

# Steam Working in the Brighton District

By B. K. COOPER

ON leaving Brighton Station in the Worthing direction, a glimpse of the running shed reveals a stock of steam locomotives that may surprise the traveller who thinks of the local train services only in terms of the electrified main and coast lines. Steam services from Brighton to Tunbridge Wells, and to London *via* Oxted, still occupy five pages of *Bradshaw*, and although the long-distance through trains by the West Coast line to Plymouth, Bournemouth, and Cardiff were reduced severely in the summer of 1947 compared with the previous year, Brighton continued to provide two engines for these workings on Saturdays. The daily restaurant-car train between Brighton and Plymouth brought a Salisbury "West Country" Pacific into the shed every night.

Eastwards from Brighton, the stopping services to London by the Oxted line curve sharply northwards immediately at the east end of Lewes Station, and from Culver Junction may proceed to Oxted by alternative routes known to enginemen as the "inner circle" and the "outer circle." The "inner circle" line is through Horsted Keynes and East Grinstead, whereas the "outer circle" accomplishes the considerable eastwards detour through Uckfield and Eridge, with its connection to Tunbridge Wells *via* Groombridge. Some of the "outer circle" trains leave Brighton with separate portions for London and Tunbridge Wells, handing over the Tunbridge Wells coaches at Eridge to a train that has come from Eastbourne, and attaching carriages from Eastbourne for the Oxted line.

In the past summer, a typical day would find Brighton providing engines for five through workings to London by the "inner circle" or "outer circle" routes, leaving Brighton at 6.15, 8.0, 10.18, and 10.50 a.m., and at 5.18 p.m. A variety of engines was employed, such as Maunsell Moguls, Marsh 4-4-2 tanks, and an occasional "B4X" 4-4-0, of which six or seven usually are stationed at Brighton.

Stopping steam services on the West Coast line from Brighton are confined to the Horsham push-pull trains, which

diverge at Shoreham to seek the rural quietude of Bramber, Steyning, Henfield, and Partridge Green, with a run by the banks of the Adur as a pleasant prelude. There was a time, not long ago, when the Horsham line had its Marsh tank engines, but Brighton now supplies the push-pull workings mainly with Stroudley 0-6-0 tanks and the smaller Billinton 0-6-2 radials. There is also a Stroudley "D" class 0-4-2 at the shed equipped for push-pull trains, and one of the larger 0-6-2 radial tanks similarly fitted. There are, in addition, a few push-pull workings on the "inner circle" to Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes.

It is, of course, the operation of the cross-country trains that necessitates a few of the larger locomotive classes being stationed at Brighton. A "Schools" has been provided recently for the Bournemouth turn on Saturdays, making the double journey throughout. Usually the Plymouth train is a Salisbury engine working, as has been mentioned already, but should the "West Country" not be available, Brighton may have to furnish power for three long-distance trains on a Saturday morning, and probably will call upon its "Schools," a "B4X," and a Maunsell Mogul. Of this trio, the engines of the Cardiff and the Plymouth trains work to and from Salisbury. Loads may be considerable, the Cardiff formation, for example, amounting to 11 vehicles of mixed Southern and G.W.R. origin. Although the Plymouth train is lighter than this when it leaves Brighton, extra coaches from Portsmouth are attached at Fareham, and the grades thence to Southampton are severe. A refreshment car works to and from Brighton on this service.

With the "Sunny South Express" still a pre-war memory, steam locomotive interest on the main line to London centres in the various van trains. Brighton often works the 6.12 and 11.28 p.m. to London Bridge, of which the former is no doubt the better known for the reason that during much of the year it runs in daylight hours. A heavy formation of coaching stock, it is supplied with a

variety of engines, sometimes of L.B. & S.C. origin—such as Marsh tanks, Billinton Moguls, or "B4X" 4-4-0s—or alternatively a post-grouping 4-4-0 of class "LI." Vehicles from east of Brighton are attached at Haywards Heath, and from the West Coast line west of Angmering, and Mid-Sussex line stations, at Three Bridges.

Goods workings from Brighton, as is usual on lines with frequent electric services, are mainly at night. On an average, there are six or seven Billinton Moguls at the shed for these duties and the van trains, as well as some of the same designer's father's 0-6-0 engines. The Moguls handle also the fast goods workings, such as the 12.38 a.m. to Bricklayers Arms.

Brighton houses some 40 engines all told, of which a large proportion is occupied with local goods trips and shunting. Two small 0-6-0s from the Eastern Section, originally at Dover, are kept there for use on the Kingston Wharf (Shoreham) sidings, where the sharp curvature calls for an engine with an abnormally short wheelbase. Eastern Section Wainwright 4-4-0s are frequent visitors to Brighton on certain through trains from Tonbridge.

It is familiar experience at Brighton Station to see a locomotive appear from the direction of the shed, pause a few seconds, and then depart again on some mission not immediately obvious. This is because the shed is so close to the platforms that the station precincts have to be used for shunting on to the required line, and a spare road is provided between platforms 2 and 3 (on the West Coast line side of the station) for this purpose. When a long train is standing at platform 2, the locomotive coming from the shed cannot back straight on to it. Instead, it runs into the spare road, proceeds forward over the crossing outside the station on to the westbound main line, and then reverses again to couple up with its coaches. The layout is such, also, that to transfer a lengthy train from the West Coast side of the station to the London line, it may be necessary to run out to Hove and round the spur to Preston Park.

At the present time most of the locomotive classes shedded at Brighton are in the black goods livery. They are kept in smart condition, assisted in these days of labour shortage, by the use for cleaning of

one of the steam "jennys" now provided at many Southern depots. The principle of this device is the atomisation by high-pressure steam of a cleansing fluid, which is sprayed from a jet on to wheels, motion, and paintwork. Coaling is performed by a crane with a 10-cwt. grab, which picks up the fuel from a wagon and deposits it in the bunker or tender. Engines needing to be turned proceed for a few yards from the coaling stage to the turntable, after which they are ready for another spell of duty.

Every steam locomotive enthusiast in the Brighton area should make the short trip to Lewes, the nearest point to see the Newhaven boat train and one that appeals to the photographer with a small camera by reason of the speed restriction round the curve on the line from London *via* Keymer Junction. During the period of double summer time this year, when the Newhaven service left Victoria at 10.5 a.m., there was a comparatively crowded half-hour of steam workings at Lewes in the morning, with the 10.50 a.m. for the Oxted line coming through from Brighton, usually behind a Maunsell Mogul; the boat train putting in a punctual appearance in charge of a spotless Brighton Atlantic; and a Marsh tank appearing with a single parcels van *en route* for Glynde to pick up Brighton milk tanks. There was a chance, too, of a relief to the boat express, although the electrification of the line between Newhaven Harbour Station and the quayside platform as from July 17 meant that the relief might well be a multiple-unit electric. If steam-worked, as it was in the days when several luggage vans were necessary on the relief as well as the main portion, the engine was usually a Maunsell Mogul.

A final memory of Lewes, while waiting for a Brighton train in the summer of 1947, is of the Marsh 4-6-2 tank No. 2325 (the one-time *Abergavenny*) waiting to leave on the 4.11 p.m. Lewes to Victoria. It was shedded at the time at Tunbridge Wells, and although geographically the workings may seem to be in a Southern backwater, the loads and gradients between Tunbridge Wells and London fully warrant the use of an engine of this size. A smart turnout suggested that the days when *Abergavenny* on the "Southern Belle" was a popular picture postcard subject are still talked of to the cleaning staff by their older colleagues.

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(See article on opposite page)



Billinton Mogul No. 2343 at Brighton shed

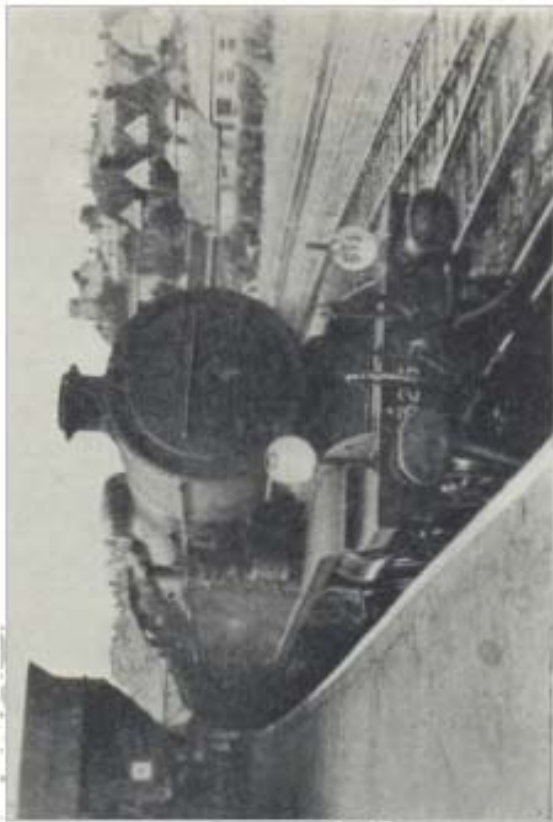


"B4X" 4-4-0 No. 2073 on the turntable at Brighton



Photos

"Schools" class 4-4-0 No. 930, "Radley," leaving Brighton on 11 a.m. to Cardiff



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Marsh 4-6-2 tank No. 2325 on Lewes to Victoria train at Lewes