after a stop for signals, 34 minutes Net. Time was recovered by cutting the Southampton station allowance and running the 15.2 miles from Bitterne to Portchester pass to pass in slightly under 20 minutes.

Two records a decade later timed by R.A.H.Weight featured a Standard Class 4 and a U Class 2-6-0. Number 76003, with six coaches, 210 tons Gross, passed Alderbury Junction in 9 minutes 30 seconds at 56 miles per hour, reached 72 at Dunbridge and stopped at Romsey over two minutes early in 20 minutes 53 seconds. It gained another two minutes to Southampton, 11 minutes 53 seconds, with 66 miles per hour before Redbridge. U No.31792, rebuilt with new cylinders and outside steam pipes in 1958 had seven coaches, 250 tons Gross on the 16.25 ex Bristol. After an initial check leaving Salisbury, it passed Alderbury in 11 minutes 2 seconds at 50 miles per hour and after 70 maximum at Dunbridge passed Romsey in 22¾ minutes. There were signal checks before Southampton finally reached in 36 minutes 31 seconds, 32 minutes Net. A Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34027 with ten coaches in September 1961, on the "Cardiff" passed Alderbury Junction in 9 minutes 31 seconds at 61 miles per hour, reached 67 at Dunbridge, reduced to 36 for Romsey and stopped at Southampton in 31 minutes 38 seconds [schedule 35 minutes]. It had left seven minutes late after a Hall Class 4-6-0 had struggled all the way from Cardiff to Salisbury.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Southampton to Salisbury performance, 1951-63

The ease with which the 4-6-2 handled the train compared with the 4-6-0 was noticeable, memories of the 1948 Exchanges and what should be expected when comparing a Class 7 with a Class 5 locomotive.

A D15 Class 4-4-0 No.30465 in 1951 westbound with 330 tons passed Alderbury Junction [11.6 miles] from the Romsey start in 15 minutes 8 seconds and reached Salisbury in 22¾ minutes on the 17.37 ex Portsmouth. The locomotive, driven on full Regulator and 27 percent cut off on the long uphill reached 54 miles per hour at Dunbridge, 52 after the station, 58 at Dean and maintained 47 up the 1/220, 850-900 EDHP. The D15's were withdrawn between 1951 and 1956; the older and smaller T9 Class 4-4-0's occasionally appeared until 1960. Number 30707, on the 22nd August of that year, with seven coaches plus two vans on the 17.45 Portsmouth to Cardiff kept time to Salisbury. The following day with nine coaches on the 09.30 ex Portsmouth, it reached Salisbury 18 minutes late. The 09.30 was allowed 85 minutes between Portsmouth and Salisbury with 12 minutes spent at the eight stops, the afternoon train 90 minutes and 16 minutes at the eight stops. Earlier the same year, March 24th, 25th and 26th ex GWR Class 43xx 2-6-0's Nos.6338, 6370 and 6338 hauled the 09.30 on successive days with six coaches on the first two days and nine on the third. The Salisbury arrivals were 20 minutes late, on time and 25 minutes late, including a stop at Alderbury Junction on the last day for five minutes to raise steam pressure. This probably says, more about footplate crew unfamiliarity with Western engines than the excellent Churchward/Holcroft designed 2-6-0's, arguably amongst the best "pound for pound" locomotives ever built.

Two Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's No.34055 and Rebuilt 34013 with 390 and 365 tons in 1962 and 1963 passed Romsey in 11 minutes 48 seconds and 13 minutes 54 seconds at 39 and 36 miles per hour. Number 34055 accelerated to 66 miles per hour quickly, was checked to 26 at Kimberley Junction by signals and to 16 at Dean for a PWR slack, then reached 56 at Alderbury Junction and arrived Salisbury one minute late, 38 minutes 2 seconds. The Net time was probably less than 32 minutes and the EDHP on the 1/220 at least 1,300-1,350. Number 34013 attained 50 miles per hour at Dunbridge, 56 at Dean, fell to 55 at Alderbury and with 72 maximum reached Salisbury in 36 minutes 8 seconds. These were easy timings for a 4-6-2, the Maunsell 2-6-0's on occasions kept time with 11 coaches and on July 22nd 1950 an N Class No.31870 had 12 coaches on the Saturday 11.37 ex Portsmouth to Cardiff. A novelty on the route in February 1965 was an ex LMS Ivatt Class 4 2-6-0 No.43006, fresh out of Eastleigh Works with the 16.36 ex Cardiff from Salisbury onwards.

There were regular trains on summer Saturday between the Bournemouth conurbation and South Wales, which ran to Salisbury via Poole, Wimborne and Fordingbridge until that line closed in 1964. There were two trains in 1950, 09.50 Bournemouth Central to Cardiff and 08.50 New Milton to Swansea. The Cardiff train stopped at Poole from 09.11 to 09.14 and then ran non stop to Salisbury [33.95 miles] in 65 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Inter Regional's from Bournemouth 1948-64

The empty stock for the Swansea train started from Brockenhurst at 08.22, picked up at New Milton, Christchurch, Pokesdown, Bournemouth, Poole and ran to Salisbury [reached at 10.36] in 66 minutes. Ten years later there were trains from Bournemouth Central to Cardiff and 08.30 and 09.00 which stopped at Poole and then Salisbury [65 and 64 minutes]. The 08.48 ex New Milton, [empty stock ex Brockenhurst at 08.22] ran to Swansea. Loads often reached 12 coaches in 1953, on July 18th the two westbound trains were hauled by 2-6-0's, U Class No.31622 and Standard 4 No.76016.

Following the Fordingbridge line closure in 1964, the 08.48 ex New Milton was rerouted via Dorchester Junction, where it reversed and Yeovil. It was allowed a sedate 40 minutes from Poole to Dorchester Junction, the eastbound train, the 09.10 ex Llanelli, a more enterprising, even taking into account the favourable gradients, 28 minutes for the 22.6 miles. A Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34064 fitted with Giesl ejector, with ten coaches, 345 tons Gross, took 25¼ minutes with 77 miles per hour maximum at Moreton and 8 minutes 10 seconds from Wareham pass to Poole stop, with 68 at Holton Heath.

The Bournemouth to Birkenhead, Birmingham and Newcastle trains were restored in summer 1948, on the first day, June 12th King Arthur Class 4-6-0's Nos.790, 30772 and 787 hauled them from Bournemouth to Oxford. The "Birkenhead" ran on Fridays and Saturdays and left Bournemouth West at 09.30, the "Birmingham" left the Central station at 09.32 and the "Newcastle" the West station at 10.30, the latter two ran on Saturdays only. The "Birkenhead" and "York" ran on weekdays in 1949, Bournemouth West departure 09.20 and 11.16 with Southern Region locomotives to Oxford. Both stopped four times between Bournemouth and Brockenhurst, then Southampton, Winchester, Basingstoke and Reading West before Oxford, the "York" additionally at Eastleigh. There was an afternoon train from Portsmouth at 15.30 to Wolverhampton with a Southern locomotive to Basingstoke. On summer Saturdays the 09.32 and 11.50 Bournemouth Central to Birmingham had Southern locomotives to Basingstoke, the "Birkenhead", "Newcastle" and "Sheffield" [the latter ex Poole 10.26] to Oxford. Four years later the two weekday trains from Bournemouth remained the same but the afternoon service from Portsmouth, after first a reduction to Fridays only, had ceased. The summer Saturday train service was similar to 1949 with the addition of a second "Newcastle" from Bournemouth Central at 08.05.

The weekdays "Birkenhead" and "York" in 1959 left Bournemouth West at 09.33 and 11.16, [the "York" ran to Newcastle for a limited summer period]. There were additional trains on summer Saturdays, to Birkenhead at 08.47, to Sheffield from Bournemouth West at 11.04 and to Birmingham Snow Hill at 11.32. The weekdays "Birkenhead" ceased at the commencement of the 1961 timetable, the re-routing of the "Pines Express" from the Somerset and Dorset in the winter timetable effectively restored it. The "Pines" in 1964 left Bournemouth West at 10.00, the York at 10.50. There were seven trains from Bournemouth to the North on a summer Saturday that year, the same number as in 1959 but now with no inter-Regional's over the Somerset and Dorset.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, locomotives on the Bournemouth inter Regional's 1949-52 Summer Saturday 1964 departures from Bournemouth West were: 09.20 Manchester/Liverpool - 10.00 Manchester ["Pines Express"] - 10.34 Bradford Exchange - 11.16 Newcastle - 11.36 Manchester Victoria. The Birkenhead and Sheffield Victoria trains started from Poole at 10.10 and 10.45. There were changes in 1966 following the closure of Bournemouth West station, the weekdays "Pines Express" was diesel hauled, the 10.30 "York" steam hauled. There were six trains from Poole on summer Saturdays: 09.04 Liverpool and Manchester - 09.42 Manchester Piccadilly - 10.29 Bradford - 10.42 Sheffield - 10.54 Newcastle - 11.38 Wolverhampton [allowed 111 minutes to Basingstoke from Bournemouth with a three minutes stop at Southampton, an average of 32.5 miles per hour. There presumably was a reason why it omitted any stops.] There was a diesel hauled train from Bournemouth Central at 09.06.

GWR locomotives appeared regularly at Bournemouth on through excursions from Western Region stations in 1949. Hall Class 4-6-0's Nos.4902 and 4958 worked through to Bournemouth from Oxford and Acton on May 1st and on June 5th Nos.6990 and 5932 arrived. Southern Region locomotives on the inter-Regional's were King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, the Urie one's prominent on summer Saturdays, on one in 1949 five Urie King Arthur's ran through to Oxford, Nos.30740/1/3/53 and 54. The 11.50 ex Bournemouth, ten coaches, was taken to Basingstoke on July 15th and 22nd by T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30712.

At the other end of the pre Bulleid scale, Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's were often used. There appeared to be no particular logic with respect to train weights and locomotive types, Lord Nelson's, often light trains, easily gained time on such occasions between Oxford and Reading. In 1949 No.863 on a weekday with 270 tons ran from Oxford to Reading West in 32 minutes [schedule 37 minutes], following a 15 minutes late start. The same locomotive, No.30863, seven years later with nine coaches, 320 tons, attained 64 miles per hour at Culham, passed Didcot North Junction in 12 minutes 24 seconds and after 69 maximum, Reading West Junction in 32 minutes 8 seconds. It reached Reading West after a check in 36 minutes 11 seconds.

Hall Class 4-6-0's were, as already noted, regular visitors to Bournemouth on through excursions but a novelty on June 3rd was Castle Class 4-6-0 No.4082 from Worcester.

The Western Region permitted Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's to work to Oxford from April 1951. Trains that summer from Portsmouth or Bournemouth that changed locomotives at Basingstoke were hauled there by 4-4-0's, 2-6-0's or 4-6-0's with T9 Class 4-4-0's at times taking 11 coaches.

An unusual visitor on a special from High Wycombe to Southampton on July 5th 1952 was a 61xx Class 2-6-2 tank No.6148. It was serviced at Eastleigh and on the return journey made a stop at Winchester to take water. A T9 Class 4-4-0 No.30724 reached Oxford on September 18th on the "Birkenhead" with 11 coaches only two minutes late, confirming both the excellence of these small superheated locomotives and the ease of the schedules.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, motive power to Basingstoke and Oxford, 1958-66

Battle of Britain Class/West Country Class 4-6-2's and Standard Class 5 4-6-0's increasingly hauled inter-Regional's, except the southbound Newcastle, a Hall Class 4-6-0 duty from 1958 between Oxford and Bournemouth West [although on the first day Grange Class 4-6-0 No.6867 left Oxford 12 minutes late after relieving another Grange]. The same day the first relief "Bradford" reached Oxford behind B1 Class 4-6-0 No.61269 and left for Bournemouth behind King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30783. Hall No.5930 hauled the 12.10 ex Sheffield. Unusual locomotives noted in later years, included a 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.7317 in 1961 on the Saturdays 11.04 Bournemouth to Sheffield as far as Basingstoke returning with the 09.49 ex Sheffield. Another 2-6-0, U Class No.31808 hauled the 11.16 Bournemouth to Newcastle on June 27th.

The "Pines Express" was diagrammed for diesel haulage commencing January 1st 1966 and the "York" for a Banbury based Stanier Class 5 4-6-0 from there to Bournemouth and return. On the 23rd February LM Class 8F 2-8-0 No.48276 appeared, [an 8F looks like a 5MT at a distance if you only look above the running plate!], it was taken off at Eastleigh, the absence of steam heating had been noticed, and replaced by a 5 No.45426.

The Standard Class 9F 2-10-0's were used on occasions north of Basingstoke, the Western Region subjected them to a 45 miles per hour speed restriction, despite the easy schedules they lost time. The 11 coach 10.54 Poole to Newcastle on an August Saturday in 1966 had No.92002 to Basingstoke, the author noted it arrive on time at Basingstoke with Driver Baker at the controls. The previous year, August 7th, No.92001 took a 405 tons Newcastle train onwards from Basingstoke. The initial 14.6 miles to Reading West took 23 minutes 57 seconds, schedule 25 minutes with 59 miles per hour maximum after Mortimer; the Southern Region did not have a 45 limit. [Southcote Junction was passed one and a half minutes within the 23 minutes schedule]. The 45 miles per hour limit was observed carefully after Reading West, average 44.8 from Pangborne to Cholsey, Kennington Junction, 24.7 miles, was passed in 39 minutes 55 seconds and after a signal stop Oxford reached in 59 minutes 50 seconds, 21 minutes late, without the check eight minutes lost.

The last year of extensive steam was 1965, on the 3rd of July through workings from Bournemouth to Oxford were with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35011 and Rebuilt Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34004/40 and 85. The changeover of Motive Power with the Western Region occurred at either Basingstoke or Oxford apart from the through Newcastle workings. The Northbound "Pines Express", on the first Saturday of the summer timetable was hauled to Oxford by Merchant Navy No.35008, where it was replaced by a Hall Class 4-6-0 No.6930. The relief to the Pines was taken to Oxford by Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73083 which returned to Bournemouth on the Southbound "Pines". Number 35008 returned South with the Manchester to Bournemouth, No.34085 took the Bournemouth to Bradford and an LM Class 5 4-6-0 the Poole to Newcastle. Class 5 No.73087 hauled the early Portsmouth to Wolverhampton to Oxford and beyond. Number 34085 relieved a Hall Class 4-6-0 No.6980 at Oxford on the Newcastle to Bournemouth.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Hall Class 4-6-0 performance on the Southern 1963-64

The York to Bournemouth was re-routed, following the closure of the former Great Central Railway Main Line in 1966, via Worcester with diesel haulage to Reading General where a Southern Region locomotive took over to Bournemouth. The last diagrammed steam was on March 4th 1967, Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34004 did the honours. In practice steam substituted for diesel on occasions up to July.

Locomotive performance on the inter-Regional service was seldom exciting, but then in all fairness neither were the schedules, the only exceptions perhaps the "Pines Express" and those trains which made several stops between Brockenhurst and Bournemouth. Some personal experiences in the last years of steam will illustrate day to day performance.

As mentioned already Hall Class 4-6-0's regularly hauled the southbound Newcastle to Bournemouth. On the last August Saturday of 1963 No.6910 arrived a few minutes late at Basingstoke with 11 coaches, 385 tons Gross. The scheduled running time from Basingstoke to Bournemouth was 97 minutes, the actual time 101 minutes 7 seconds, station allowances were generous, the overall 117 minutes schedule was improved on by four and a quarter minutes. The initial 25 minutes to Winchester was kept exactly with 42 miles per hour at Wootton and 66 maximum at Winchester Junction. The 18 minutes schedule to Southampton was maintained with a quarter of a minute to spare without exceeding 59 miles per hour. On the next two stages to Brockenhurst and New Milton one and a quarter minutes were lost in each case, 20 minutes 14 seconds and 11 minutes 16 seconds. The maximum before Brockenhurst was only 58 miles per hour and on the adverse gradients to Sway No.6910 only reached 28. On the Downhill stage to Christchurch.28 seconds was dropped [schedule eight minutes] with only 64 miles per hour. Number 6910 reached 30 miles per hour on the 1/99 before Pokesdown before a signal check costing one and a half minutes before Bournemouth Central. The final stage from the Central to the West station took seven and a half minutes with 41 reached at Gas Works Junction, 2.2 miles, passed in 4 minutes 51 seconds.

A Modified Hall Class 4-6-0 No.6991 hauled the northbound "Newcastle" on 19th August 1964 with 11 coaches, 410 tons Gross. Scheduled running time from Bournemouth to Southampton was 47½ minutes, actual 48½ minutes, the overall time 55 minutes, the actual 55 minutes 35 seconds. Two minutes were dropped on the first three short stages to Boscombe, Pokesdown and Christchurch, and the ten minutes allowance to the next stop at New Milton was exceeded by 32 seconds. It passed Hinton Admiral in 6 minutes 33 seconds, falling to 36 miles per hour at MP100. The next two sectors to Brockenhurst and Southampton occupied 9 minutes 21 seconds and 17 minutes 43 seconds [schedule 9 and 19 minutes]. Maxima were 57 miles per hour at Lymington Junction and 66 at Totton. Quarter milepost readings indicated No.6991 developed 1,050-1,100 EDHP at MP102 at 45 miles per hour, the locomotive was being worked hard and was eased immediately afterwards. In the opposite direction No.6910 developed 1,050-1,100 on the 1/99 to Pokesdown.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on the "Newcastle" 1963-66

The northbound "Newcastle" on 2nd September 1963, 11 coaches, 385 tons Gross had Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73065. The initial five stages from Bournemouth to Brockenhurst were run in 31 minutes 46 seconds with two and a half minutes lost by a PWR slack at Hinton Admiral. The Hall No.6991 took 29 minutes 52 seconds, the schedule stipulated 27 minutes. Both trains passed Totton in 12 minutes 58 seconds from the Brockenhurst start. The train stopped at Eastleigh, Winchester and Basingstoke after Southampton, [schedules 11, 12 and 27 minutes]. Actual times by No.73065 were 11 minutes 26 seconds, 12 minutes 46 seconds and 26 minutes 58 seconds. Speeds on the long gradient were 49 miles per hour before Winchester and 45 at Roundwood, overall time Bournemouth to Basingstoke 113 minutes 52 seconds [schedule 113 minutes].

Another Standard Class 5 4-6-0 had 410 tons on the Newcastle on July 24th 1965. The schedule over the three stages from Southampton to Basingstoke had been extended to 13, 13 and 29½ minutes for the electrification works. Number 73110 took 17 minutes 17 seconds with several signal checks, 13 minutes 1 second and 30 minutes 44 seconds including a PWR slack to 32 miles per hour at Micheldever and a signal check before Basingstoke. The maximum on the 1/256 was 47 miles per hour after Wallers Ash. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34044 and 34093 hauled the train on Saturdays 7th and 21st August, they were checked badly both days before Eastleigh, 20 minutes 46 seconds and 18 minutes 54 seconds. The next stage to Winchester was run in 11 minutes 59 seconds and 12 minutes 46 seconds with attained speeds of 52 and 47 miles per hour. Times on to Basingstoke were 24 minutes 10 seconds with 54 miles per hour at Roundwood, 68 before Worting Junction and 69 afterwards and 26 minutes 3 seconds with 51 at Roundwood.

Southern Region locomotives hauled the northbound Saturday "Newcastle" in the summer of 1966. Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73113 on 9th July with 420 tons ran to Eastleigh in 12 minutes 19 seconds including a signal stop at St. Denys, to Winchester in 12 minutes 57 seconds and Basingstoke in 37 minutes 6 seconds, there was a stop for signals and two checks before Basingstoke. Six weeks later West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102 fared better. The train now had an additional stop at Southampton Airport, reached in 8 minutes 51 seconds, with 50 miles per hour at Swaythling and another 3 minutes 48 seconds to Eastleigh. The times to Eastleigh and Basingstoke were 11 minutes 1 second with a maximum of 52 miles per hour and 26 minutes 37 seconds including a PWR slack and a signal check before Basingstoke.

The sedentary schedule of the 11.38 Poole to Wolverhampton in 1965 has already been noted. Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73110 had 350 tons on Saturday July 10th 1965. Eastleigh was passed in 10 minutes 51 seconds before it caught up the preceding Alton Diesel multiple unit, Winchester in 26 minutes 5 seconds at 26 miles per hour, Worting Junction in 47 minutes 31 seconds and after signal checks Basingstoke was reached exactly to schedule in 55 minutes 3 seconds, probably 42 to 43 minutes Net.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance Oxford to Bournemouth 1963-65

The "Pines Express" had the fastest inter-Regional schedules between Bournemouth and Basingstoke, overall running time northbound with stops at Bournemouth Central, Southampton and Winchester was 88 minutes, southbound three and a half minutes less. The southbound allowance between Southampton and Bournemouth was 36 minutes, northbound 32 minutes. On two successive August weekdays in 1964 it left Southampton three and 12 minutes late, with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35005 plus 13 coaches, 490 tons Gross and Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34042 with 12 coaches, 465 tons Gross. Brockenhurst was passed in 17 minutes 26 seconds and 16 minutes 50 seconds with 68 and 71 miles per hour before, minima before Sway were 50 and 56, maxima before Christchurch 73 and 78, the station passed in 28 minutes 42 seconds and 27 minutes 34 seconds. Bournemouth was reached in 33 minutes 24 seconds and 32 minutes 34 seconds. Driver Adams with No.34044 and 485 tons Gross, in June 1965 took 31 minutes 38 seconds.

Some summer Saturday trains ran non stop from Basingstoke to Southampton, the 09.00 ex Sheffield to Poole was allowed 43½ minutes in 1965. It was hauled by a Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73110 on July 24th and by Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34093 on August 21st, ten coaches each time, 365 and 360 tons. The Class 5 after a two minutes signal stop at Worting Junction reached 56 miles per hour at Roundwood and after a PWR slack to 24, 78 before Winchester. It passed Northam Junction in 42 minutes 10 seconds and reached Southampton five minutes late after a signal check, 37-38 minutes Net. The West Country passed Micheldever in 15 minutes 46 seconds at 73 miles per hour, reached 80, was checked to 3 at Wallers Ash, to 30 for a PWR slack before Winchester, attained 79 at Eastleigh and reached Southampton in 41 minutes 20 seconds, 34 minutes Net. Number 73110 on July 10th had a light train on a relief Sheffield, eight coaches and ran unchecked in 39 minutes 10 seconds without exceeding 70 miles per hour.

The last personal experience with steam on the "Pines Express" was on November 19th 1965, it was one and a half hours late at Birmingham. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35027 replaced the Brush Type 4 Diesel at Oxford and with 13 coaches, 475 tons Gross passed Culham, 7.3 miles, in 10 minutes 35 seconds at 66 miles per hour and Didcot North Junction in 12 minutes 50 seconds at 68. Signals reduced this to 26 miles per hour at the East Junction, normally taken at 40, then on the Local line the maximum at Goring was only 65 and Reading West was reached in 36 minutes 7 seconds. Earlier in the year the 435 tons Saturday Bradford to Poole with Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34034, passed Culham in 11 minutes 45 seconds at 64 miles per hour, Didcot North in 15 minutes 13 seconds after signals at Appleford. It attained 70 miles per hour at Goring before signal checks and. Reached Reading West in 36 minutes 42 seconds [schedule 39 minutes]. On the rare occasions trains had a clear run speeds reached the mid 70's around Goring and Cholsey. West Country Class No.34103 attained 76 miles per hour with 450 tons in June 1964 on the "Pines" and Rebuilt No.34095 75 on August 14th with the Bournemouth to Sheffield.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, LM Class 5 4-6-0 performance 1966

The Reading to Basingstoke branch initially fell at 1/258 after Southcote Junction before it rose continuously to Basingstoke except for a short stretch before Mortimer and one and a half miles past Bramley station, the average over the 12½ miles was 1/370. West Country Class No.34034 with 435 tons passed Mortimer, 6.3 miles in 8 minutes 58 seconds from Reading West at 56 miles per hour, Merchant Navy Class No.35027, with 475 tons in 9 minutes 25 seconds at 57. Speeds at Silchester crossing were 62 and 56 miles per hour, No.34034 after signal checks reached Basingstoke in 23 minutes 50 seconds [schedule 27 minutes]. The Merchant Navy after a PWR slack to 21 miles per hour accelerated from 42 to 44 on the 1/134½, 1,600-1,650 EDHP and reached Basingstoke in 23 minutes 40 seconds [schedule 23 minutes].

The LM Class 5 4-6-0's from Banbury depot apparently performed well in 1966 when running to Bournemouth and back the following day on the York to Bournemouth. The Bournemouth drivers seemed prepared to let them run faster downhill than the Hall Class 4-6-0's. Number 45493, a regular performer, with only eight coaches, 290 tons Gross starting from Basingstoke passed Worting Junction in 5 minutes 48 seconds at 41 miles per hour before a PWR slack, Micheldever in 16 minutes 5 seconds and after 80 maximum, reached Winchester in 26 minutes 16 seconds [schedule 26 minutes]. There was a long stop for signals before Eastleigh; it took 29¼ minutes to reach Southampton. Four a quarter minutes of the lost time was recovered to the next stop at Brockenhurst, 17 minutes 15 seconds with Totton passed in 5 minutes 51 seconds and 70 miles per hour attained before the stop. Later in the year, on a day when the train loaded to 15 coaches the driver requested assistance from Brockenhurst to Sway.

The last personal experience of steam on an inter-Regional was on July 4th 1967, Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34095 instead of the diagrammed diesel hauled 11 coaches, 410 tons Gross from Reading General. It was checked by signals before Micheldever and Southampton and for a PWR slack after Winchester. The maximum was 70 miles per hour at Winchester Junction, the overall running time Basingstoke to Southampton 52 minutes 36 seconds [schedule 46½ minutes]. This, the last steam hauled scheduled inter-Regional train, a somewhat inauspicious performance, was not untypical.

References and Notes

- Ref.1 Railway World [RW] Vol.20 Rescued by Rover by R.K.Kirkland
- Ref.2 [RW] Vol. 23 p.41 N.Harvey
- Ref.3 Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society [SLS] 1963
- Ref.4 [SLS] Vol. XXXIX
- Ref.5 [RW] Vol. 20 p.573
- Ref.6 [RW] Vol. 22 p.327-33
- Ref.7 [RW] Vol. XVII p.125
- Ref.8 Railway Magazine Vol.105
- Ref.9 P.R.Wallis.. "On Engines in Britain and France" Ian Allan 1957

Chapter; 30 SPECIAL EVENTS.

Steam hauled specials for Association Football Club supporters were not as frequent on the Southern Region as in other parts of the UK. The London based First Division sides, if they were not playing against each other generally travelled north. Twickenham Rugby Football Ground, very much a Southern preserve was served by the Suburban electrified network. FA Cup ties did however at times lead to the large-scale movement of supporters to and from the South East. Tottenham Hotspur in 1948 played at Southampton in the sixth round of the Cup and there were special trains from Waterloo at 10.00, 10.15, 10.30 and 10.45, all with King Arthur Class 4-6-0's. The 10.45, 12 coaches, 420 tons Gross taken by No.766 with a schedule of 34 minutes to Woking and 61 to Basingstoke. Number 766 did rather better with eight and a half minutes to Clapham Junction 29 minutes to Woking and 53 minutes 44 seconds to Basingstoke, an average EDHP from Woking to Basingstoke of 930-980. It was checked badly for signals after Basingstoke, passed Litchfield in 71 minutes 4 seconds, attained 87 miles per hour near Winchester and reached Southampton in 96 minutes [schedule 100 minutes] 85-86 minutes Net. Number 792 in the Up direction with ten coaches, checked by signals before Eastleigh and before Clapham Junction took 102 minutes 56 seconds to Waterloo after passing Hampton Court Junction in 83½ minutes. [Ref.1]

The following February Newport visited Portsmouth and eight special trains ran with locomotives changed at Salisbury, the Southern Region used two D15 Class 4-4-0's, two U Class 2-6-0's, one N Class 2-6-0 and three West Country Class 4-6-2's. The next month when Millwall played at Reading a ten coach train ran from London Bridge to Reading via Redhill hauled by N Class 2-6-0 No.1824, a circuitous route for the fans. There were occasions, as already seen with King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.766 working to Southampton, when locomotive performance with Football specials was up to normal express standards. An H2 Class 4-4-2 with nine coaches including a Refreshment Car in 1953, destined for Norwich from Brighton, ran to New Cross Gate in 64 minutes, including two scheduled stops, Net time was assessed as 57 minutes, probably equivalent to less than 60 minutes non stop Brighton to London Bridge. Portsmouth played at Bristol on the second Saturday of 1955 when there were four special's provided, three made up to 11 coaches, the other to nine, Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's hauled all four to Bristol. These locomotives were no strangers to Bristol and on November 13th No.34090 worked through to Weston Super Mare with 11 coaches and averaged 75 miles per hour on the level between Nailsea and Puxton & Worle with a maximum of 77.

Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34089 took an 11 coach Football special on November 3rd 1962 from Bournemouth to Coventry via Basingstoke and Leamington, returning via Fordingbridge and Wimborne. This was a foretaste of an invasion of the West Midlands when Southampton played Manchester United in the FA Cup semi-final at Villa Park.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Horse Race Meetings

There were 13 trains from Southampton to the West Midlands, departures from 07.00 to 09.00, to Birmingham via Basingstoke and Oxford, twelve of these with Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's, the other had 4-6-0 haulage, a Standard Class 5 to Basingstoke and a Hall from thereon. There were two trains by other routes, one from Eastleigh via Southampton, Salisbury and Westbury and one from Brockenhurst via the Somerset and Dorset Joint line.

Horse Race Meetings, significant events for the Southern Railway, were in many cases by 1948 served by electric trains, including Ascot, Epsom and Goodwood. The use of electric multiple units simplified logistics, particularly for the Derby and Oaks meeting at Epsom, the only steam hauled trains were the Royal and Pullman specials. On Derby Day in 1951 there were four locomotive hauled trains: two ex Victoria to Epsom Downs, one taken by an electric locomotive, the other by two LM Class 2-6-4 Tank's Nos.42084 and 42087, running bunker to bunker with nine Pullman Cars - two to Tattenham Corner, one ex Cannon Street with N1 Class 2-6-0 No.31879 and eight coaches, the other ex Charing Cross with N1 No.31822 and seven coaches. The three cylinder N1 Class were for many years the preferred locomotives for specials on the Tattenham Corner branch.

The following year all locomotive hauled trains were electric whereas in 1953 the Royal Train to Tattenham Corner had Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30915 and the eight coach Pullman ex Charing Cross N1 Class 2-6-0 No.31822. The first Class Pullman trains to Ascot were revived that year, they consisted of three Kitchen and six Pullman Cars, motive power from Waterloo on June 10th and 11th West Country Class 4-6-2's Nos.34107 and 34011. The Royal Train for Derby Day 1954, June 2nd, four Pullman Cars, left Victoria at 12.10 behind Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30936. Her Majesty returned from Chessington South at 17.15, 25 minutes to Waterloo, behind West Country No.34011. The Pullman special from Charing Cross had the customary N1, No.31880, but patronage was declining, five coaches sufficed. The Ascot Specials ran on four days, with West Country No.34020 and ten coaches on June 17th.

The Royal Special to Tattenham Corner, four Pullman Cars, later three plus the Royal Saloon was steam hauled every year from 1955 to 1964. For the first eight Schools Class 4-4-0's had the honour, No.30924 the last year, the next two years Rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's, in 1963 No.34088, at that time regularly used on special workings between Victoria and Gatwick Airport for visiting Overseas VIP's and in 1964 No.34052, subsequent to this electric locomotives. Derby Days imbued a sense of importance to the Tattenham Corner Branch; the writer remembers the immaculate spare locomotives, often a K Class 2-6-0, simmering gently in the goods siding at Chipstead during the afternoon. Strictly speaking Royal trains do not fall within the remit of this book; they were hardly available for Public use although they certainly commanded Public attention. They were planned in great detail, as an appendix to this chapter the arrangements for the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to the Winchfield and Hook area on July 15th 1953 are reproduced.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Lingfield Race Meetings, 1948-57

The Lingfield Race Meeting for many years was served by steam hauled specials. There were trains to Lingfield, on the Oxted to East Grinstead line, from London in 1948 hauled by N Class 2-6-0's Nos.1406, 31413, 31815 and 31816 and U Class 2-6-0 No.31614. The LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's as they became available, were subsequently preferred as they avoided the need for turning at East Grinstead. [This involved running through the Lower station and reversing up the freight connection to the Upper station] The Tank's however had to run to Oxted and back to take on water and footplate crews appeared unable to keep time with them. Consequently at the Autumn Meeting, November 12th and 13th tender locomotives were employed on all London to Lingfield specials other than the Cannon Street train on the 12th, Tank No.42080 lost 25 minutes. Locomotives on the 13th were N Nos.31411 and 31413 and U1 Nos.31904 and 31905 from Bricklayers Arms Depot and U1 No.31891 from Stewarts Lane. The special from Brighton via Horsted Keynes was entrusted to a 2-6-4 Tank, No.42103 albeit with only four coaches.

The reputed ineffectiveness of the Class 4 2-6-4 Tank's in the early fifties did not prevent the use of LM Nos.42082 and 42088 and Standard Nos.80012 and 80151 on Victoria to Lingfield specials on August 20th 1955. The Brighton train had Standard Tank No.80122 and the 12.33 ex Cannon Street N Class 2-6-0 No.31812, reportedly the closest to schedule passing Hurst Green. [Ref.2] The Victoria Lingfield specials in 1957 left at 11.38, 11.50, 12.02, 12.03 and 12.39: the 12.03 was the normal Saturday train to East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells strengthened to eight coaches, it was the longstanding 12.03 Victoria to Brighton via East Grinstead and Sheffield Park re-routed to Tunbridge Wells after the closure of the Horsted Keynes to Culver Junction line, "Bluebelle". [The weekdays 12.03 was re-timed to 12.08 ex Victoria upon the introduction of the Oxted line interval service in 1955, after the "Bluebelle" closed] - 11.38, nine former SE&C coaches, N Class 2-6-0 No.31413 - 11.50, eight coaches plus a Pullman Car, N No.31412 - 12.02, eight coaches, LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42080 - 12.39, seven coaches plus two Pullman Cars, U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31914. The 12.02 ran to Lingfield in 45 minutes, the 12.03 arrived 12 minutes late at 13.14 and the last train with U1 No.31914 took 51 minutes. There was one train ex London Bridge, 12.39, LM Tank No.42081 with the eight coaches set used on the weekday 17.50 Victoria to Groombridge plus another vehicle. It arrived Lingfield five minutes after the last train from Victoria, The Brighton train left at 12.11 and reached Lingfield at 13.03, Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.80147 with four coaches.

The handling of the stock and locomotives was complicated, although much practised over the years. The coaches from the 11.38 ex Victoria remained at Lingfield; the locomotive proceeded to East Grinstead to turn. The locomotive on the 11.50 ex Victoria, after disposing of the carriages in a siding at Lingfield, piloted the locomotive from the 12.02 ex Victoria to East Grinstead, where the coaches were stored and both locomotives turned. The Brighton locomotive and train were stabled at Lingfield, the first locomotive to arrive back at Lingfield after turning at East Grinstead was No.31413 at 13.25.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Farnborough Air Show 1950

On another occasion, in 1957 the return workings from Lingfield were; 16.34, the regular weekday 15.47 ex Tunbridge Wells West to London Bridge, LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42067 with ten coaches including four Hastings Route restricted width vehicles - 16.45, U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31904, seven coaches plus two Pullman Cars - 16.55, Tank No.42091, nine coaches - 16.58 to Brighton - 17.09, No.42106, nine coaches - 17.17, No.42090, nine coaches - 17.30, 42080, nine coaches, this train had stabled at East Grinstead. Working six trains weighing between 320 and 360 tons within an hour up the rising gradients to MP17¾ with Class 4 Tanks challenged the footplate crews. A personal recollection on the 17.09 ex Lingfield on the 4th July 1958; albeit with an N Class 2-6-0, No.31411 with 340 tons Gross, seven coaches plus two Pullman Cars fell to 38 miles per hour minimum before Hurst Green Junction, after averaging 39 from MP25 [1/150 average]. There was a check for signals before Oxted, passed in 11 minutes 55 seconds at ten miles per hour before the N reached 32 on the 1/132 in Woldingham tunnel and 57 at Upper Warlingham. Sanderstead, 14.0 miles was passed in 25 minutes 1 second and after a signal check at South Croydon, East Croydon reached in 30 minutes 27 seconds, 900-960EDHP average between MP's 25 and 17¾.

The Lingfield Specials for the 1964 Autumn Meeting all had either diesel locomotives or consisted of Diesel Multiple Units. To achieve this required 34 additional steam trains in Sussex, six special engine workings, three at Eastborne, two at Tunbridge Wells and one at Three Bridges, the DMU schedules were reportedly maintained by the 2-6-4 and 2-6-2 Tank's. Whether the Race-goers would have preferred corridor stock hauled by steam to an Oxted line DMU was not a question asked in 1964.

There were many reasons for Special trains, inter alia, a visit to see the Ocean Liners at Southampton, Bonfire Nights in East Sussex and Military Tattoos; an occasion requiring rather more planning was the Farnborough Air Show in 1950. The Southern Region, as a result of the ravages of War particularly short of coaching stock, borrowed from the Eastern Region six off eight coach sets recently made redundant as a result of Suburban electrification at Liverpool Street. These sets, fitted with Westinghouse Brakes, required air-braked locomotives, i.e. those of the former London Brighton and South Coast Railway.

There were seven extra train sets from Waterloo for the Air Show during the week, three of Southern stock hauled by King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, the other four with Westinghouse Braked stock hauled by three K Class 2-6-0's and one H2 Class 4-4-2. There were ten extra trains on the Saturday, six of them with Westinghouse braked stock, locomotives were two H2 Class, three B4X Class 4-4-0's and three K Class 2-6-0's, an S15 Class 4-6-0 and a 700 Class 0-6-0 inter alia appeared on the Southern stock. The H2 and K Class were in daily use on the Central Section, the B4X 4-4-0's however were taken from long term store, there was only one at that time in use, No.2072. Drivers involved with the specials reputedly liked the B4X 4-4-0's, footplate crew's reactions have always been an enigma.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, the Spithead Royal Naval Review, 1953

The last train from Waterloo, the 13.38, experienced some difficulties, it initially stopped at Vauxhall so the driver could release the brakes, subsequently speeds were 11 miles per hour at Clapham Junction and 23 maximum before Surbiton, the driver afterwards said the locomotive, B4X No.32071 was not to blame. There were 11 trains from Farnborough between 17.25 and 20.45, with one H15 Class 4-6-0 No.30331, one H2, two B4X's, one U Class 2-6-0, two K and one 700 No.30339, on the last train with eight Southern coaches credited with a brisk run. There were Farnborough specials from Southampton and Poole headed by King Arthur No.30779 and West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34093 and a four coach shuttle ran between Guildford and North Camp with I3 Class 4-4-2's Nos.32088, 32089 and 32091.

Her Majesty the Queen's Coronation in 1953 involved Specials to London for those wishing to observe, the outstanding two, both all Pullman, 12 coaches from Southampton to Victoria via Wimbledon and Tooting for passengers on the cruise ship "Caronia" and from Dover with Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70004.

The Royal Naval Review at Spithead, ten days after the Coronation involved the Southern Region in considerable extra traffic. There were two excursions to Southampton Docks on the Saturday, June 13th with King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30456 and a West Country Class 4-6-2. There were specials on the Sunday from Swansea and Cardiff, Southern locomotives from Salisbury, West Country Nos.34003 and 34100. An excursion from Cheltenham via the Midland and South West Junction was worked through to Southampton by former GWR 43xx Class 2-6-0 No.6348. There were five steam hauled trains to Portsmouth via Eastleigh, three from the Western Region [Kidsgrove, Southall, Wolverhampton], hauled by Hall Class 4-6-0's throughout and two from the Midland Region [Leicester, Wellingborough] which reached Portsmouth behind West Country No.34005 and Battle of Britain No.34065. There was an hourly service between Chichester and Portsmouth and additional trains between Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton.

There were 32 Specials from Waterloo on the Monday, 25 of these steam hauled to Southampton [seven were electrics to Portsmouth] The Southampton trains left Waterloo between 07.00 and 10.55 behind five Maunsell and three Urie King Arthur Class 4-6-0's, seven Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0's and ten 4-6-2's. The heaviest train the 08.15, 12 Pullman Cars, c.510 tons Gross had Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34063. The only incident, a hot box on the 10.10 made up of ten London Midland Region coaches, caused a delay of 29 minutes at Micheldever. King Arthur No.30763 after attention to the offending vehicle ran the 20.0 miles to Southampton Docks in 20 minutes. Carriage stock came to Waterloo from as far away as Eastleigh, also from Farnborough, Brookwood, Woking, Walton, Esher, Surbiton, Wimbledon and Brentford, the rest was stored at Clapham Junction. Additionally incoming scheduled services were rapidly turned round at Waterloo and despatched to Southampton. The 06.04 ex Southampton Terminus for example arrived at Waterloo at 08.24 and left 18 minutes later, the 07.23 ex Eastleigh at 09.16 left 35 minutes later and the 08.25 ex Basingstoke, with N15X Class 4-6-0 No.32328 arrived 09.43 and left at 10.00.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Hop Pickers

There were 12 Specials from Victoria, [six to Portsmouth and three to Chichester formed of electric multiple unit stock or hauled by electric locomotives] three of them hauled by U1 Class 2-6-0's Nos.31903, 31904 and 31906 to Fareham, one of these was taken on to Gosport by Q1 Class 0-6-0 No.33024. The three electric locomotives Nos.E2001, 2002 and 2003 were relieved at Chichester by U or K Class 2-6-0's for the final stage to Fareham, [including Nos.31809 and 32349]. The return trains from Southampton commenced at 19.36 with a peak of 18 between 01.03 and 03.41 and another batch of 11 between 08.05 and 11.03. The 12 coach Pullman Car set was used intensively:- 20.40 ex Docks to Waterloo - return empty - 03.41 ex Docks to Waterloo - 05.48 ex Waterloo to Docks empty - 17.25 ex Docks to Waterloo, "Cunarder" Boat train,[incoming "Queen Mary"]. Four train sets made two return journeys between Southampton and Waterloo.

An annual special requirement was the movement of workers from London to the Kent and East Sussex fields for the Hop Picking Season in September plus the visits of their friends and relatives at weekends. Pre War trains regularly involved the Wainwright rebuilt Stirling 4-4-0's, post War the Maunsell rebuilt Wainwright 4-4-0's predominated. Typical workings i.e. September 2nd 1950: 08.17 London Bridge to Pluckley, seven coaches plus two vans, E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31166 - returned empty stock - 16.43 London Bridge Maidstone West via Sevenoaks - 12.40 London Bridge Maidstone West via Oxted, six coaches plus four vans, E1 No.31547 - 15.01 London Bridge Ashford via Otford, six coaches plus four vans, E1 No.31159. There was a peak Sunday evening each year during the season. September 16th was the day in 1951, 21 trains arrived at London Bridge from 18.37 to 22.02. [There were two additional ones ex Dover, one to Chatham the other to Rochester]. The 21 trains took advantage of the Southern Region's plethora of routes, eight ran from Tonbridge via the Main Line through Orpington, 12 via Oxted and one Main Line to Sevenoaks and then via Swanley. On this particular evening there were 18 Up trains past Oxted in a four and a half hours period including the six usual scheduled services.

The 1952 service for Hop Picker's friends was less intensive, many were hauled by D1, E1 and L1 Class 4-4-0's with some D and E Class 4-4-0's and even C Class 0-6-0's. A modern touch was introduced, one Sunday duty undertaken by a 2-6-4 Tank. There were 17 specials the following year on the peak Sunday evening, they all stopped at Tonbridge, 14 within a two hours period, locomotives included three D1, two L1 and one D, three 0-6-0's, one N and one N1 Class 2-6-0's and a solitary Schools Class 4-4-0. The Schools hauled the 18.15 ex Northiam on the former Kent and East Sussex Railway. This train, seven coaches including a Buffet, plus two vans was taken from Northiam to Robertsbridge by two "Terrier" A1X Class 0-6-0 Tank's, No.32670 in front and No.32659 at the rear. To avoid excessive weights, even "Terriers", they worked light engine from Robertsbridge to Northiam with a coach sandwiched between them. At Northiam one locomotive, No.32670 on this occasion, was attached to the six waiting coaches plus vans and the other buffered up to the rear with the Buffet car between it and the six coaches.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Ramblers Excursion's

The two "Terriers", in their top and tail formation ran the 3.55 miles from Northiam to Bodiam in 9 minutes 55 seconds, the 0.95 miles from there to a stop 200 yards West of Junction Road Halt in three minutes exactly and the 2.5 miles to Robertsbridge in eight minutes. They passed Salehurst Halt, 1.3 miles in four minutes.

The peak 1957 evening was September 15th, although the number of special trains had fallen to 11. The two "Terriers" on the 18.15 ex Northiam were Nos.32670 and 32678. Ten trains ran to London Bridge [arrival 18.51 to 22.46], the other from Dover to Chatham. Two started from Ashford, one from Headcorn, two from the Hawkhurst branch and four from Maidstone West. They all stopped at Tonbridge and continued to London, half via Oxted and East Croydon and half via the Main Line with one diverted via Otford and Swanley. Schedules to London from Tonbridge were 52-58 minutes via the Main Line with two stops, one of which was at New Cross and 70 minutes via the Crowhurst loop, five minutes longer if there was a water stop at Oxted.

There were 12 trains for Hop Picker's and friends on both September 14th and 21st 1958. On the first day C Class 0-6-0's hauled the trains numbered H70 and H71 to Maidstone West via Orpington. In the Up direction, as in previous years half of the trains ran via Oxted. Two trains on the 14th, H80 and H86, [17.02 and 19.23 ex Headcorn] were hauled by Schools Class 4-4-0's, as was H83 from Ashford the following Sunday, D1, E1 and L1 Class 4-4-0's were used on others. An established pattern from previous years was followed on the second Sunday, an LM Class 4 2-6-4 Tank No.42080 on the 21.20 Maidstone West to London Bridge. However Hop Picking or at least the use of people from East London was in decline.

Another special interest group, the Ramblers, organised Special Trains, which often loaded heavily, frequently travelled over secondary routes and were of interest to Railway enthusiasts as they provided a steam hauled passenger service over some normally all electric Suburban routes. They also at times used unusual motive power with the result the clientele often included railway enthusiasts not renowned for their walking attributes.

N Class 2-6-0 No.31813 hauled 11 coaches from Victoria to Gomshall on the 9th July 1950 with another N as pilot over the heavy grades from Redhill to Gomshall. There were several similar trains to Gomshall over the next few months, loads nine to 11 coaches, when no assistance was taken from Redhill. The locomotives, L or L1 Class 4-4-0's or N's apparently had to be driven hard up the 1/96 west of Dorking despite which time was only kept by fast running downhill. On Sunday July 23rd, the 11 coach Ramblers excursion ran to Hildenborough, Tonbridge and High Brooms via Crystal Palace Low Level with U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31906 and a D Class 4-4-0 No.31488 taken as pilot from Tonbridge. Four weeks later N Class 2-6-0 No.31812 also with 11 coaches for Frant, Wadhurst and Stonegate via Redhill was late passing Tonbridge and elected to forego assistance on to Tunbridge Wells.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Ramblers Excursions

The N Class 2-6-0's were not within the Hastings Branch Loading Gauge, the three cylinder N1 Class were and in the evening N1 No.31879 hauled the train back to Tonbridge where the miscreant No.31813 took over for the journey back to London. A Special to Charing and Hothfield on September 17th also via Crystal Palace brought a Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 to the Balham to Beckenham line. Four weeks later the destination was Selham on the Midhurst branch, the ten coaches taken to Horsham by U1 Class 2-6-0 No.31908 where it was relieved by a Q Class 0-6-0 observed later passing Billingshurst at a "good speed".

Locomotive work at times was demanding on the Ramblers, arguably the hardest task fell to the N and U1 Class 2-6-0's with 11 coaches on the specials to Sheffield Park, Uckfield or Groombridge, the first had to run over the challenging Lingfield to East Grinstead stretch, they were observed maintaining schedule with 375-400 tons. [Ref.3]

A U1 Class 2-6-0 hauled ten coaches to Heathfield in 1952 with a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank attached as pilot at Oxted. Later in the year, the same locomotive, No.31906 hauled 11 coaches destined for Cranleigh as far as Guildford via West Croydon, Leatherhead and Effingham Junction. A pair of 700 Class 0-6-0's replaced it at Guildford; the previous year the 700's hauled the train throughout. This was a case where the Rambler's were given greater motive power than some other trains; there had been occasions when a 700 had taken 11 coaches unassisted between Guildford and Christs Hospital on Reading to the South Coast Excursions. Whilst the Battle of Britain/West Country Class 4-6-2's were occasionally employed on Rambler's trains in the early years, No.34066 worked to Hothfield in 1950 and No.34071 took 11 coaches to Sheffield Park in 1953 they were regulars by 1955. Number 34066 hauled eight coaches to Heathfield and on May 22nd No.34101 had 11 coaches to Hollingborne, Harrietsham and Lenham on the Maidstone to Ashford line. It left Victoria at 09.34 and was allowed 55 minutes over the 34.3 miles from Bromley South to the next stop at Hollingborne including the 1/60 after Maidstone. The actual time was 46 minutes 37 seconds with 79 miles per hour maximum between Wrotham and West Malling, Lenham after a stop at Harrietsham was reached at 11.18.

The need for two locomotives on the Ramblers decreased over the years, but there were still exceptions. The visit to the Hawkhurst Branch on May 28th 1961, shortly before the line was closed, involved D1 and E1 Class 4-4-0's Nos.31739 and 31067 with nine coaches, the route taken from London to Paddock Wood was via Redhill. Two weeks later a Q Class 0-6-0 hauled ten coaches, 360 tons Gross, unaided from Victoria to Cranleigh via West Croydon, Leatherhead and Effingham Junction. It stopped at Wrest Croydon, Sutton and Leatherhead, the initial short stage to Clapham Junction took seven minutes, after a signal stop at Carshalton Beeches it was six minutes late at Sutton. Speeds were 31 miles per hour at Balham, 40 after Streatham Junction, 50 at Ashstead and 56 at Clandon. Cranleigh was finally reached six minutes late. The return journey commenced at Cranleigh at 19.45 and after many checks reached Victoria 25 minutes late.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, interval steam service between Brighton and Eastborne

All Railways are compelled on occasions through inclement Weather to implement emergency Timetables. The Southern Railway and later the Southern Region at times of heavy snowfalls, flooding or when conductor rails were iced up either resorted to propelling electric trains with steam locomotives or on occasions replaced the electric set with steam hauled stock. There was severe flooding in early November 1960 in the south and west of England, in the area around Lewes it was so bad that electric services were impossible and steam locomotive hauled trains ran between Brighton and Eastborne. Initially on an as available basis but a half-hourly interval service was shortly introduced with Brighton departures at 12 and 44 minutes past the hour and Eastborne at 21 and 51 minutes past. The Friday trains were made up to eight or nine coaches but on the Saturday, after implementation of the interval service four or five. Locomotives used included seven Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tanks, three K Class 2-6-0's, two U1 Class 2-6-0's, two C class 0-6-0's, two M7 Class 0-4-4 Tanks including No.30053, one Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2, one Standard Class 4 4-6-0, one N Class 2-6-0 and one Q Class 0-6-0.

The short lived Regency Belle Pullman, it ran from Victoria to Brighton on Saturday evenings returning from Brighton early Sunday morning, was normally made up of "Brighton Belle" Electric Multiple Unit stock. On April 4th 1964 it returned via the Steyning Line due to engineering works on the Maim line, with steam haulage, seven Pullman Cars plus two luggage vans and rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34088. One of the last occasions a steam hauled passenger train left a Central Section London Terminus.

No account of Southern Region steam hauled specials would be complete without reference to a journey made by Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34051 with five Pullman coaches and an Eastleigh built parcels van from Waterloo to Handborough, North of Oxford. [The author later regularly saw the van at the Industry Hill Golf Club in California for many years] Number 34051 passed Barnes in 11 minutes, Twickenham in 18, Virginia in 36, Ascot in 46, Wokingham in 56, Reading Spur Junction in 65 and stopped at Reading East for two minutes in 66. It passed Didcot East in 23 minutes from the restart, Oxford in 36, Yarnton in 41 and stopped at Handborough in 47. The author watched the train, with many others, as it passed through Feltham on January 30th 1965 as Sir Winston Churchill made his journey to his final resting-place at Blaydon in Oxfordshire.

References and Notes

- Ref. 1 Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society [SLS] Vol. XXIV p.9
- Ref. 2 Journal of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society [RO]
Vol. XXIV p.365
- Ref. 3 [RO] Vol. XXV p.316 & [SLS] Vol. 27 p.24

Chapter: 31 ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The Southern Region possessed various alternative routes, many of which were the result of the Victorian Railway Companies anti-competitive practices. These routes were often used by scheduled Services, particularly at peak periods to avoid bottlenecks and of greater operating interest, in emergencies.

The longest disruption caused by Natural events post Nationalisation followed the East Coast floods in January 1953. The Herne Bay to Birchington line was closed to all traffic from January 31st to May 21st after the sea defences were breached. Initially London to Margate and Ramsgate trains ran beyond Faversham via Canterbury East, Kearsney Junction, Minster, Ramsgate and Margate. Although the diverted trains were scheduled from Faversham to Ramsgate with only the one stop at Canterbury, in practice most paused at Kearsney to attach a pilot locomotive for the 1/70 climb to Martin Mill. Pilots, due to the absence of watering facilities at Kearsney and Martin Mill had to be tender locomotives; one regular was D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31470.

This circuitous route to Ramsgate was significantly shortened when the connection from the former London Chatham and Dover Railway to the South Eastern Ashford to Margate line at Canterbury was reopened. The new connection, fully signalled twin track, opened on February 23rd and reduced the distance from Faversham to Ramsgate by some 16 miles whilst avoiding the steep gradients either side of Martin Mill. A regular service was initiated from the opening date between Victoria and Birchington via Faversham, Canterbury West, Ramsgate and Margate. One outcome was that Ramsgate received a service from London in 106 minutes, the second quickest ever; conversely times to Margate were significantly slower than before. These diverted trains ran until May 22nd when the Herne Bay to Birchington stretch was reopened. There do not appear to have been any observed inspired locomotive performances during this period but conversely there were no major complaints concerning punctuality. Unless the travelling Public recognised the difficulties the Railway was operating under and suppressed their feelings! The commissioning of the connection at Canterbury within four weeks and the reestablishment of the Herne Bay to Birchington line one week earlier than the estimate made immediately after the disaster with hindsight appear impressive. The first six months of 1953 was certainly a challenging time for the Southern Region with both the effects of the Kent floods and the axle difficulties with the Bulleid Pacific's.

Many "regular" diversions on the Eastern Section occurred during repairs to one of the innumerable tunnels, particularly on the former South Eastern Main Line. Polhill was closed from February 29th 1948 for three weeks, most trains ran via Sevenoaks Bat and Ball and Swanley. Typically an extra nine or ten minutes was allowed, Folkestone to Waterloo non stop in 95 minutes. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.918 with eight coaches passed Sevenoaks three minutes early and with 58 miles per hour at Otford, 61 at St Mary Cray reached Waterloo in 90 minutes 55 seconds.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, South Eastern Diversions

D.W.Winkworth in his book on the Schools Class 4-4-0's detailed his experiences at the time on the 06.58 ex Hastings to Cannon Street, allowed an extra nine minutes for the diversion. Schools kept time easily with 11 coaches; the best Net time was only one minute longer than the 31 minutes schedule for the normal route from Sevenoaks to Cannon Street, 3.6 miles shorter. [Ref.1] Diversions were not always handled so well, on the 13th April 1950 for instance Ramsgate to London Bridge trains via the South Eastern Main Line were diverted via Redhill. The 15.25 ex Margate, due Charing Cross 18.30 was noted at East Croydon at 18.45.

The availability of several alternative routes was at times fortuitous. There were engineering works in Sevenoaks tunnel on January 16th 1955, the following trains ran via East Croydon, Oxted and the Crowhurst spur to Tonbridge: 04.05 London Bridge to Hastings - 07.15 Charing Cross to Ramsgate - 09.25 Charing Cross to Hastings with Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30937 - 11.12 Charing Cross to Margate, Schools No.30936 - 13.40 Hastings to Charing Cross - 14.36 Margate to Charing Cross, L1 Class 4-4-0 No.31759. Other trains stopping at Tonbridge ran via Redhill between Tonbridge and East Croydon, those trains booked non stop between Ashford and London ran via Maidstone East. The 04.55 Sunday London Bridge to Hastings took an unusual route on March 18th, via East Croydon, Oxted and Tunbridge Wells West. It continued from the West to the Central station via the single connecting line before departing in the opposite direction for Hastings. Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30914, motive power to Tunbridge Wells arrived there early after 74 miles per hour maximum between Oxted and Edenbridge at Monks Lane.

There were engineering works at Headcorn between Tonbridge and Ashford on several 1956 late spring Sundays. Trains from Ashford, Folkestone and beyond ran via Maidstone East, a familiar route for crews, they regularly took Boat trains this way, the likelihood of signal checks was less than if diverted via Redhill, performances were often lively. The normal additional allowance for diversion via this route was ten minutes. A Schools Class 4-4-0 was reported attaining 91 miles per hour with ten coaches at West Malling, a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30800 with only six coaches left Ashford almost four and a half minutes late and despite signal checks at Grove Park maintained the normal schedule to Charing Cross. This would suggest 71 minutes for the 56.3 miles from Ashford to London Bridge via Maidstone. Polhill tunnel was closed on November 25th 1956 and trains were diverted via Swanley and Otford. The 15.25 ex Charing Cross to Hastings with a Schools Class 4-4-0 and six coaches made an additional stop at Chislehurst. The 25 minutes schedule from there to Sevenoaks, 14.5 miles, was cut to 20 minutes 55 seconds with 61 miles per hour at St Mary Cray and 60 at Eynsford.

The Sevenoaks tunnel was closed again on the first three Sundays in February 1957. The 09.15 ex Charing Cross and the 17.50 ex Folkestone ran via Maidstone as did the Boat trains, all others via Redhill, schedules via Redhill were generous reflecting the intensive use of the Brighton Main Line.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Eastern Section Diversions via Redhill or Maidstone 1957

The 12.17 from Tonbridge on February 3rd was allowed 67 minutes to Charing Cross, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34067 improved on this by six and a half minutes. The following Sunday Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30919 ran from Redhill to the next stop at London Bridge in 27 minutes, passing times were East Croydon 11¼ minutes and New Cross Gate 21. Schools No.30904 on the third Sunday with 260 tons attained 32 miles per hour on the 1/100 to Forest Hill from a start at New Cross Gate, it was checked by signals at East Croydon and Star Lane before Redhill. With a clear road afterwards, it reached Tonbridge, 37.5 miles in 53 minutes 5 seconds, after a maximum of 77 miles per hour at Edenbridge [schedule 59 minutes].

Sir James Colyer Ferguson travelled to Folkestone on the 09.15 ex Charing Cross via Maidstone, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34100, driver Collins and ten coaches, 345 tons Gross. Otford was passed two minutes late after various delays, 37 minutes 36 seconds from Waterloo at 42 miles per hour. Schedule on to Ashford, 35.1 miles, was 49 minutes pass to pass, the Bricklayers Arms crew cut this to 39 minutes 52 seconds. The Maximum before Maidstone was 78 miles per hour, at Maidstone 40, minimum on the 1/60 afterwards 32, the average from Maidstone to Lenham was 41½, 1,100-1,150EDHP average. Speeds afterwards were, 75 miles per hour on the descent towards Ashford, a slow passage through the station, 64 on the rising grades to Westenhanger, 59 minimum afterwards and finally 75 before a signal check outside Folkestone Central. The station was reached in 92 minutes 56 seconds [schedule 100½ minutes], 86 to 87 minutes Net, normal schedule via Tonbridge was 85 minutes. The same crew returned to London on the 11.14 from Folkestone [09.40 ex Margate] with West Country No.34099 and 11 coaches, 400 tons Gross. The first 32¼ miles from the Ashford start were run in 43 minutes 9 seconds with Otford passed in 48 minutes 12 seconds, five and three quarters minutes early before signal checks and delays all the way to London. Lenham, 10.1 miles and c.250 feet higher than Ashford was passed in 16 minutes 19 seconds at 47 miles per hour, 74 was reached on the descent to Maidstone, the station passed slowly at 37 in 25 minutes 10 seconds four and three quarters minutes early, Subsequent speeds were 33 miles per hour at Barming, 60 at Malling and 41 minimum at Wrotham. Net time Ashford to Waterloo was c.75 minutes or less.

The majority main line Cannon Street and Charing Cross arrivals and departures were diverted to Victoria for eight days in the aftermath of the tragic accident at St Johns, Lewisham, at the end of 1957. A few left from Victoria Central Section and ran via Redhill, the "Man of Kent", normally 16.10 ex Charing Cross, continued this way after Monday December 9th. Sevenoaks tunnel was closed again on the first four Sundays of 1958 and most trains were diverted via Redhill; a few used the Crowhurst spur and Oxted route.

Diversions due to closure of the Main Brighton line normally occurred on a Saturday night/Sunday morning. On the 22nd and 29th April 1956 for instance the 04.40 and 04.45 Sunday London Bridge to Brighton and Eastborne trains ran via Oxted, East Grinstead, Horsted Keynes and Haywards Heath.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section Diversions

The Western Section like the Eastern Section had alternate routes but those to the Main line to Southampton were either circuitous or involved some single-line working.

The Portsmouth direct route saw very little scheduled steam passenger operation, one of the rare exceptions was the Sunday 03.30 [03.35 in the W.T.T] from Waterloo, non stop to Havant in 91 minutes, but it was a regular alternate route for Southampton trains. The 03.30 was at times itself diverted to the Mid Sussex line via Dorking and Horsham. In 1964 West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34023 with the normal 260 tons ran poorly over this route. A Class 5 4-6-0 No.73082 on June 14th attained 87 miles per hour on the downhill stretch past Oakley, fell to 60 at Warnham, reached 65 before slowing for Horsham, 60 at Arundel and 66 at Drayton.

A major land-slip at Hook on December 27th 1960 resulted in the diversion of Bournemouth trains either via the Portsmouth Direct and Fareham or via Alton and Winchester, the "Mid Hants". Initially after the slip occurred some trains ran via Reading General and the Basingstoke branch. The Down line past the slip was not fully reopened until January 24th, between times there were various scenarios. The 08.30 ex Waterloo to Bournemouth and Weymouth for instance travelled past the slip until January 10th, then via the Mid Hants and from the 16th to the 23rd via the Portsmouth direct. C.J.Allen published details of three journeys over the Portsmouth Direct timed by A.F.Mercer.[Ref.2] Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34071 and rebuilt West Country No.34018 both had 11 coaches, 400 tons Gross. They ran the 42.15 miles from Woking to Havant the next stop in 57 minutes 26 seconds and 60 minutes 12 seconds, 53 and 51½ minutes Net. The pre War 90 minutes Portsmouth schedule with a Schools Class 4-4-0 was 52½ minutes pass to pass. Number 34071 after initial delays for signals ran the 24.6 miles from Guildford to Petersfield in 30 minutes 37 seconds, with 50 miles per hour at Godalming, 33 at MP38, 53 at Witley, 26 minimum at Haslemere and 75 maximum downhill afterwards. There was a check to 40 miles per hour from where it increased to 44 at MP58 before a signal stop before Havant. Number 34018 reached 58 miles per hour at Godalming, fell to 43 at MP38, reached 56 at Witley and was still travelling at 32 on the 1/80 when signals caused a reduction to 20 through Haslemere station. The time from Guildford to Haslemere including the signal check was 16 minutes 36 seconds. A Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73083, with ten coaches, 365 tons Gross ran rather in the fashion of a T9 after the First World War with 48 miles per hour at Godalming, 27 at MP38, 46 at Witley, 16 at Haslemere, 77 at Liss and 36 at MP58. Havant was reached in 60 minutes 33 seconds, 57½ minutes Net.

O.S.Nock published three Up runs between Havant and Guildford, one behind a West Country Class 4-6-2, No.34102, one with a rebuild, No.34021 and one with a Standard Class 5 4-6-0, No.73087. All had 11 coach formations, 395 tons Gross. MP58¼, 8.2 miles from Havant was passed at minima of 29, 25 and 25 miles per hour, No.34102 was then checked before Petersfield; the others reached 64 and 61 on the favourable grades.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Diversions over the "Mid Hants"

The minima at MP49¼ were 44, 41 and 36 miles per hour, the times to Haslemere 33 minutes 8 seconds, 32 minutes 59 seconds and 30 minutes 52 seconds. [No.73083 passed Havant without stopping, an advantage of two minutes] Maxima in the dip after MP49¼ were 47, 56 and 60 miles per hour and the minima at Haslemere 40, 35 and 39. Guildford was reached in 49 minutes 7 seconds, 53 minutes 4 seconds after a signal check and 44 minutes 57 seconds, [No.73083 passed without stopping]. The schedule Havant start to Guildford stop was 52 minutes, the Class 5 kept the pre War non stop schedule with half a minute to spare, then they would have taken greater advantage of the downhill stretch past Petersfield, often exceeding 80 miles per hour. Net times for Nos.34102 and 34021 were 47 and 49 minutes.

In the event of weekend engineering work between Eastleigh and Southampton trains could be diverted through Fareham where a reversal was necessary. The Down "Bournemouth Belle" one Sunday was taken from Eastleigh to Fareham by Standard Class 5 4-6-0 where West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34040 came on at the other end and took the train to Southampton and Bournemouth. The Alton to Winchester route, the "Mid Hants", was regularly used, although single track it was shorter than the Portsmouth Direct and Fareham with the added advantage that Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's were permitted to use it. On May 8th 1955 for instance five trains ran this way: 07.03 ex Southampton Docks to Waterloo, seven coaches, N15 Class 4-6-0 No.30785 - 09.20 ex Waterloo, nine coaches, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34018 - 09.35, ten coaches, Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 No. 30858 - 10.14, ten coaches, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35019, it apparently made a particularly stirring ascent of the 1/60 between Butts Junction and Medstead - 11.20 Military special ex Waterloo, 12 coaches, West Country No.34012 and 700 Class 0-6-0 No.30700 as pilot from Alton. [The 07.03 ex Southampton on Sundays was scheduled in 1956 to run via Alton, Winchester departure 07.32 - Alton arrival 08.19. On September 30th an Urie King Arthur Class 4-6-0 with 13 coaches predictably stalled on the 1/60 between Ropley and Medstead, the following week No.30755 with a lighter train kept time].

The Hook land-slip as already mentioned resulted in many diversions over the Mid Hants. On January 8th 1961 the 09.30, 10.30, 11.30 and 12.30 ex Waterloo travelled this way with West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34017 and Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's Nos.35029, 35020 and 35018. The 12.30, the "Bournemouth Belle", 11 Pullman Cars took U Class 2-6-0 No.31628 as pilot from Alton. The 07.20 ex Bournemouth in the week commencing January 10th and the 13.25 and 17.25 ex Weymouth ran via Alton. A U Class 2-6-0 piloted the 07.20 to Alton and returned on the Down 08.20, a Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank, the Up "Bournemouth Belle" on the 10th and 16th, a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76065, West Country No.34044 on the 18th, the Merchant Navy's handled most other trains without assistance. On occasions engine-men produced rousing performances on the 1/60 gradients either side of Medstead, 30 miles per hour with ten coaches. There were also frequent delays, on September 19th Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73083 with the Sunday 02.55 Waterloo to Poole took 54 minutes from Alton to Medstead.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Diversions over the Mid Hants 1965 and 1966

The 02.55 ex Waterloo was frequently diverted via Alton in 1965 and 1966 because of Bournemouth electrification works. It stalled on the 1/60 on October 10th and was assisted by the following 03.10 [both trains left five minutes later in the W.T.T. than in the Public Timetable]. Steam locomotives were not the only offenders, the following weekend a Warship Diesel Hydraulic stalled on the 1/60 with the 02.55. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34023 on the 22.35 from Waterloo to Weymouth on November 6th also came to a halt. The "Mid Hants" was a far from ideal alternative route, indeed in the late 1965 early 1966 period, with the exception of early Sunday morning most diversions were via the Portsmouth direct.

The problems were soon forgotten however and on May 22nd driver Saunders with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35003 on the 09.54 Weymouth to Waterloo with nine coaches plus a van apparently ran well over the "Mid Hants". [The author regrets that rather than travel behind Saunders he elected to sample the sea air at Weymouth]. Diversions recommenced at the end of the summer service over the "Mid Hants". One interesting duty was the 08.55 Sunday ex Bournemouth to Waterloo. [This a very leisurely train with an overall schedule of three and a half hours, eighteen stops up to June 12th 1966 and diesel haulage. After this with three additional stops, five minutes was added to the overall time and from September it was rostered for steam haulage.] On the 22nd and 29th May LM Class 4-6-0 No.45493, laying over at Bournemouth between the Saturday York Bournemouth turn from Banbury and the Monday return, hauled the train via Alton. Diversions over the "Mid Hants" have been extensively documented. [Ref.3]

There were times when diversions for engineering works recreated 19th Century duties. During part of the last weekend of March and the first in April 1960 the main line between Brockenhurst and Bournemouth was closed. All Bournemouth and Weymouth trains ran via the original Main Line ["Castleman's Corkscrew"] through Wimborne. However only the Saturday evening Channel Islands Boat Train followed the original route exactly via Broadstone and Hamworthy Junction, the others ran from Broadstone to Bournemouth, where they reversed if bound for Weymouth, no doubt causing considerable delays, a not uncommon result of diversions.

References and Notes

- Ref.1 D.W.Winkworth "The Schools Class" G.Allen & Unwin 1982
- Ref.2 Trains Illustrated Vol. XIV p.337
- Ref.3 Various numbers of Mid Hants News, the Journal of the Mid Hants Railway Society
R.Hardingham "The Mid Hants Railway" Runpast Publishing

Chapter 32 Boat Trains 1948-1967

The Southern Railway pre War was probably best known for its electrified Services including the "Brighton Belle", the "Atlantic Coast Express" and the various Boat trains. The first Continental Boat train service to be reinstated, actually before War end; was from Victoria to Newhaven. H2 Class 4-4-2's were regularly in 1948, theoretically limited to 360 tons Tare maximum, frequently improved on the 81 minutes schedule to and from Newhaven [56.7 miles] with trains of this weight. Locomotives regularly involved were Nos.32421/4/5 and 6, Nos.32424 and 32426 were considered the best. On occasions other Classes were used, on May the 24th and 29th; when an additional coach was added [391 tons tare], N15 Class 4-6-0 No.795. The Night Newhaven Boat train, reinstated on June 17th 1948, operated three days a week, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, Victoria departure 19.50, schedule 80 minutes to Newhaven. The Up train left Newhaven Harbour at 06.10, allowed three minutes longer, the night trains were also regularly hauled by H2's. This [Duty No.781] increased the weekly number of duties to four for the H2's [an older H1 was used occasionally] i.e. one Oxted line, the Day Boat train, the Night train and a Saturday only Boat train.

The inaugural Up and Down Night Boat Trains were hauled by H2 Class 4-4-2 No.2426, [Nos. 2423 and 2425 worked Oxted line duties that day]. H1 Class 4-4-2 No.2038 often worked the Night Boat trains during the summer, on the 28th September, after working the Brighton to Bournemouth the previous day it hauled the last Up Night Boat train on the 2nd October and returned to Newhaven depot on an Oxted line working. The Down Night Boat train on the 2nd October had Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30928, which from the 20th of the month became a regular on the Day Boat train. At times during the summer both Up and Down Newhaven Boat trains ran in duplicate or triplicate, the extras usually hauled by King Arthur Class N15 4-6-0's, Maunsell 2-6-0's or the 4-4-2's. H1 No.2038 was taken out of winter store on the 2nd April 1949. Schools Nos.30928 and 30929 hauled the regular Boat trains over the Easter period, U1 and N Class 2-6-0's the extras. The 4-4-2's however still found use; H2 No.32426 took the Up 18.48 relief [schedule 78 minutes Newhaven to Victoria] on the 23rd of April and the 18.14 Up [schedule 81 minutes] the following day. The 4-4-2 was promoted on the 25th and worked the Main train in both directions. Either H2 No.2422 or H1 No.2038 handled the evening relief all week ending 30th April, No.2038 on the 28th and the 29th.

The Newhaven Boat trains were scheduled for electric locomotives from the 15th May 1949, the last steam hauled 09.05 Down and 17.48 Up [actual departure 17.55] had Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30929 with ten coaches, one Pullman coach and two vans. The relief's continued to be diagrammed for steam, although it seems unlikely it was anticipated how long steam would continue. H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32424 arrived at Victoria three minutes early on Bastille Day 1949 with the 18.27 relief from Newhaven, the load only 300 tons and the locomotive driven from Balcombe to Victoria without any further coal being added to the fire, not uncommon with their large fireboxes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, steam on the Main & Relief Newhaven's 1950-54

West Country/ Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's, permitted to enter Newhaven depot from July 1st 1950, appeared on relief Boat Trains by summer end.

The H2 Class 4-4-2's continued in use, earlier in the year No.32425 hauled an 11 coach relief and from the end of July 12 coaches plus a van, 408 tons Tare were hauled by H2's or U1 Class 2-6-0's. H2 No.32426 returned from a general overhaul at Eastleigh in July and was noted twice improving on the 79 minutes schedule of the 09.05 Down by some three minutes with 11 coaches and a van. In the Up direction it handled 11 coaches plus two vans, 450 tons Gross, on the 17.48 ex Newhaven. H1 Class 4-4-2 No.32038 returned to service at the beginning of July, after nine months in store and appeared on relief's. It was noted on the last day of July arriving five minutes late with 408 tons Tare, the lateness attributed to inferior coal and slippery rails, apologies were hardly necessary. A writer, in the Journal of the Railway Correspondence and Travel, noted that as the last of the Ivatt designed Atlantic's were being withdrawn from service, the Marsh derivatives were working as hard as ever. [The actual comment was "crowning themselves with glory", the observation of a true enthusiast].

The H2's were used on some Easter 1953 relief's and on Whitsun Sunday, a novelty on the 09.05 ex Victoria was B1 Class 4-6-0 No.61274, it also headed the 17.48 Up the following Friday. Duty No.780 in 1953, scheduled for an H2, involved: light engine Newhaven to Victoria early Saturday morning - 10.30 Down - 18.27 Up on the Sunday. In practice due to a French shipping strike the duty was only worked once, by H2 No.32422. The three Southern Region electric locomotives, on June 14th 1953 were used on specials to Chichester in connection with the Spithead Review. The daytime Newhaven Boat train, 14 coaches plus two vans had E1 Class 4-4-0 No.31504 and U1 Class 2-6-0 No. 31892. On the 9th of August Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30918 hauled 11 coaches plus three vans unassisted.

The relief Newhaven Boat trains in 1954 commenced on April 10th with Schools Class 4-4-0's Nos.30915 and 30919, later West Country/Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's and U1 Class 2-6-0's appeared. On the 24th April, for the first time in five years operation, all three electric locomotives were out of service. As a precursor to this H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32424 on the 22nd with 403 tons Tare, 435 tons Gross, on the 17.48 ex Newhaven despite signal checks and a PWR slack, in total a loss of time of seven minutes, reached Victoria on time [schedule a generous 91½ minutes]. On the 24th West Country No.34045 had 14 coaches plus two vans, 535 tons Gross and kept the electric schedule, except for a PWR. slack. Number 34047 worked the daytime train, except on the 26th, No.34017 with one coach less until an electric reappeared on the 29th. Keen crews kept time, although at the expense of line-side fires, consequently the schedule was eased slightly. The electric schedule from Newhaven to Victoria was 73¼ minutes, 48¼ minutes from Keymer Junction to Victoria. The 60 minutes non stop timing from Brighton to Victoria, allowed 47 minutes from Keymer passed at speed, usually at least 70 miles per hour, No.34045 passed at 20 and kept time with 535 tons.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, steam on the Main & Relief Newhaven's 1954-59

Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30916 with 11 coaches and two vans ran to Newhaven in 74¾ minutes on the 09.31 ex Victoria on the 29th June [schedule 72¾ minutes]. Almost four weeks later H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32426 with 428 tons Tare lost one minute on a relief [schedule, assuming this was the 10.30, 79 minutes]. The 10.30 was allowed 54 minutes to pass Keymer Junction, equivalent to Brighton in 65 minutes. The 09.05 was allowed one minute less, it ran Through line between East Croydon and Stoats Nest, whereas the 10.30 used the Local line.

The following summer Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76061 hauled 12 coaches and two vans on the 09.05 from Victoria [schedule 74½ minutes]. The 2-6-0 reportedly lost three minutes initially and regained them later. If correct, this confirms the ability of these relatively small locomotives to haul heavy trains over short distances at comparatively high speeds. The older locomotives were not finished, on the same day, 5th August, H2 Class 4-4-2 No.32425 reached Victoria including a signal check within the 91 minutes Up schedule with 420 tons. It was the third train of this weight it had hauled that day, Up 06.23, Down 10.25 Down and Up 17.41. In the morning it had climbed up to Grosvenor Bridge faultlessly from Victoria. Steam locomotive performance on the electrified Brighton line in 1955 was at a high level.

The Newhaven to Dieppe shipping service recommenced in 1957 on April 5th, there were no electric's available on the 28th, the normal train, 14 coaches and three vans, was hauled by a West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34047 with D1 class 4-4-0 No.31743 as pilot. The D1 was reported in poor condition, in spite of which time was kept. There were occasions during the summer when Battle of Britain/West Country's unassisted kept the electric schedules with 430 tons, Schools Class 4-4-0's appeared regularly on the relief's. On the 24th August the 09.05 and 10.03 ex Victoria were entrusted to Nos.30909 and 30915 respectively with electric traction on the 09.31. The 09.05 schedule to Newhaven allowed 70½ minutes if hauled by an electric, 75 with steam.

There was an electric locomotive failure on Easter Saturday in 1958 and Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30915 had difficulties with the Down 09.05. The return working, the 16.14 ex Newhaven had West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34045 [electric schedule 73 minutes]. There were additional trains on Easter Sunday, including two of 13 coaches to the Midlands and the North. Schools Class 4-4-0's and L Class 4-4-0 No 31776 made two return journeys between Newhaven and Willesden Junction, including the haulage of both trains. Other locomotives used over the weekend included King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30799, West Country No.34045 and Schools Class 4-4-0 Nos.30909 and 30910.

There was only one available electric locomotive on Easter Saturday March 28th 1959, No. 2001, which failed at Haywards Heath. From then until the 18th April the main trains were hauled by Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's, mainly Nos.34077/85 & 86 from Stewarts Lane on Duty No.504. The relief's were taken by Schools Class 4-4-0's, including Nos.30900/8/9/15 & 37.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, end of steam on the Newhaven, 1964

Electric propulsion recommenced on the 18th April but on 26th West Country Class 4-6-2 hauled the main train in both directions. The last Newhaven Boat train of 1960, on the 30th October featured Battle of Britain No.34070.

There was little use of steam during the summer in 1963, Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34057 was noted on the Up train on 2nd August and on the 09.02 ex Victoria on September 6th. There was again however a lack of electric's during November 1963 and although some West Country/ Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2's were utilised, most trains had Maunsell 2-6-0's, which reportedly seldom maintained the electric schedules [Ref.1]. It would be surprising if they ever kept schedule. Even this was not the end of steam on the Newhaven Boat trains. On the 1st and 3rd of April 1964 a rebuilt Battle of Britain hauled the 10.30 Down returning light engine to London and rebuilt West Country No.34031 the 09.32 Down and the 17.14 Up on the 3rd. The last steam hauled Newhaven Boat train ran almost three years after steam was replaced on the "Golden Arrow" and 27 months after the last occasion steam propulsion was employed on the Night Ferry service. [Electric locomotives commenced operation of the Night Ferry in 1959, but on the first day of 1962 steam was used in the Up direction.]

The "Night Ferry", the heaviest regular train on the Eastern Section of the Southern Railway, retained this distinction post Nationalisation, its only competitor for a short period on the Southern Region was the "Devon Belle" to Plymouth and Ilfracombe. The first post War "Night Ferry" ran on the 15th December 1947, the Southern Railway's final gesture as a publicly quoted company. The usual locomotive between Dover and Victoria at the end of 1948 was Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34071 or 34072. The normal train makeup included three Wagons Lits cars, 55 tons each, often four during summer 1948 and on the 13th October five. With the five formation an L1 Class 4-4-0 was taken as pilot, not so much for reasons of power but to address potential water difficulties, if the 4-6-2 was worked hard the tender might be emptied. The pilot was also used to heat the non-ferry vehicles waiting at Dover.

The gradual increase in train weight resulted in the use of Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's, which in addition to greater power than the Battle of Britain's had a larger water capacity, Nos.35029 and 35030 were allocated to Dover motive power depot in October 1949. By the end of February 1950 all three Merchant Navy class locomotives allocated to Dover were out of service and motive power was a Battle of Britain / West Country Class 4-6-2 piloted by an L1 Class 4-4-0. On March 1st the train was observed running to time hauled by Battle of Britain No.34090 alone. Two days later Merchant Navy No.35026 appeared but after this a West Country/Battle of Britain with a pilot was employed until March 17th when No.35028 resurfaced. The smaller 4-6-2's usually had a pilot if there were five sleeping coaches plus the usual two or three freight vans and six corridor coaches including a Pullman restaurant car c.550-600 tons Gross. The exact weight depended on the number of vans and the weight of luggage.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, "Night Ferry" in the fifties

The "Night Ferry's" weight, plus the possibility of diversion via the Maidstone East route and delays approaching London, particularly if it was out of its path due to the ferry docking late, all added to the operating challenges on the Up train. The Victoria arrival just after 09.00 inevitably led to frequent delays within the inner Suburbs even when running to time. The weight increased further over the years, the make up on three days a week from October 1954 was seven Wagons Lits sleepers, five corridor coaches plus two luggage vans, up to 650 tons Gross.

Motive power at this time was usually a Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2, No.34072, 34073 or 34074 piloted by one off D1 Class 4-4-0 No.31246, L1 Class 4-4-0 Nos.31753 and 31755. The Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's had been replaced earlier in the year over concerns as to whether even with the large capacity tenders there was sufficient water without a pilot. The train usually ran via the former LC&D route on weekdays, which involved heavy work on the adverse gradients from the Dover start, after Canterbury and after Rochester. Various locomotives were used as pilots before matters settled down somewhat, although on at least two occasions a pair of Battle of Britain's did the honours. Variety continued until the end of steam operation, indeed the last four steam hauled trains in June 1959, after one day of electric haulage, involved a rebuilt Merchant Navy on its own twice and a Battle of Britain plus an L1 twice. The author regularly saw the Up train between September 1950 and June 1959 when attending school; it passed the end of the grounds and could be seen shortly before the start of Morning assembly/prayers if running to time. The Down train left Victoria at 21.00 or 22.00 depending on whether winter or summer and was a mystery.

The weight of the "Golden Arrow" [Victoria to Dover/Folkestone] varied between winter and summer. Whilst the "Night Ferry" ran to Dover from Victoria in 98 to 100 minutes, the "Golden Arrow" whilst initially 100 minutes in 1949, latterly ran to 92 minutes. The Test trip for the 92 minutes schedule with Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 involved an assortment of vehicles, four corridor coaches, a Wagon Lits vehicle from the Night Ferry, a Southern Region restaurant car and a Western Region inspection coach. Ninety miles per hour was reached at Sandling Junction in the Down direction and 92 at Pluckley in the Up. Perfect time was reportedly kept. The "Golden Arrow" ran via the Chislehurst loop, Tonbridge and Ashford.

There were Boat train paths throughout the day as in Southern Railway times. The May Working Time Table for 1949 included Boat trains from Victoria to Folkestone at 08.00, 13.00 and 14.00 and to Dover at 09.00, 09.30, 10.00, 10.30, 11.00, 15.00, 21.00 and 22.00, all via Tonbridge. There were additional paths to Dover via Chatham at 09.50 and 22.10 and to Folkestone at 13.30 and 13.50 and Dover at 14.40 via Tonbridge. In the Up direction Boat Train numbers 8, 20, 24, 28, 30, 36, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56, 60, 64, 68 and 70 ran via Tonbridge, Nos.12 and 14 via Maidstone and Nos.32 and 54 via Chatham. Additional time was allowed for the alternative routes i.e.124 and 119 minutes via Maidstone and 123 and 110 minutes via Chatham.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Boat Train Duties 1952

In 1953, following the Coastal floods diverted Kent Coast trains ran between Faversham and Kearsney, consequently due to congestion the 13.30 ex Dover ran via Maidstone with the 115 minutes schedule maintained. Victoria to Dover via Tonbridge schedules were usually 98 to 102 minutes, to Folkestone Junction 90 to 92 minutes.

Locomotive duties varied according to the time of the year. Stewarts Lane depot for instance had four Boat Train duties from September 15th 1952: 09.00 Victoria to Dover, 14.25 Folkestone Victoria - 10.00 Victoria Dover, 13.30 Folkestone Victoria [both Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2] - 13.00 Victoria to Folkestone Harbour, 16.58 Dover Marine Victoria, ["The Golden Arrow" Britannia Class 4-6-2] - 13.30 Victoria to Dover, 18.10 Dover Victoria [either a Britannia or Merchant Navy]. Dover duty No.430 for a Merchant Navy included two return trips to Victoria: Up "Night Ferry" - 12.30 Victoria to Folkestone - 17.10 Dover to Victoria – Down "Night Ferry".

In practice, in July 1952, the "Night Ferry" had a Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, one off Nos.35025-30 every day bar three when Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70014 appeared. The "Golden Arrow" had a Britannia, Nos.70004 or 70014 every day bar three when Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34071 deputised. Locomotive failures were rare in service, stoppages in the Depots far too common. On September 11th failed West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34091 on the 12.40 Folkestone to Victoria was replaced at Ashford by a pair of 4-4-0's, E1 Class No.31067 and L Class No.31764, which regained twelve minutes of lost time between Ashford and Victoria. This suggests an Ashford to Victoria time of 66 minutes. The 4-6-2's normally hauled most Boat trains between London and Dover or Folkestone, King Arthur Class 4-6-0's occasionally and after 1955 the Standard Class 5 4-6-0's, also occasionally. There were however instances, when due to maintenance difficulties with the Merchant Navy and Battle of Britain/West Country's, Maunsell 2-6-0's appeared and inevitably lost time.

Performance on the Boat trains was invariably good, the locomotive for the "Golden Arrow" received special attention at Stewarts Lane Depot. A review of some journeys over the period 1948 to 1960 will illustrate day to day achievement. The 1948 "Golden Arrow" schedule, 100 minutes Victoria to Dover Marine, with a West Country Class 4-6-2 [No.21C135 was a regular at this time] and 390 tons was a comparatively easy assignment. On one occasion after initial signal checks, [it required 12 minutes 50 seconds to pass Sydenham Hill and 23¾ minutes to Bickley Junction] the maximum before Tonbridge was 74 miles per hour, the station passed in 44¼ minutes, there was a PWR slack to 15 at Paddock Wood, the maximum afterwards 79 and with another PWR slack Dover was reached in 96 minutes 38 seconds. The locomotive was driven with full Regulator and 35 percent cut off recovering from the Paddock Wood check, boiler pressure was 230-240 pounds per square inch, the steam chest ten pounds per square less. Earlier the cut off was advanced to 40-45 percent up to Sydenham Hill with boiler pressure at 260-270 pounds per square inch and 200-230 in the steam chest (Ref.2).

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Down "Golden Arrow" performance 1953-57

Five years later when the schedule was 92 minutes West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34108 had 475 tons. It passed Sydenham Hill in 12 minutes 28 seconds at 29½ miles per hour and Bickley Junction in 22 minutes. Signals slowed it to 31 miles per hour at Orpington, it was 47 seconds late at Tonbridge, reached 72 twice between Tonbridge and Ashford, fell to 66 minimum at Westenhanger and with 77 maximum before Folkestone, reached Dover in 89 minutes 52 seconds. Sir James Colyer-Ferguson who recorded the run, reckoned 89¼ minutes Net, the locomotive slipped up to Grosvenor Bridge and again before Sydenham Hill (Ref. 3). Brown of Stewarts Lane was the driver, EDHP from Ashford to Westenhanger 1,700-1,800. In 1954 Driver Brewer, a man with a great reputation; had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 and 420 tons to Folkestone. He passed Sydenham Hill in 12¼ minutes and Bickley Junction in two seconds under 21 minutes. The time to Tonbridge was 44¼ minutes after a signal check at Sevenoaks, the maximum before Ashford 81 miles per hour, the minimum at Westenhanger 75, to Folkestone Central 81 minutes 10 seconds and the sidings, 85 minutes 25 seconds, 1,900-2,000 EDHP between Ashford and Westenhanger. (Ref.4)

Norman Harvey travelled on the footplate when the Down "Golden Arrow" locomotive, a Britannia Class 4-6-2 was failed with a minor defect, some 30 minutes before departure. The unprepared replacement, West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102 had a dirty fire, left Victoria with 235 pounds per square inch in the boiler, was checked by signals and was nine minutes late at Bickley. It averaged 71 miles per hour from Tonbridge, passed at 40 to Westenhanger passed at 70, the maximum before Ashford was 83, 70 was sustained past Chart, 74 reached at Smeeth and 70 the minimum at Westenhanger, 1,420-1,470 EDHP. The load was light, 345 tons but boiler pressure never exceeded 200 pounds per square inch. Signal checks before Folkestone nullified any recovery and the sidings were reached nine and a half minutes late. [Ref.4] P.R.Wallis rode on the footplate of Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70004 with 390 tons. It passed Sydenham Hill in 11½ minutes at 31 miles per hour, full Regulator and 25 percent cut off, Bickley Junction in 20 minutes 51 seconds and without exceeding 69 miles per hour was two and a quarter minutes early at Tonbridge, 42 minutes 20 seconds. The maximum before Ashford was 74 miles per hour, the minimum at Westenhanger 58, Sandling Junction passed in 75 minutes 52 seconds before signals then caused a three and a half minutes late arrival at the sidings, 89½ minutes, 82½ minutes Net. [Ref.6]

West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34104 in 1957 with 475 tons passed Sydenham Hill in 11 minutes 58 seconds at 20 miles per hour and after a 17 PWR slack at Penge was three and a quarter minutes late at Bickley Junction, 25 minutes 10 seconds. It then gained four and three quarter minutes to Folkestone Junction with 31 miles per hour at Knockholt, 80 maximum before Tonbridge, 76 maximum before Ashford and 60 minimum at Westenhanger. Tonbridge to Westenhanger took 30 minutes and Victoria to Folkestone Junction 82 minutes 23 seconds after 77 miles per hour at Sandling Junction. There was a PWR slack between Folkestone and Dover, reached in 90 minutes 47 seconds, 86-87 minutes Net. [Ref7]

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, performance on other Down trains, 1951-55

Although the 92 minutes Dover schedule and the equivalent time to Folkestone produced the best performances, there were frequently meritorious ones with heavy loads on the more easily timed duties. Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35026 in 1951 with 450 tons, slowed to 30 miles per hour for a PWR slack at Herne Hill, passed Sydenham Hill in 11 minutes 2 seconds and without exceeding 69 miles per hour, Tonbridge in 43 minutes 9 seconds. There was a PWR slack at Paddock Wood to 23 miles per hour, 76 maximum afterwards and 60 minimum at Westenhanger. Folkestone was passed in 82 minutes from Victoria, well ahead of schedule [Ref.8]. Two years later West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34101 with 500 tons lost one and three quarters of a minute on the 100 minutes schedule to Dover. It ran via the Catford loop and with a signal check at Sevenoaks was three minutes late at Tonbridge. The minimum at Westenhanger was 58 miles per hour, the average from Tonbridge to there 64.3. Folkestone Junction was passed in 92 minutes before signal checks prevented an on time arrival.

Standard Class 5 4-6-0, No.73080 left Victoria on the 15th July 1955 with the 10.00 Boat train, 12 coaches plus two luggage vehicles. Shortly after this, B.Byrom rode on the footplate with the indefatigable Gingell and 14 coaches, 470 tons Gross. The initial difficult stage to Sydenham Hill took 11 minutes 53 seconds with 26 miles per hour minimum, full Regulator and 45 percent cut off, boiler pressure fell to 170 pounds per square inch, 1,050-1,100EDHP, some 25 percent less than if full pressure had been maintained. There was a signal check to 20 miles per hour and a PWR slack to 17 between there and Bickley Junction, where it was four and a half minutes late, 26 minutes 35 seconds. The time to Tonbridge was 47 minutes 19 seconds with 71 miles per hour before Sevenoaks. Chart signal box was passed in 71 minutes 41 seconds after 55 to 63 miles per hour from Tonbridge. There was a slowing to 23 miles per hour for signals before Ashford and then with full Regulator and 45 percent cut off initially, then 35, and finally 40, an acceleration to 56 on the adverse gradients to Westenhanger before falling to 54, 1,150-1,200EDHP. Folkestone sidings were reached one minute late, 93 minutes from Victoria, taking account of the various checks, equivalent to Victoria to Dover in 91-92 minutes [Ref.9]. The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's ran to the 98 minutes schedule when hauling similarly heavy trains some 30 years previous.

The King Arthur Class 4-6-0's still hauled heavy Boat trains, usually relief's, on occasions in the 1950's. Number 30799 on the 4th April 1954 with 470 tons on the 12.30 ex Victoria was noted running two minutes late at Bickley Junction, two minutes early at Tonbridge, one minute late at Ashford and on time at Folkestone. The respective scheduled passing times were 23, 48, 74 and 92 minutes. O.S.Nock rode on the footplate of No.30769 with 420 tons to Dover via the Maidstone East route, the schedule allowed 113 minutes from Victoria. The Dover arrival was late due to many signal checks but the Net time was 110 minutes. The locomotive ran the Maidstone to Lenham stretch in 17 minutes 29 seconds and attained 54 miles per hour on the 1/286 after Ashford.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region Up "Golden Arrow performance 1948-54

N.MacKillip rode with Gingell, 450 tons and a West Country Class 4-6-2 on the 14.30 ex Victoria. Locomotive working was easy through the inner suburbs, 20 percent cut off after Herne Hill before it was almost stopped for signals at Bickley Junction after then 25 percent and 250 pounds per square inch in the steam chest. [MacKillop a former Newcastle driver regarded this as heavy working]. The results were 80 miles per hour before Tonbridge and 73 at Paddock Wood, there was a PWR slack to 15 at Pluckley, then 60 minimum at Westenhanger. Gingell passed Ashford early and reached Dover eight minutes ahead of time [Ref.10].

The Standard Class 5 4-6-0's were not the last new locomotive type to be introduced to the Boat trains; during Autumn 1958, when works on stage 1 of the Kent electrification were well advanced, tests were carried out on the Folkestone Harbour branch. A former GWR 57xx Class 0-6-0 pannier Tank No.7778 on the 22nd October 1958 made two trial ascents on the 1/30 with five and six coaches. The 57xx Class was then approved for 170 tons, compared with 127 tons for the R1 Class 0-6-0 Tank's employed on the branch for many years.

The 1948 "Golden Arrow" schedule was 102 minutes from Dover to Victoria. West Country Class 4-6-2 No.21C135 with 390 tons passed Ashford in 29 minutes 10 seconds after attaining 54 miles per hour at Westenhanger. The maximum before the Tonbridge slowing was 67 miles per hour, it passed the station in 55¼ minutes and after a PWR slack to 26 at Sevenoaks and signal checks before Herne Hill, reached Victoria on time [Ref.11]. D.S.M.Barrie travelling some four years later when the schedule was 92 minutes, naturally noted some faster travelling. The locomotive, Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70004 with 400 tons improved on the schedule by 90 seconds after an initial signal check to 23 miles per hour at Cheriton Junction. Subsequent speeds were 77 miles per hour at Ashford and 88 after Headcorn; the average from Headcorn to Paddock Wood was 84.5. The times to pass Sandling Junction and Tonbridge were 19¾ and 48½ minutes respectively. On another occasion Sir James Colyer-Ferguson travelled behind No.70004 with 425 tons and Driver Brewer. Initially there was a PWR. slack and signal checks, it took 22 minutes 6 seconds to Sandling Junction [schedule 17½ minutes] then with 52 miles per hour at Westenhanger, 78 at Ashford and 87 at Headcorn it passed Ashford and Tonbridge in 30 minutes 47 seconds and 50 minutes 46 seconds [schedule 49½ minutes]. Driver Brewer ran Tonbridge to Knockholt in 15 minutes 54 seconds with 39 miles per hour entering Sevenoaks tunnel and a minimum of 47 at Knockholt. Victoria was reached in 92 minutes 10 seconds after three further signal checks, 85 minutes Net.

O.S.Nock rode on the footplate of Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 in 1954, also with 425 tons. It reached 62 miles per hour at Westenhanger and passed Ashford in 24¾ minutes at 84. This initiative was rewarded with a signal check to 15 miles per hour after which it attained 82 at Paddock Wood and passed Tonbridge in 50 minutes 8 seconds, without the check this could have been 44 minutes.

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Southern Region, Up "Golden Arrow" performance 1954-59

After Tonbridge with full Regulator and cut off at 25 percent, Nock reckoned 53 miles per hour was sustained on the 1/122 before a signal check prior to Sevenoaks. There were two further signal checks, Victoria was reached in 92 minutes 7 seconds. 83 minutes Net. This was far from par for the course. On the 12th August 1954 driver Brewer with Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70014 and 401 tons Tare, probably 430 tons Gross, left Dover 17 minutes late and despite a stop for signals after Dunton Green reached Victoria only eight minutes late, 78 minutes Net. [Ref.12]

Four other examples give a view of day to day performance. Driver Brewer with West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102 and a typical winter load of only 345 tons ran to Victoria in 95 minutes 33 seconds from Dover; this was the 17.15 ex Dover [schedule 95 minutes]. Ashford was passed in 27 minutes 25 seconds after 54 miles per hour at Westenhanger; there was a PWR slack to 20 after Ashford and a recovery to 86 at Paddock Wood. The Tonbridge to Knockholt time was 16 minutes 10 seconds and there were two signal checks between there and Victoria, 89 minutes Net. [Ref.3] Driver Bailey with Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70014 and 425 tons Gross reached 89 miles per hour at M.P.45½ and sustained 40 on the 1/122. Driver J,White with the same locomotive and one less coach, 390 tons Gross attained 85 miles per hour after Ashford and at 42 through Hildenborough was accelerating with full Regulator and 25 percent cut off. The Regulator was then partially closed, three quarters open and speed fell away to 39 miles per hour. After various delays Victoria was reached three and three quarters minutes late, 95 minutes 50 seconds, 87 minutes Net. [Ref.14] Occasionally with a clear road, actual times were well inside schedule, rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35015 in 1959 with 425 tons reached Victoria in 87 minutes 5 seconds. Times to Ashford and Tonbridge were 26 minutes 66 seconds and 46 minutes 50 seconds with 88 miles per hour maximum. Tonbridge to Knockholt took one second over 16 minutes with 38 miles per hour entering Sevenoaks tunnel and 44 minimum at Knockholt.

As in the Down direction the other Boat trains did not require the same level of performance as the "Golden Arrow". Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 in 1953 with 470 tons gained seven and a half minutes from Folkestone sidings to Victoria, [schedule 93 minutes] 40¼ minutes to Tonbridge, a maximum of 83 miles per hour and 19 minutes 18 seconds from there to Knockholt. With a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 these schedules represented somewhat more of a challenge, but in 1954 No.30765 with 490 tons improved on it by two minutes. O.S.Nock rode on the footplate of King Arthur No.30769 with 420 tons via Chatham [schedule Dover to Victoria 120 minutes]. With full Regulator and 42 percent cut off leaving Dover it attained 33½ miles per hour on the 1/132 and after a signal stop at Canterbury with the same settings 34½ on the similar rise to Emsden tunnel.

The power required from locomotives on the Boat trains was not excessive if running to time but on occasions performance reached high levels as some power outputs confirm.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, power outputs on Eastern Section Boat Trains

EDHP noted previously on Down trains: Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73080 1,050-1,100 at Sydenham Hill and 1,150-1,200 at Westenhanger - West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34102 1,420-1,470 between Ashford and Westenhanger - No.34108 with 470 tons 1,700-1,800 - Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35028 1,900-2,000. In the Up direction the average EDHP between Tonbridge and Knockholt when running the distance in c.16 minutes:- West Country Class No.34102 and 345 tons 900-950 - Britannia Class 4-6-2 No.70004 with 425 tons 1,130-1,180 - Merchant Navy No.35015 with 425 tons 1,120-1,170. Britannia Class 4-6-2 No. 70014 at 42 miles per hour at Hildenborough developed 1,375-1,425 - Merchant Navy No.35028 when sustaining 53 on the 1/122 1,975-2,025 - King Arthur Class 4-6-0 No.30769 1,050-1,100 EDHP on both ascents between Dover and Faversham.

There were four Boat train services on the Western section of the Southern Region; scheduled daily trains to Southampton Docks in connection with sailing's to the Channel Islands and the French Ports, special's in connection with various Ocean Liner arrivals and departures at Southampton, Saturday trains to Lymington Pier connecting with the Isle of Wight ferry to Yarmouth and from 1959 to Weymouth for the Channel Island vessels, previously served from Paddington.

There were scheduled departures in the summer of 1953, on certain days of the week, from Waterloo at 18.35, 19.22, 20.01 and 21.00 in connection with sailings from Southampton Docks to St. Malo, the Channel Islands and Cherbourg. The first three ran non stop to the respective docks [schedule 93, 90 and 90 minutes to pass Northam Junction]. The 21.00 stopped at Basingstoke [56 minutes] and Winchester [25 minutes]. There were additional Channel Islands trains at summer weekends, in 1953 boat trains were at record levels with eight run on some Saturdays, there were six extra on Friday August 3rd. The timetable included 26 Conditional paths from Waterloo, commencing with the 08.15 and finishing with the 20.40, for Ocean Liner Boat trains. Some on Mondays and Fridays were used for Bournemouth relief's. The timings inevitably varied due to threading them through the other intensive services. The 14.20 ex Waterloo for instance to Northam Junction in 85 minutes whereas the following 14.45 was allowed 12 minutes more.

The Channel Islands train in the summer of 1960, 08.27 ex Waterloo, stopped at Basingstoke in 57 minutes and subsequently at Southampton, Bournemouth, Poole and Weymouth Junction signal box where locomotives were changed for the journey to the Quay. Schedules for the individual stages were 35, 34, ten and 38 minutes, Weymouth Junction was reached at 11.33 and the Quay at 12.00. There were trains on some weekday evenings, 20.00 on Friday ran to Weymouth Junction in three hours five minutes with four intermediate stops and the 21.15, on certain days, took seven minutes longer. The 21.15 between May and September ran to the Channel Islands shed at Southampton, 46 minutes from Basingstoke with an additional Friday 19.24, 109 minutes with a stop at Basingstoke. There were 26 conditional paths to Southampton available commencing 07.45 and finishing 20.20

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, Western Section Boat Train schedules

The Channel Islands boat train in 1964 left Waterloo at 08.10, to Weymouth Junction in 3 hours 4 minutes, with intermediate stops at Basingstoke, Southampton and Bournemouth [schedules 55, 35, 34 and 51 minutes]. The 19.45 on Wednesday and Friday evenings reached the Junction at Weymouth at 22.58 [schedules 55, 39, 38 and 52 minutes over the four stages]. The 19.20 Friday relief stopped only at Southampton [split times 92 and 84 minutes] and reached Weymouth at 22.21.

There were two through trains from Waterloo to Lymington Pier on summer Saturdays in 1953 at 08.45 and 09.42, the first ran to Winchester the first stop in 84 minutes, the other stopped additionally at Woking and Basingstoke, both served Southampton and Brockenhurst. In 1960 the 08.45 was allowed 85½ minutes to Winchester and the 09.42 79½ minutes including a two minutes stop at Woking, Woking to Winchester 47½ minutes, overall times to Brockenhurst were 130 and 128 minutes respectively. There was another train at 12.00, non stop to Southampton in 87 minutes, Brockenhurst reached in 112 minutes from Waterloo, overall times to Lymington Pier were 154, 153 and 134 minutes.

The various Ocean Liner Boat trains, dependent on sailing times, ran irregularly, at times emulating London buses, always travelling in groups. The service on occasions was intensive; on September 16th 1955 for instance thirteen Liners departed or entered Southampton Docks within a 24 hours period. There were 18 Boat trains from the Docks to London, [two were diverted to Victoria station after passing Wimbledon as Waterloo was unable to accommodate them] and nine from Waterloo to the Docks.

Many Southampton Boat trains were an Eastleigh Depot responsibility, at times they had difficulties in providing express passenger locomotives and regularly employed mixed traffic S15 Class 4-6-0's or borrowed a locomotive ex Eastleigh works following an overhaul or repairs. On the 27th and 28th November 1955 for example Schools Class 4-4-0 No.30920 from the Eastern Section was pressed into service, on the second day with ten coaches, two Pullman coaches and two vans, probably 480 tons Gross. Towards the end of steam LM Region locomotives received attention at Eastleigh works and Britannia Class 4-6-2's Nos.70002 and 70004 appeared on the 09.20 and 17.23 ex Waterloo on the 12th May and 16th August 1966 respectively.

Locomotive performance on both the Ocean Liner and scheduled services to Southampton Docks was not high. Schedules were generous, which bearing in mind the need at times to use whatever locomotive was available was sensible, however at times performance was poor. The 21.00 ex Waterloo, "The Normandy Express", was regularly hauled by a Lord Nelson Class 4-6-0 in 1953. On the 13th October No.30864, with a light train of 202 tons Tare ran to Basingstoke in 51¾ minutes Net and continued to Winchester the next stop in 21 minutes 37 seconds. Ten days later however with 430 tons, the times were 71 minutes 28 seconds and 27½ minutes, a loss on schedule of 18 minutes.

Date: 2nd January 2007

Southern Region, locomotive variety on the Lymington's

The use of mixed traffic locomotives on the Ocean Liner trains virtually ceased in the late 50's when Schools Class 4-4-0's, displaced by the introduction of diesel multiple units on the Hastings route and the Electrification projects in Kent became available. Their performance was competent, No.30913 observed maintaining 44 miles per hour with 415 tons between Eastleigh and Roundwood, sufficient for timekeeping purposes, 850-900EDHP average. Standard Class 4 and 5 4-6-0's allocated to Western Section depots from 1956 onwards further alleviated any motive power shortages.

The Lymington trains were always operationally interesting, the Brockenhurst turntable limited motive power from Waterloo; the branch itself necessitated even smaller locomotives. Nine Elms Depot in 1951 endeavoured to keep at least two U Class 2-6-0's in good condition to haul the two ten coach Down trains, there was often late running, a U1 appeared at least once. Eastleigh handled one Up duty, on at least one occasion it used a D15 Class 4-4-0. The following year, 1952, U1 Class 2-6-0's Nos. 31907, 31909 and 31910 appeared regularly. O.S.Nock rode on the footplate of No.31907, with 370 tons on the 09.42 ex Waterloo it barely kept time, it lost 75 seconds between Woking and Basingstoke, 12 minutes 3 seconds to pass MP31 at 43 miles per hour from Woking, Regulator five eighths open and cut off 32 percent. From the Basingstoke start Worting Junction was passed in six and a half minutes with the same Regulator setting but with the cut off further advanced to 42 percent, it reached 72 miles per hour before Winchester. A Q Class 0-6-0 No.30548 replaced the U1 at Brockenhurst and kept the 11 minutes schedule to Lymington exactly, with a maximum of 50 miles per hour [Ref.15].

The following year Nine Elms overcame its difficulties, it borrowed D15 Class 4-4-0's whilst Eastleigh employed a T9 Class 4-4-0 on its one duty. The 10.35 ex Lymington, a ten coach train, was scheduled non stop from Southampton to Waterloo in 95 minutes. Mr. Drummond's two best designs of 4-4-0's were on Main line duties in 1953, approximately 55 and 40 years after their inception. D15 Nos.30464, 30465 and 30467 were employed on the two Nine Elms duties in 1954 [Nos.24 and 28, the 08.45 and 09.42 ex Waterloo]. The D15's ran well, particularly in the Up direction. No.30464 with 365 tons starting from Basingstoke passed Surbiton, 35.8 miles, in 34¾ minutes with 79 miles per hour attained between Brookwood and Woking. On another occasion No.30464 with 370 tons reached 42 miles per hour on the 1/256 to Roundwood from the Winchester start, 725-775EDHP. Eastleigh introduced a new type to the Lymington trains during the year, Standard Class 4 2-6-0 No.76019.

U Class 2-6-0's Nos. 31621 and 31634 were rebuilt at Eastleigh with new cylinders, outside steam pipes and new frames in 1955 and were used immediately by Nine Elms on the Lymington trains. Number 31634 on the 13th August was timed at 79 miles per hour before the Winchester stop with the 08.45 and ten coaches. Eastleigh used a Standard Class 4 2-6-0 for its duty. The following year Nine Elms had a further rebuilt U class 2-6-0 No.31624 available and Eastleigh had Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75070.

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Southern Region, the Weymouth Channel Islands Service

There was yet another locomotive change in 1957 on the Lymington's with Schools Class 4-4-0's used on two of the three Down trains. They continued on these duties until the last members of the Class were withdrawn in 1962, on the Bank holiday weekend Saturday in 1962 all three trains were hauled by Schools, Nos.30935, 30936 and 30937, the following year diesel locomotives were used. The Schools had power to spare; one was noted with 345 tons on the 12.00 ex Waterloo running to Southampton in 82 minutes Net. There were still occasions after their introduction when other locomotives were noted, on the 8th August 1959 for instance the first two Up trains were taken by Standard Class 4 2-6-0's.

The Waterloo to Weymouth Channel Islands Boat train was inaugurated on the 2nd November 1959, the first Boat train on the Western Section with tight timings, particularly with the 12 coach summer formation. The author watched the Down train, 08.10 ex Waterloo, pass through Clapham Junction most days between September 1962 and January 1965 but only travelled on it twice. The Up train on the 1st and 8th June 1967 had Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2, No.35008 [a regular performer during the last few weeks of steam] with 430 tons. It passed Clapham Junction in 46 minutes 35 seconds and 44 minutes 34 seconds from the Basingstoke start after observing a PWR slack at Farnborough to 20 and 43 miles per hour. Maxima were 76 and 74 miles per hour, Waterloo reached in 57 minutes 57 seconds after signal checks and 52 minutes 51 seconds [schedule 57 minutes].

The Up train, for "pathing" reasons, was tightly timed between Weymouth and Poole; details of three journeys tabulated in D.W. Winkworth's book on the Bulleid Pacifics suggest the schedule was not usually kept. Crews probably operated on the basis that any lost time could be recovered between Bournemouth and Southampton even if they delayed other trains in the Bournemouth area. [Ref.16]

There were occasions during the last few months of steam operation when running east of Southampton was definitely lively. On the 29th June this was the case in both directions, the locomotive was rebuilt Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No.34087 with the normal load, 425-430 tons Gross. Driver Hendicott of Nine Elms depot, on the Down train, passed Winchester in 18 minutes 21 seconds from the Basingstoke start, he was delayed after this by a PWR slack at Shawford and signal checks before Southampton. Speeds before Winchester were 53 miles per hour at Wootton and 95 before Winchester Junction. In the Up direction driver Shepherd of Eastleigh passed Farnborough in 13 minutes 17 seconds from the Basingstoke start before slowing for a PWR slack at Sturt Lane Junction, the maximum at Fleet was 92 miles per hour. The Southern Region's last steam hauled regular scheduled Boat train provided probably the fastest running ever performed on such a service, a fitting epitaph to the Age of Steam.

Notes and References

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- Ref. 3. Railways Vol.14 p.268 and Trains Illustrated Vol. XIII p.286 [TI]
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- Ref. 16. "Bulleid Pacific's". D,W,Winkworth. G.Allen & Unwin 1974

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Epilogue 2000

The end of steam hauled passenger trains on the Southern Region of British Rail in July 1967 appeared to predicate the virtual demise of the steam locomotive in South East England. The Bluebelle Railway operated over five miles between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes and there were other embryonic preservation schemes, but only the optimist foresaw more than a token steam presence and that with small elderly locomotives.

Thirty three years later the Bluebelle operated between Sheffield Park and Kingscote, with the prospect of a further extension to East Grinstead and main line connection. The Swanage railway, like the Alton to Winchester route was closed in the early seventies, but had recovered such that it was operating to a park and ride facility at Norden with the real prospect of connection to the freight only branch to Furzebrook and ultimately restoration of the whole Wareham to Swanage route. The Alton to Winchester line ["Mid Hants"] had been rebuilt between Alton, with a main line connection, and Alresford. The Kent and East Sussex in April 2000 completed its extension from Northiam to Bodiam providing a route from Tenterden and the long term prospect of a connection with the main line Hastings branch at Rotherfield.

The four lines in 2000 had a total route mileage of more than 35, most of the trains were hauled by steam; indeed on a weekday during Summer a minimum of eight steam locomotives were required. The author regularly visited the Mid Hants during the year which saw the return to service of rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34016 plus regular performance by Urie Class S15 4-6-0 No.30506, LM Class 2-6-2 Tank No.41312 and Rebuilt Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 No.35005.

A visit to the Bluebelle on August 18th included the first revenue earning trip for some years of unrebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.21C123. In practice the locomotive, after a lengthy major overhaul piloted the 14.00 departure from Sheffield Park but was taken off at Horsted Keynes with an overheated tender axle, authenticity perhaps too reminiscent of the past. The two service trains that day were hauled by Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No.73082 and Standard Class 4 4-6-0 No.75027, the mid day Pullman service was hauled by ex LB&SC Class E4 0-6-2 Tank No.473.

On the 19th the 13.25 Tenterden to Bodiam consisted of three coaches plus a vintage first class saloon hauled by USA Class 0-6-0 Tank No.30065. The journey along the former Rother Valley railway route at a steady 24 miles per hour seemed truly miraculous, the return by ex Norwegian 2-6-0 equally so.

On the 22nd the train service on the Swanage railway was hauled by M7 Class 0-4-4 Tank No.30053 and Standard Class 2-6-4 Tank No.80104 [some four weeks earlier No.80079 had been in service]. The M7 with its 137 tons train, commencing with the 10.30 departure from Swanage made seven return journeys to Norden during the day, including 22-23 miles per hour sustained on the 1/76 gradient.

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Southern locomotives were also in evidence elsewhere in the Country. Rebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.34027, masquerading as the Hogwarts Express appeared regularly from August onwards on the West Somerset Railway. The locomotive brought back earlier memories, West Somerset crews recreated the former Great Western Railway and had difficulty in starting the ex Southern Railway locomotive. Memories of the last years of steam operation on the Folkestone Harbour branch were evoked by a 57xx Class 0-6-0 Tank No.7714 hauling 8 coach trains [280 tons] on the Severn Valley Railway. Number 7714 attained 20 miles per hour on the 1/100 past Eardisley with the 2nd valve cracked and 35 percent cut off.

Perhaps the most surprising event, viewed from a 1967 perspective was the employment of rebuilt West Cowntre Class 4-6-2 No.34016 on a weekly service to Canterbury from Victoria, routed in the Down direction via Maidstone East and Ashford returning via Minster Junction, Dover and Tonbridge. With the use of Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2's No.35028 on VSOE specials and No.35005 on special duties on the Bournemouth line, Bulleid Pacifics were very much still at work on main lines in the South East.

On October 22nd unrebuilt West Country Class 4-6-2 No.21C123 and Battle of Britain No.34081 hauled 12 coaches on the 16.28 Sheffield Park to Kingscote, despite inclement weather they started without slipping, somewhat different from many experiences on the West Somerset with No.34027 during the year. The author never envisaged in July 1967 that in the year 2000 he would travel behind a Bulleid Pacific let alone six!

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