

ATR 7006/SPA 462

SOUTHERN STEAM

Southern Railway steam locomotives at work on British Railways in the 1950s

SIDE ONE

Band One

At Exeter St David's in 1958.

At Exeter Southern Region trains from the West of England faced a 1 in 37 climb from St David's Station to Central Station.

'West Country' class 'Pacific', No. 34003 *Plymouth*, stands in Exeter St David's Station waiting to leave for London, Waterloo with an SR express from the West of England on a July morning in 1958. At the far end of the station a WR engine whistles in the distance.

Plymouth whistles in answer to the distant whistles of the banking engines, makes a slippery start, cheered on by a watching WR engine driver, heads the train out from the station and climbs past and away towards the tunnel which leads to Exeter Central Station. At the rear of the train, two 'E1/R' class 0-6-2 Tank engines, Nos 32697 and 32135, give banking assistance on the 1 in 37 climb.

Another SR express from the West stands waiting at Exeter St David's on an August afternoon in 1958 headed by a '700' class 0-6-0, No. 30317, piloting 'West Country' class 'Pacific', No. 34034 *Honiton*.

No. 30317 whistles in answer to the banking engine and starts out from the station. The exhaust beat of the 0-6-0 contrasts with the three-cylinder beat of the 4-6-2 as the two engines head the train past and climb away towards Exeter Central, assisted by an 'E1/R' class 0-6-2 Tank engine, No. 32124, at the rear of the train.

Carriage and wagon examiners are busy in the nearby WR carriage sidings later the same day as 'N' class 2-6-0, No. 31838, starts out from St David's Station with a train from the West of England, climbs past and whistles away into the tunnel.

Band Two

At Victoria Station, London on a September morning in 1956.

'King Arthur' (N15) class 4-6-0, No. 30767 *Sir Valence*, acknowledges the distant whistle of the banking engine and starts out of Victoria Station at the head of a Kent Coast express. At the rear of the train an 'E1' class 4-4-0, No. 31019, gives banking assistance out of the station for the 1 in 62 climb towards Grosvenor Bridge.

Later the same morning, now on board the 11.50 train for Chatham and the Kent Coast, which is headed by the 'E1' class 4-4-0, No. 31019, in the charge of Sam Gingell, a driver whose exploits on this line were well known in the 1950s.

No. 31019 starts the train out of Victoria, vigorously attacks the 1 in 62 climb to Grosvenor Bridge, rumbles over the bridge and whistles past Stewarts Lane, then, on the Catford loop line, tackles the rising gradients between Peckham Rye and Nunhead.

The 4-4-0 maintains speed on the 1 in 100 climb to Swanley, then, accelerating on falling gradients, whistles through Swanley Junction, roars through Farningham Road at 80mph and attacks the 1 in

100 climb past Fawkham and Longfield Siding and the shorter climb at 1 in 132 past Meopham to Sole Street.

The train slows at the approach to Rochester and crosses Rochester Bridge. From here on the train is checked by signals, understandably since it is now some 12 minutes ahead of schedule, in spite of signal and permanent way slowings, between Brixton and Bickley Junction.

No. 31019 heads through Rochester Station, climbs on gradients of 1 in 95, 1 in 180 and 1 in 135 towards and through Fort Pitt Tunnel and brings the train to a stop in Chatham Station, more than nine minutes ahead of the 57-minute schedule for the 35.4 mile journey from Victoria.

Details concerning this journey are taken from a log compiled by Mr S.A.W. Harvey.

Load: 256 tons tare, 276 tons gross.

Locomotive working: full regulator, with cut off at 60% Victoria–Grosvenor Bridge, 35% at Peckham Rye, 25% at Farningham Road and 35% at Meopham.

Signal checks at Brixton, Bickley Junction, Rochester Bridge and Rochester Station. PW check at Catford.

Speeds: 55mph at Peckham Rye, 50mph at Nunhead, 50mph at Swanley, 80mph at Farningham Road, 70mph at Fawkham, 56mph at Longfield, 60mph at Meopham and 58mph at Sole Street.

Actual time, Victoria–Chatham, 47½ minutes. Net time 42½ minutes.

SIDE TWO

Band One

Beside the Tonbridge–Tunbridge Wells line on the 1 in 53, 1 in 47 climb between Tonbridge Station and Somer Hill Tunnel on a December morning in 1956.

No. 30929 *Malvern*, a 'Schools' (V) class 4-4-0, fitted with a Bulleid double chimney, approaches from under a road bridge after passing through Tonbridge Station and climbs past and away towards Somer Hill Tunnel with a London–Tunbridge Wells–Hastings train.

An engine whistles in the yard outside the loco sheds and another 'Schools' class 4-4-0, No. 30923 *Bradfield*, fitted with a single chimney, tackles the climb towards Somer Hill Tunnel with a train for Tunbridge Wells and Hastings, which has called at Tonbridge Station.

'L' class 4-4-0, No. 31760, accelerating after a signal check, heads a passenger train past, down the gradient, towards Tonbridge Station.

'H' class 0-4-4 Tank engine, No. 31544, heads out from Tonbridge Station, climbs past and whistles away towards the tunnel with a push and pull train for Tunbridge Wells.

Band Two

On the Folkestone Harbour branch line, which climbs at 1 in 30 for nearly one mile to join the main line at Folkestone Junction.

On a windy afternoon in August 1956 a boat train, headed by two 'R1' class 0-6-0 Tank engines, Nos 31339 and 31069, starts out from Folkestone Harbour Station and, raising echoes from the surrounding buildings, climbs past and away towards Folkestone Junction with another 'R1' class 0-6-0 Tank engine, No. 31340 giving banking assistance at the rear of the train.

Band Three

'D' class 4-4-0, No. 31549, calls at Wanborough Station and climbs away, against the wind, on the 1 in 100 rising gradient towards Reading with a train from Redhill on an April afternoon in 1956.

'A1X' class 'Terrier' 0-6-0 Tank engine, No. 32646, arrives at Hayling Island Station with a train from Havant on a November morning in 1957. The engine waits with brake pump thumping busily, then, when uncoupled, moves away beyond the points of the run-round loop. When the points have been changed, the 'Terrier' moves back through the station, running light.

'H2' class 'Atlantic', No. 32425 *Trevoze Head*, hauled a special train from South London to Bourne End and back on a July Sunday in 1956.

Trevoze Head moves past from a siding, running light, towards the coaches of the special train, couples up and waits in Bourne End Station, with brake pump panting, for the 'right away'.

The 'Atlantic' whistles, accompanied in the background by the whistle of the WR engine which has brought the train from Marlow, then starts the train out from the station, heads it past and away, over the river bridge, towards Maidenhead and London.

Band Four

'Merchant Navy' class 'Pacific', No. 35023 *Holland-Afrika Line*, waits at Salisbury Station at the head of the up 'Atlantic Coast Express' in the pouring rain on a cold, blustery March day in 1956.

The 'Pacific', slipping heavily on the wet and greasy rails, starts out from the station and heads the heavy train past and away on the 1 in 305 rising gradient towards London while, in the background, the station announcer gives details of the next down train for the West of England.

Band Five

On the SR West of England main line at Templecombe in July 1956.

'Merchant Navy' class 'Pacific' No. 35016 *Elders Fyffes*, approaching on the 1 in 80 climb from Gillingham, heads a down express through the station and away on the 1 in 100 rising gradient towards Yeovil Junction, Exeter and the West.

A train has just arrived at the Somerset and Dorset line platform in the background as another 'Merchant Navy' class 'Pacific', No. 35002 *Union Castle*, whistles through Templecombe Station and away down the gradient towards Gillingham and Salisbury with the up 'Atlantic Coast Express'.

'King Arthur' class 4-6-0, No. 30450 *Sir Kay*, moves out from the sidings and into the station with the coaches of a train for Salisbury.

'T9' class 4-4-0, No. 30702, starts out from Templecombe Station with an afternoon train for Yeovil.

'S15' class 4-6-0, No. 30842, moves out from the sidings heading a goods train into Templecombe Station on a November afternoon in 1956. Wagons groan and squeal as the train slows to a stop in the station, then No. 30842 propels the train out of the station and away up the gradient towards the sidings. In the background, a train on the Somerset and Dorset line passes under the mainline bridge beyond the station.

Note: the 'West Country' and 'Merchant Navy' class locomotives heard at Exeter, Salisbury and Templecombe had not at that time been rebuilt.