

Sir WINSTON CHURCHILL'S LAST JOURNEY

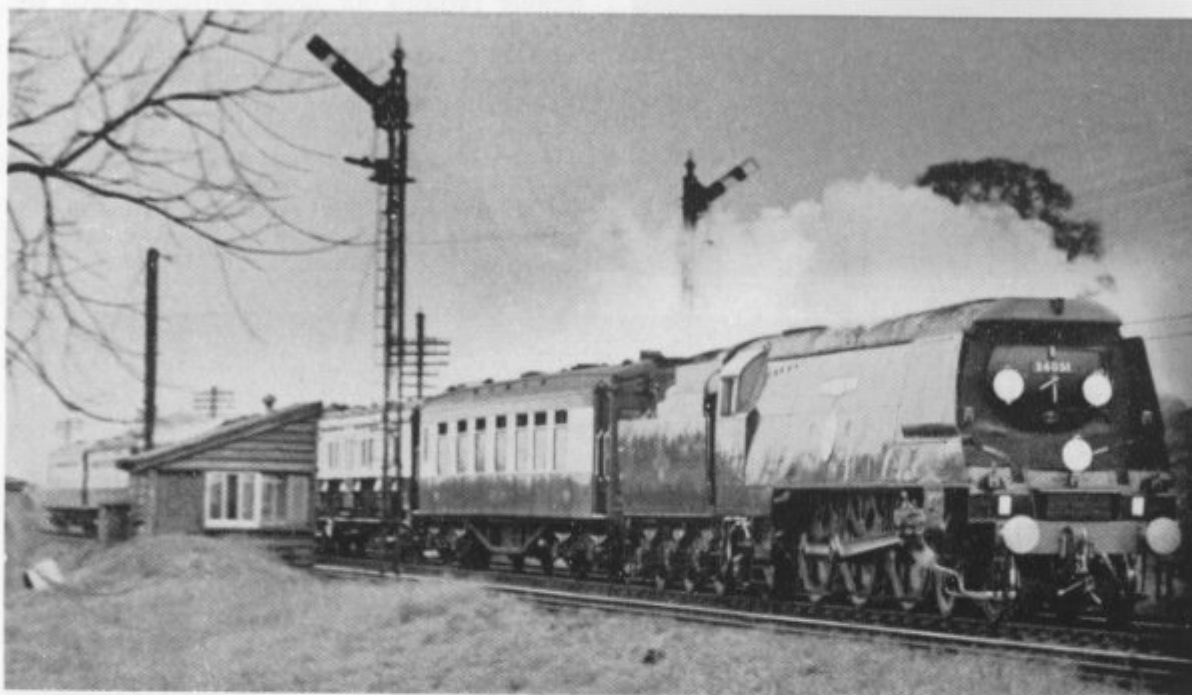


Photo: V. C. K. Allen

Funeral train between Ashford and Staines, during the journey from Waterloo to Handborough on January 30. The five Pullman cars and bogie van (second vehicle and conveying the coffin) were headed by "Battle of Britain" class 4-6-2 locomotive No. 34051, "Sir Winston Churchill"

Along the entire route thousands of people gathered to pay their last respects to the great statesman and to witness, probably for the last time, a steam locomotive hauling a special funeral train

Born into the great days of steam on the railways of the world, Sir Winston Churchill had lived to see it reach the peak of its development, while his latter years also witnessed its decline, the growing pains of the diesel age and the beginnings of a new era in railway motive power. It seemed only right that his last journey, from Waterloo to Bladon, should be by rail and behind a steam locomotive—albeit one which, by its very design, became a topic of controversy.

THE State funeral accorded to Sir Winston Churchill on January 30 was but the fitting climax to the life of a great man and the expression of a nation's grateful thanks for duty nobly done.

From Westminster Hall, after a three-day period of lying in state, the coffin, accompanied by a

mile-long procession, was taken slowly along Whitehall, the Strand, Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill to St. Paul's Cathedral. The brief but moving service ended, the procession continued on its way to Tower Pier via Cannon Street, Eastcheap and Tower Hill.

Lying at the Tower Pier was the Port of London Authority survey launch *Havengore* which was to take the still flag-draped coffin to Waterloo Pier. It was carried aboard to the sound of laments played by the bagpipes of Scottish regiments and, as *Havengore* cast off, the first shot of a salute of 19 guns sounded.

All other traffic on the river ceased as the convoy of launches made its way up river, the jibs of the cranes on Hay's Wharf being lowered in salute. Passing under London Bridge, Cannon Street, Southwark, Blackfriars and Waterloo bridges,

Havengore and the attendant launches finally tied-up at Waterloo Pier, near the Festival Hall, and the coffin was transferred to a waiting motor hearse which took it to Waterloo Station.

At Waterloo, platform No. 11 had been reserved for the special train and platforms 9 and 10 were closed from 12.35 to 13.40. The York Road entrance was closed to traffic from noon onwards and pedestrian crossings over the centre cab road from 13.05 to 13.35, passengers being directed to the subway connecting both sides of the station.

The six-coach train included a bogie van for the carriage of the coffin and, on arrival at the platform, the hearse was met by a bearer party of eight men and a regimental sergeant major from Sir Winston's old regiment, the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars. The coffin on their shoulders, the bearers moved slowly across the platform and up a short ramp towards the open doors of the van. Two of the bearer party remained in the van on guard when the doors were closed.

The mourners and friends then entrained in the Pullman car immediately behind the van and the stationmaster, who last doffed his hat to Sir Winston five years ago when he left Waterloo on a visit to Lord Avon, directed the train's departure. In a flurry of steam and with a short blast on its whistle, locomotive No. 34051 and its train drew slowly away from the platform. *Winston Churchill*, "Battle of Britain" class 4-6-2 Pacific No. 34051, designed by O.V.S. Bulleid and built in 1946, was officially named in a ceremony at Waterloo on September 11, 1947, by Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Dowding. Normally shedded at Salisbury for mixed-traffic duties, it was brought to Nine Elms on January 25 in preparation for hauling the funeral train.



Photo: D. H. Cape

Nameplate and plaque on the side of No. 34051, which was Southern Railway No. 21C151 at the time of the naming ceremony at Waterloo Station on September 11, 1947

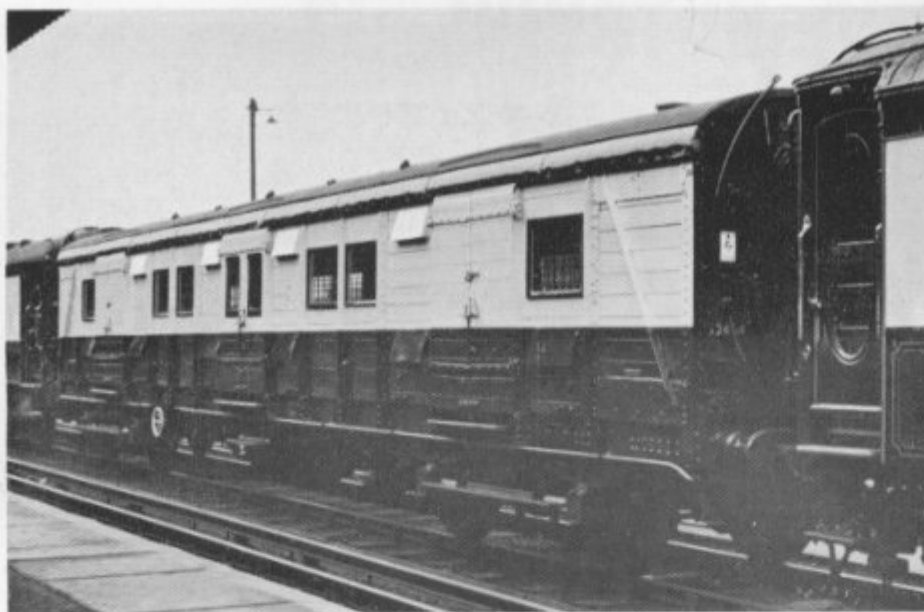
On the footplate was A. W. Hurley, now aged 61, who has been driving for 22 of his 47 years of railway service and is no stranger to Royal trains. In 1941 he was fireman on a train which took Winston Churchill to Southampton from Surbiton, bombing having disrupted the lines between the latter place and Waterloo. Hurley was unaware of the fact that the Prime Minister was on board until the train reached its destination. The 22-year-old fireman, J. C. Lester, has been on the railway for only seven years and his own comment—"It's a great honour and something I shall remember all my life"—needs no qualification.

The train consisted of six vehicles. Behind the locomotive was Pullman brake car No. 208,



Photo: G. R. Mortimer

The empty stock leaving Clapham Junction sidings for Waterloo at about 11.40 hr. on January 30, with class "4" 2-6-4 tank engines Nos. 80137 and 80143 respectively at the rear and front ends



Southern bogie "P.M.V." (probably the last with corridor connections) No. S2464 at Clapham Junction before being worked up to Waterloo. In Pullman livery, it bore the paint date 7/62 and another date, 20/1/65, presumably for varnish

Photo: Brian Stephenson

followed by bogie luggage van No. S2464 (for the carriage of the coffin), Pullman cars *Carina*, *Lydia* and *Perseus* and Pullman brake car *Isle of Thanet*. Mr. W. H. Horwill, a 62-year-old Royal train guard with 48 years of railway service behind him, was in charge of the train.

The journey time between Waterloo and Handborough (for Bladon and Blenheim) was scheduled to take 1 hr. 55 min., departure time from Waterloo being at 13.28. Passing times on the route were as follow: Barnes 13.39, Twickenham 13.46, Virginia Water 14.04, Ascot 14.14, Wokingham 14.24 and Reading spur 14.33. At 14.34 the train stopped on the Reading (East) down line to pick up Western Region driver-conductor P. Talbot and conductor-guard H. F. Simmons and left two minutes later.

Reading General was passed at 14.39, Didcot East 14.59, Didcot North 15.00½, Oxford 15.12 and Yarnton 15.17, arrival at Handborough being at 15.23.

At the conclusion of the funeral service at Bladon the mourners rejoined the train at Handborough but, in place of *Winston Churchill*, motive power was provided by Western Region diesel-hydraulic type "4" locomotive No. D1015, *Western Champion*. Departure was at 16.20, the train running through to Paddington, where it arrived at 17.35. Having played its part in a never-to-be-forgotten moment in history, *Winston Churchill* returned light to Nine Elms, taking the route by which it came, via the Reading spur on to the Southern Region.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway 15 in.-gauge Pacific No. 9, built by the Yorkshire Engine Company in 1931 and re-named "Winston Churchill" in 1948 before going on exhibition to Canada

