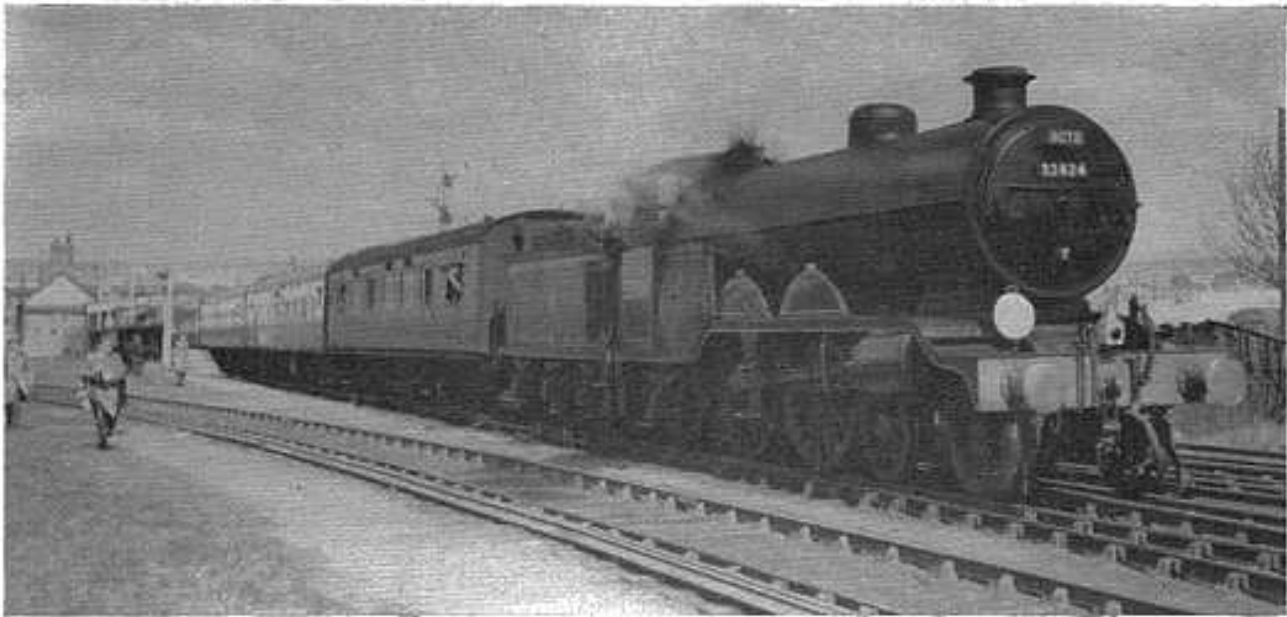


The Last British Atlantic



Photo]

[J. C. Beckett

No. 32424 at Newhaven Town on April 13, after backing with the "Sussex Coast Limited" from the Harbour Station

A CHAPTER of locomotive history was closed on Sunday, April 13, when the last Atlantic tender locomotive to remain in regular service on British Railways, No. 32424, *Beachy Head*, ended its working life of more than 46 years. A few hours earlier, it had hauled a special train, the "Sussex Coast Limited," carrying more than three hundred members and friends of the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society, from Victoria to Newhaven Harbour. On the completion of that journey, it returned to Brighton shed for the last time.

Built at Brighton to the designs of Douglas Earle Marsh, Locomotive Superintendent of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway from 1905 to 1911, No. 32424 was placed in service in September, 1911, and was one of six class "H2" 4-4-2s, originally numbered 421 to 426. Before going to Brighton, Marsh had been Chief Assistant Mechanical Engineer at Doncaster, and it is, perhaps, not surprising that his designs had a marked similarity to those of Henry Ivatt for the Great Northern Railway.

The class "H2" Atlantics had 21-in. × 26-in. outside cylinders, and piston valves actuated by Stephenson link motion. The driving wheels were 6 ft. 7½ in. dia., and the bogie and trailing wheels 3 ft. 6 in. The boiler was 15 ft.

6¾ in. long, with an external diameter of 5 ft. 6 in., and carried a working pressure of 170 lb. per sq. in. (subsequently increased to 200 lb.). The heating surface, including that of the Schmidt superheater, was 2,511 sq. ft. In working order, the engine weighed 68½ tons, of which 37½ tons rested on the driving wheels; the tender weighed 29½ tons.

"SUSSEX COAST LIMITED," VICTORIA TO NEWHAVEN HARBOUR

Dist.		Sched.	Actual	Speeds
miles		min.	m. s.	m.p.h.
0.0	VICTORIA	0	0 00	—
2.7	Clapham Junc. ...	6	5 44	49
			sig. stop	
4.9	Balham Junc. ...	10	12 51	—
7.5	Norbury	—	16 22	51½
			sigs.	
10.0	Windmill Bridge Junc.	17	20 09	—
10.5	EAST CROYDON	18	21 04	—
13.5	Purley	—	25 10	51
15.0	Coulsdon North ...	25½	26 54	46
17.7	Quarry Tunnel (north end)	28½	30 05	58
21.9	Earlswood	34	34 34	61½
26.0	Horley	38½	38 19	69
29.5	THREE BRIDGES ...	42½	41 42	56
31.9	Balcombe Tunnel Box	45	44 11	56
34.1	Balcombe	—	46 20	70½
			sig. stop	
38.0	HAYWARDS H'TH	52½	53 46	53
			sigs.	
41.1	Keymer Junc. ...	56½	59 26	—
44.8	Plumpton	60	63 32	57
			p.w.r.	
47.6	Cooksbridge	—	67 46	55
50.2	LEWES	68½	72 01	—
51.0	Southerham Junc. ...	—	74 16	*
56.4	Newhaven Town ...	78	79 50	—
56.8	NEWHAVEN HBR.	80	81 11	—

* Speed 59 m.p.h. after Southerham Junc.



The "Sussex Coast Limited," headed by 2-6-4 tank No. 80154, ascending the bank between Lewes and Falmer on its way to Brighton

Together with five similar, but not superheated, locomotives of class "H1," built in 1905 and 1906, and numbered 37 to 41, the "H2" Atlantics passed to the Southern Railway at the grouping of 1923, and had 2,000 added to their numbers. They also received names of headlands on the south and west coast of England. After the nationalisation of the railways in 1948, the numbers were again altered by the addition of 30,000.

The special train arranged by the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society to mark the withdrawal from service of No. 32424 on April 13 was made up of six corridor coaches and the Pullman car

Myrtle, and left Victoria at 10.25 a.m. The locomotive experienced no difficulty in handling its load of 234 tons tare and 255 tons gross, and, despite two signal stops, covered the 57-mile journey to Newhaven Harbour in only 1 min. more than the 80 min. allowed for the non-stop run. Details of the run are set out in the accompanying table, compiled by Messrs. H. C. Creamer and L. J. W. Smith.

The signal delays were unavoidable, because the 10.25 a.m. electric train from Victoria to Worthing and Littlehampton had to be given preference at Balham Junction, to which point it had been specially diverted to the down relief



Photos]

[J. Head

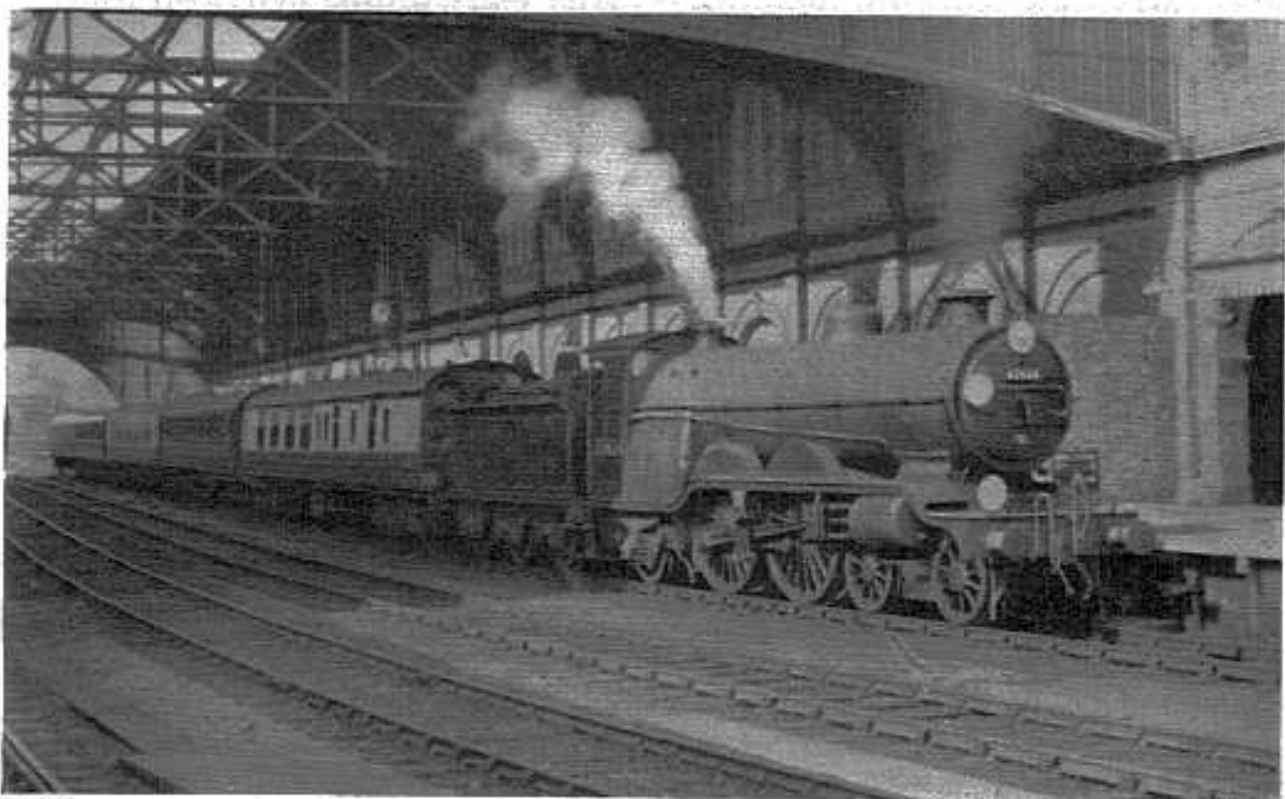
The special train passing Selhurst on the return journey to London, with "King Arthur" class 4-6-0 No. 30796, "Sir Dodinas le Savage"

line. Moreover, this train had to call at East Croydon and Haywards Heath. Between Windmill Bridge Junction (Croydon) and Coulsdon North, the "Sussex Coast Limited" ran on the relief line. The second signal stop (15 sec. at Copyhold Junction, 36.8 miles from Victoria) was particularly unfortunate, because the engine then had about 1 min. in hand, and probably would have improved still further on the schedule.

As the train drew away from the suburbs of London, some of the passengers were able to recall the work of the

Croydon were covered in a shade over 14 min.; Quarry (18.6 miles) was passed in 24½ min.; Horley (25.8 miles) in barely 31 min.; and Haywards Heath (37.8 miles) in 42 min. The whole of the arrears had then been regained, but high speed was maintained to bring the train into Brighton about 1 min. early, at 5.59 p.m.

After a short wait at Newhaven Harbour, the "Sussex Coast Limited" was worked back to Newhaven Town Station. A visit to the nearby locomotive shed revealed a varied assortment of Southern Region motive power, including



Photo]

[R. Stieber

No. 32424 about to leave Bournemouth Central with the 2 p.m. train for Brighton on September 24, 1957

Brighton Atlantics in their heyday, on the "Southern Belle," the Newhaven Boat Train, and the "City Limited." Of outstanding merit was a journey on the down "City Limited" behind No. 32424 in the autumn of 1921. There had been a delay in getting the empty stock into London Bridge, with the result that the train left that station 4 min. late, at 5.4 p.m.

The road was clear throughout, and it was obvious from the start that the enginemmen were determined to make every effort to recover the lost time. Despite the 2¾ miles of 1 in 100 up the New Cross Bank, the 10.3 miles to East

three veteran "Terrier" tank engines, Nos. 32636, 32640 and 32662, "K" class 2-6-0 No. 32345, "L" class 4-4-0 No. 31776, "Schools" class No. 30910, *Merchant Taylors*, and British Railways 2-6-4 tank No. 80154, placed in service in 1957, and the last steam locomotive to be built at Brighton Works. Shortly after midday, No. 32424 came to the shed to be turned before running light to Brighton. Needless to say, the many photographers in the party took full advantage of this opportunity.

The journey was continued at 1.46 p.m. behind No. 80154, and on arrival at

Brighton a visit was paid to the locomotive shed, where another representative assembly of motive power was to be seen. Of particular interest were the "Terrier" tank No. 82, *Boxhill*, and L.S.W.R. 4-4-0 No. 563, both of which had recently been on exhibition in their original liveries. A sombre note was struck by the arrival of No. 32424 from Newhaven at about 2.50 p.m. The last British Atlantic had ended its long working life within sight of the works at which it was built. There remained for it only the last journey to the scrap heap.

The "Sussex Coast Limited" left Brighton for London at 4.16 p.m. behind 4-6-0 No. 30796, *Sir Dodinas le Savage*, one of the "King Arthur" class with six-wheel tenders, which worked on the Brighton main line for some time before it was electrified in 1933. Fifty-eight minutes had been allowed for the non-

stop run of 50.9 miles, but, as the journey proceeded, hopes of a punctual arrival gradually faded. Haywards Heath (12.9 miles) was passed in 18 min.; Horley (24.9 miles) in 31 min.; and East Croydon (40.4 miles) in 47½ min. Then came a dead stand for signals at Streatham Common, and Victoria was reached at 5.19 p.m., 5 min. late.