

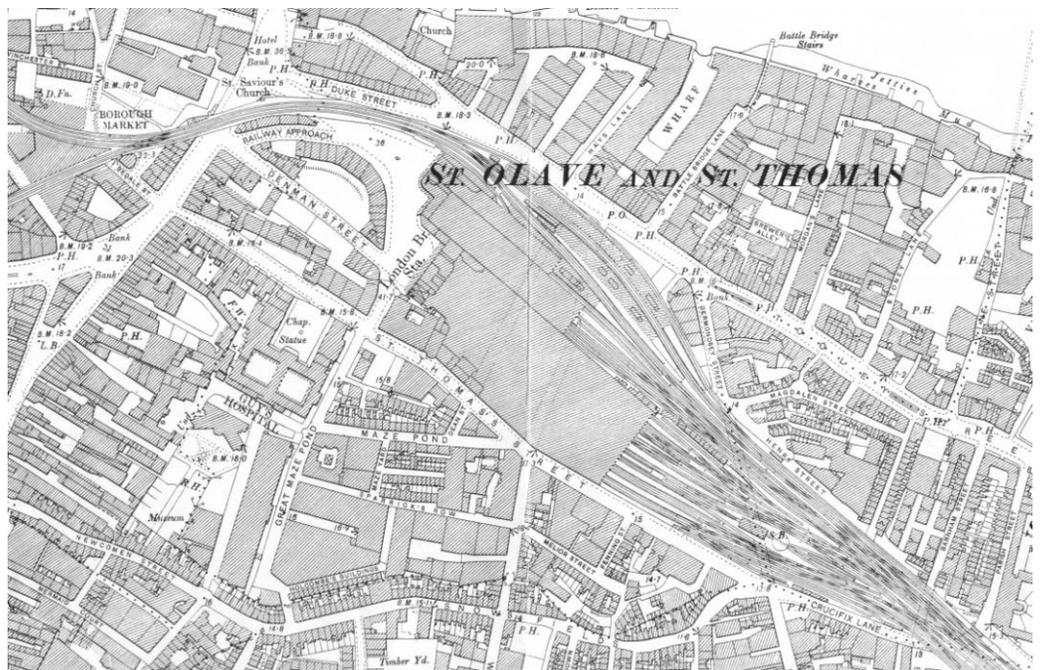
## A Tour around the London Termini

How many main-line London railway termini are there? This was a common party or playground conundrum in the 1950's, before young minds turned to more useful facts and figures, and the answer could range from about ten to as many as seventeen. There were more than anywhere else in the known Empire, quite possibly the whole world too, that much was certain. The full list was compulsory knowledge for well educated suburban schoolboys, and fierce argument would ensue (interspersed with the odd biff on the nose) based on the precise definitions of "terminus" and "main-line". Thus London Bridge, Baker Street and Blackfriars might justifiably be excluded, though I believe these normally formed part of "official" lists as might be found in a good encyclopedia. Of the rest, Broad Street could be excused as being of little importance even then. The real cinderellas, often overlooked, were Fenchurch Street and Holborn Viaduct, which sorted the men from the boys. A really mean inquisitor might also seek to claim Edgware Road and Moorgate, but never very convincingly. For some reason, everyone knew Marylebone, despite the fact that it probably saw fewer trains than any of the others!

I travelled regularly through Waterloo, Paddington and Liverpool Street, as described elsewhere. The others were visited in the course of Saturday afternoons spent train-spotting, and we also came across various aspects of the lines leading out from them, notably the freight activities not otherwise seen, on our bus and tube rover excursions.

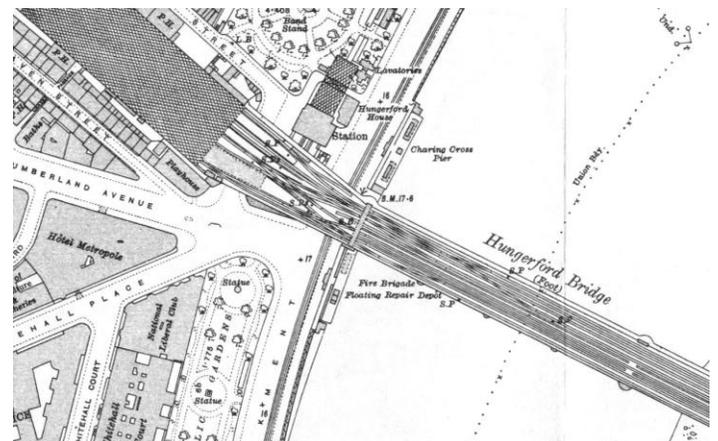
### **The Southern Region termini**

The Southern group tended to be the least interesting, with steam traction heavily diluted by the electrics everywhere except at Waterloo. Both London Bridge (1913 OS map extract, right) and Victoria sprawled incoherently over large areas, and it was difficult to form an overall impression of what was happening; there seemed to be no good vantage point that was easily accessible. London Bridge was still looking much the worse for its extensive wartime bomb damage, and was long



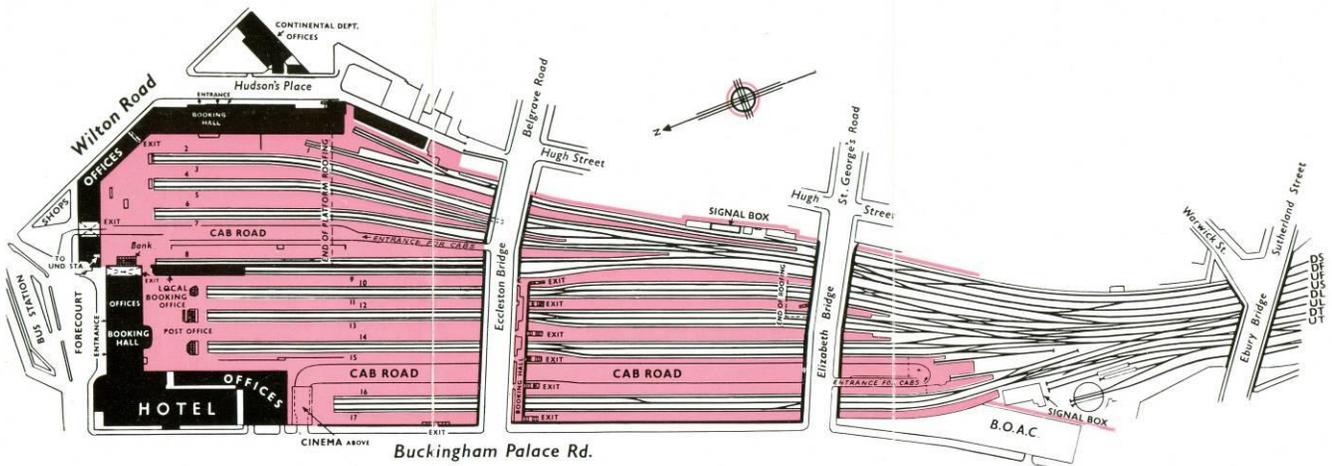
proposed for complete rebuilding though nothing seemed ever to get done. My fondest memory of Victoria is being taken to see the prestigious "Night Ferry" train, with its opulent royal blue liveried "Wagons Lit" sleeping car stock, the only foreign passenger carrying vehicles to be seen regularly in these islands, travelled over from France on a train ferry ship.

At Charing Cross (right), the trains seemed uncomfortably close and overbearing, whether encountered from the very narrow platforms or from the pedestrian walkway which accompanies the lines on Hungerford Bridge across the Thames from Waterloo.



This used to lead straight out onto the station concourse until it was shortened and diverted down steps to the Embankment in the early 1960s. When a train passed by on the nearest line, I found the rumblings and vibration amongst the bridge girders quite scary. There was little steam interest to be seen, perhaps the occasional "Schools" or "King Arthur" class locomotive, but one very unusual electric train which ran regularly from here was Bulleid's clever experimental double deck high density suburban set comprising 4-car unit nos. 4001/2, not perpetuated due to delays in loading and unloading passengers in the upper level seating areas. Once we had tracked it down, a short ride (perhaps just to Waterloo East) in this curiosity was a must.

In 1963 the Southern Region Public Relations & Publicity dept. produced a series of informative leaflets on their London terminal stations, with a plan, an aerial view and some facts and figures. Those for Victoria and Charing Cross are reproduced in their entirety below, for their historical interest. I don't know if similar ones were produced for Cannon Street, London Bridge or Blackfriars, but I never saw any – if anyone does have these, I would much appreciate seeing a copy!



**VICTORIA STATION**  
BRITISH RAILWAYS  
SOUTHERN REGION

**KEY TO RUNNING LINES**

DS .. Down Slow	DL .. Down Local
DF .. Down Fast	UL .. Up Local
UF .. Up Fast	DT .. Down Through
US .. Up Slow	UT .. Up Through

Physically, Victoria is two stations side by side, under the same roof.  
 From the first part, platforms 1-8, generally known as the eastern side, trains run to Kent—the coast resorts, Channel ports—and to the South East London suburbs.  
 From the other part, platforms 9-17, or the central section, they go to Sussex, to Portsmouth and to the South London and East Surrey suburbs.  
 The only link between the two systems is one cross-over line running from the central lines into the eastern side platforms.  
 The station was built in this way in 1860—and for many years until the formation of the Southern Railway company in 1923 the two sections were run quite independently by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway.  
 Over the years there have been large scale alterations to increase the capacity of both sections. The most recent, in 1959-60, involved lengthening the eastern side

platforms to take 12 and 14 coach trains under the Kent Coast Electrification Scheme, redesigning the complicated track network almost as far as the River Thames, and rebuilding part of Eccleston Bridge with only two spans so that its supporting columns would not interfere with the new track layout. Work has begun on the reconstruction of Grosvenor Bridge. When complete the bridge will have an extra track to give a total of ten.  
 Today, the station is working at capacity at peak times and there is no room for further expansion short of major reconstruction: but the number of passengers continues to grow. Since 1939, the daily figure has jumped from 124,620 to 166,684. And the increase during the heaviest single hour of the business peak periods has more than doubled—from 16,978 to 36,117.  
 Every day 1,019 trains use the station. The best known are the Brighton Belle, on the central section; and the Golden Arrow and Night Ferry services to the Continent from the eastern side.  
 The Silver Arrow services provide a new rail-air-rail link with Paris, via Gatwick.  
 Many trains out of the central section call at Clapham Junction

to connect with services from Waterloo.  
 Of the 17 platforms, number 15, is 1,430 ft. long—one of the longest in Britain.  
 There are two signal boxes. The oldest, controlling the eastern side, was opened in 1919 and was adapted for colour light signalling in October 1938. It has 126 miniature levers, 75 track circuits and eight train describers.  
 The central section box, opened in October 1938, and also equipped for colour light signalling, has 201 miniature levers, 116 track circuits and six train describers.  
 There is access from the station to the LTE Underground Station, which will be expanded to accommodate the new Victoria Line, now under construction.  
 A new £100,000 terminal for British United Airways, straddling the road between platforms 15 and 16 was opened in May 1962 and is reached from platform level by an escalator.

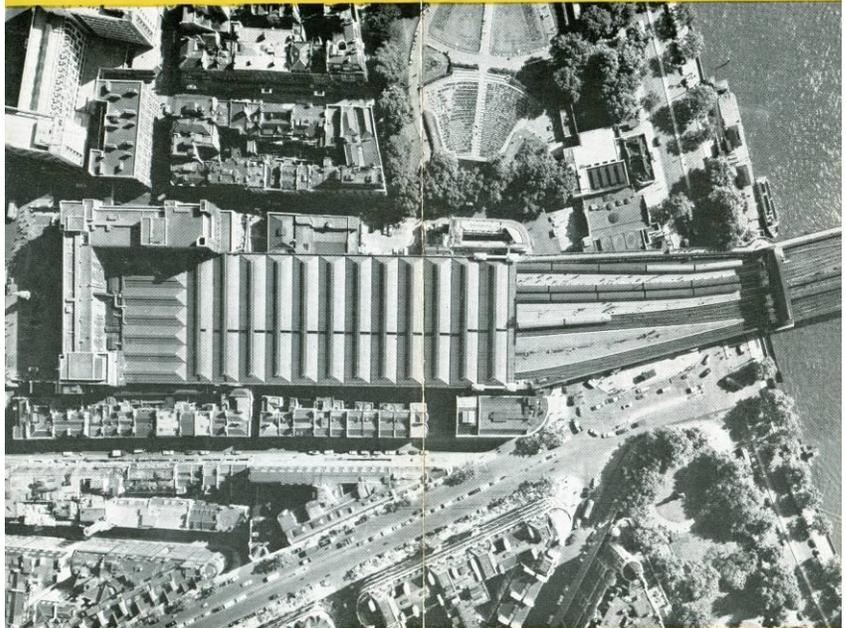
# VICTORIA STATION



## FACTS & FIGURES

British Railways  
SOUTHERN REGION

# CHARING CROSS STATION

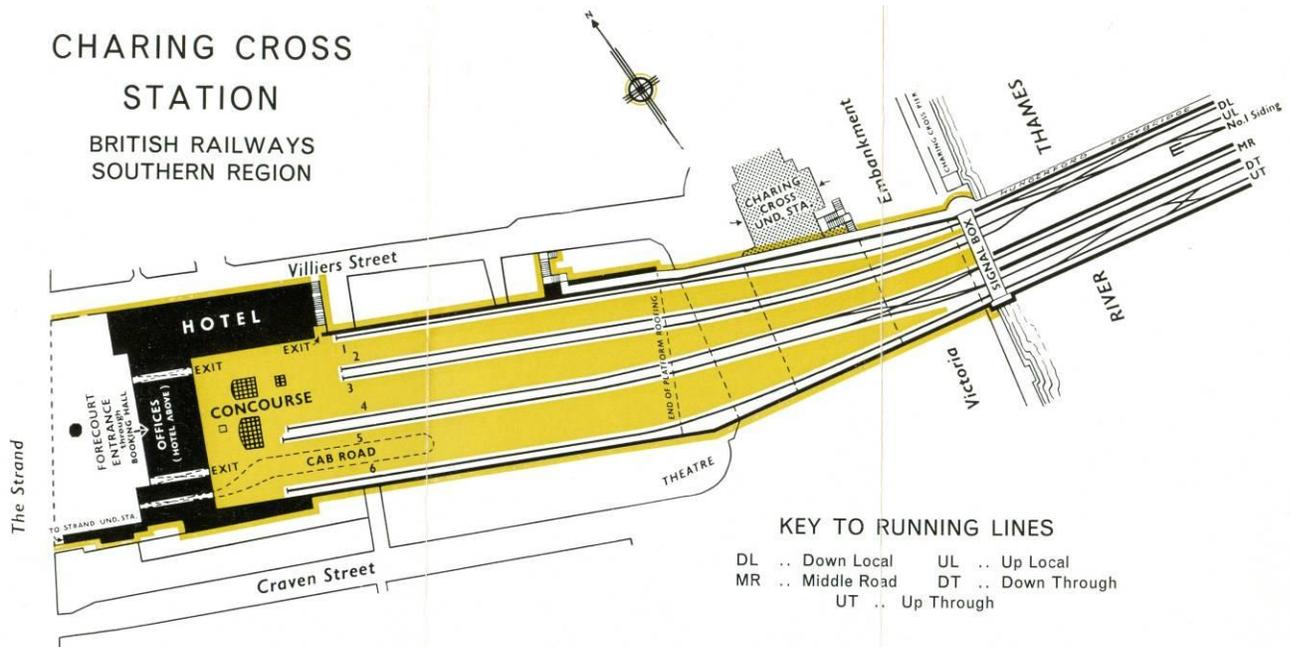


## FACTS & FIGURES

British Railways  
SOUTHERN REGION

# CHARING CROSS STATION

BRITISH RAILWAYS  
SOUTHERN REGION



Here is the heart of London. For in the forecourt at Charing Cross Station there is a monument from which the London distances shown on all signposts and milestones are measured.

The station itself was opened in 1864. It has only six platforms—small by main line terminal standards—but every day they are used by 700 trains.

At peak times, this busy station is worked to capacity. While the number of daily passengers has grown

steadily from 111,000 in 1939 to more than 125,000, the figure for the heaviest single hour of the peak has jumped by more than half—from 16,000 to 25,500.

The longest platform—number 6—is 748 ft. It is used mainly by smart, new main line electric trains which have replaced steam on the services to East Kent.

The other platforms are used by the Hastings line diesel-electric multiple-unit trains, and by suburban

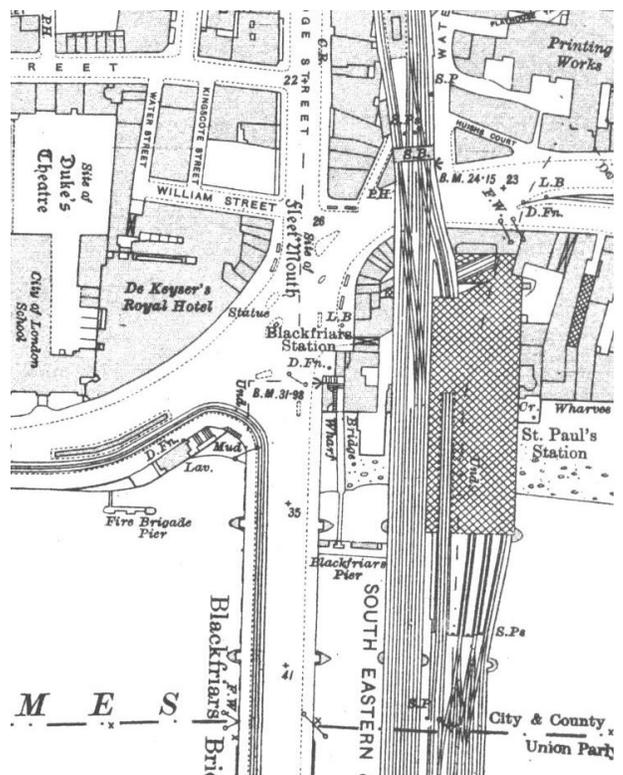
electric multiple-unit trains. Steam trains last used the station regularly in 1961. The power operated signal box, opened in 1926, has 100 levers, 59 track circuits and four train describers.

Above the station offices is Charing Cross Hotel, which has established itself as one of the leading hotels in London.

There is easy access from the station to both Charing Cross and Strand LTE Underground stations.

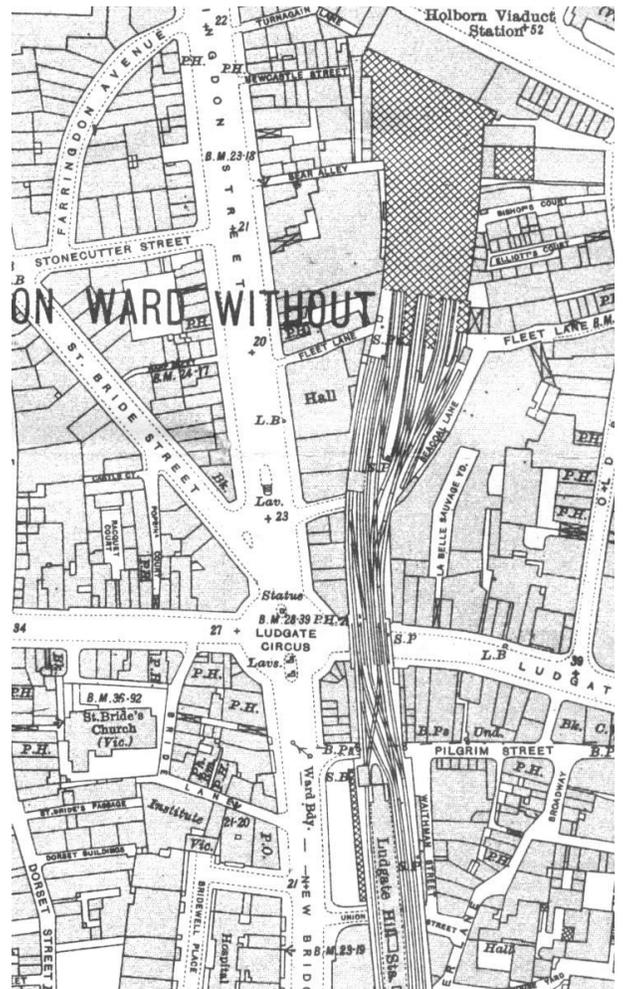
Poor bomb blasted Holborn Viaduct, and recently roofless Cannon Street were rarely visited; along with Blackfriars they seemed to serve on Saturdays mainly as quiet repositories for standard 4-EPB type electric unit sets, out of use until the following Monday morning rush. In view of this, the prominent architectural feature of the latter station - a list of places allegedly served by the former South Eastern & Chatham Railway incised permanently into the stonework of the main facade - was regarded with mild amusement. Exotic foreign names such as Baden Baden, Bremen and Brindisi were interspersed with prosaic Bromley, Bickley and Broadstairs. Likewise, Sheerness and Sittingbourne could be found rubbing shoulders with St. Petersburg! This served to remind us of this station's prestigious past as a centre for business and holiday travel to Europe, a status similar to that which say Gatwick Airport has today. Upon later rebuilding, the stones were moved and reassembled on the station concourse, where they may still be seen.

The other interesting feature of the area around Blackfriars was the complexity of the trackwork (OS map extract right). Immediately to the west, four through lines bypassed the



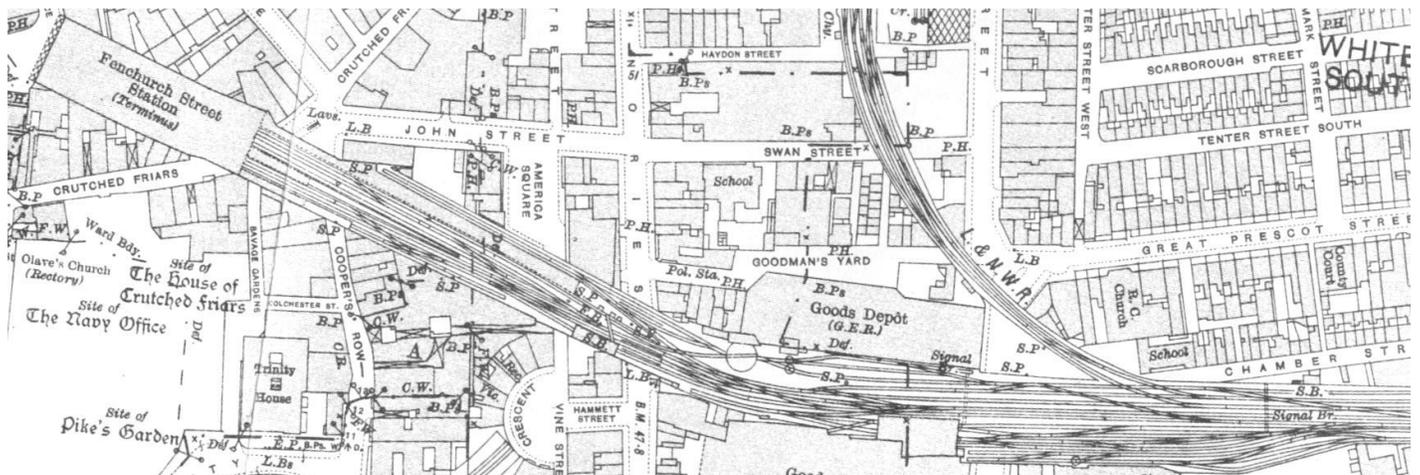
station, allowing trains to proceed directly to Holborn Viaduct, having crossed the Thames on separate bridges now completely dismantled. The westernmost two platforms at Blackfriars were also on through lines, these disappearing out of the back wall of the station, just as they still do for the "Thameslink" services, to join up with the direct lines. From this vantage point, Holborn Viaduct station could be clearly seen only about half a mile away, and in between were the derelict remains of Ludgate Hill station, closed in 1926.

We would peer out along these tracks hoping to see one of the cross-London freight trains, usually headed by an LNER type J50 tank loco, but these were not common on Saturdays. They emerged from a mysterious tunnel just south of Holborn Viaduct, long since closed to passenger trains, which joined the Metropolitan widened lines at Farringdon Street thence leading to the northern routes at Kings Cross or St. Pancras. The Thameslink service nowadays uses a broadly similar but not identical route; most traces of the old connecting line have been obliterated by it. In the depths of the old tunnel were situated the platforms of Holborn Viaduct Low Level station. These had been disused since 1916, but were still easily accessible through an unlocked door off the side of the main station concourse and down a flight of steps. A member of the station staff once took great delight in showing me this secret, smoky subterranean labyrinth, but unfortunately there were no trains due at the time!



## Fenchurch Street

This other obscure terminus was to be found in a secluded corner, hidden amongst tall old city office blocks. I knew it well however since my father worked in one of these, London House, right next door, and was often required to attend on Saturday mornings. When I had travelled up with him I would while away the odd hour or two on the station, which had a surprisingly frequent though sparsely patronised train service at that time of the week. Fenchurch was something of an enigma; it carried the royal blue enamelled signware of British Railways Eastern Region throughout, and the street frontage canopy was of that most distinctive and familiar Great Eastern Railway "sawtooth" pattern, both features one might expect in this quarter of London; but only ex LMS group



engines and trains could be seen there! There were just four platforms beyond the iron railings at the top of a long flight of wooden steps up from street level. These two pictures were taken in August 1973, during extensive building work; the station façade still survives, but above and behind is now modern office accommodation.....



The motive power used on the trains to Tilbury and Southend was exclusively 2-6-4 tanks, based at Tilbury or Shoeburyness sheds. Most common were the ex-LMS Stanier 3-cylinder variety numbered in the 42500 series, unique to this line; there were 37 of them in all, of which I managed to log 21 in my various brief visits. Helping out were one or two of the newer Fairburn machines, and about 15 of the B.R. standard 80xxx version. All the lovely old 4-4-2 tanks once associated with this line had gone from the London area by 1959, and I regret never seeing any of them. The only native LT&SR survivor was an 0-6-2 tank, 41981, used for freight and shunting, which we found lurking outside Plaistow shed on one of our L.T. rover ticket tours; by then we had progressed to the more expensive combined bus and underground cards for greater flexibility, at five shillings a go, and were in the process of exploring the furthest reaches of the District line.

The carriages used on the Southend run were also ex LMS; mainly the wooden paneled 1920s suburban stock painted plain red or maroon, grouped in quite uniform sets of up to 12 vehicles. I recall occasionally seeing an odd vehicle stuck onto one end of a train, a quaint, short flat roofed antiquity which completely upset the regularity of the remainder. These were in fact bogie vehicles (though they resembled 6-wheelers above platform level) and I was told they were used to increase the passenger capacity; a thirteenth ordinary length coach would have made the train too long for the platforms and runround loops. This explanation was difficult to reconcile with the lack of Saturday morning customers! Such interesting features of that distinctive and self-contained entity which was the former L.T & S system were swept away upon full electrification of the route from June 1962, and this little station became not worth visiting any more.

## King's Cross

When my father had finished work, we would go for a quick bite of lunch at a nearby "Lyons Corner House" or "Kardomah", then get down to some serious train spotting at the busier northern main-line terminals, Kings Cross, St. Pancras and Euston. The plain but graceful double arched frontage of Kings Cross was for many years somewhat obscured by an untidy array of kiosks and sheds, presenting an even worse appearance than the more modern "Travel Centre" (pictured below, also in August 1973, with some fashionable young Londoners!), but the surrounding area was then unsullied by association with drugs and prostitution; we youngsters had no qualms about walking around alone, even on a dark winter's evening.

On a summer Saturday around lunchtime, on entering the sun-dappled yellow brick archways of the main concourse, there would often be an impressive array of Eastern Region "pacific" motive power lined up at the buffer stops, simmering gently; one of the prestigious streamlined A4's, perhaps an A3 and an A2, all carrying their prominent nameplates. These names were predominantly of birds and famous racehorses, but were a very mixed bunch; some being suggestive of speed and grace: *Quicksilver, Flying Fox, Hal O' the Wynd,*



whereas others were much less suited to steam locomotives and conjured up wry amusement even in those days: *Gannet, Pretty Polly, Merry Hampton, Call Boy, Gay Crusader (!)*. The tone would be lowered by the presence of a filthy B1 "Bongo" 4-6-0 or a "concrete mixer" L1 2-6-4 tank (so nicknamed because of their awkward rolling gait at speed) heading up a semi fast or empty stock working. These "ordinary" engines seemed to lurk in their own soot laden gloom; our eyes took a while to adjust to this coming in from the sunshine outside, but in general the atmosphere at Kings Cross was less pervasive than at Liverpool Street. Both these terminals were of course Eastern Region, but there the similarity ended; they were as different in character as St. Pancras was to Euston or Waterloo to Victoria, all still with the strong individualities imparted by their pre-grouping owners. Nowadays, sadly, even the former regional boundaries are becoming very indistinct.

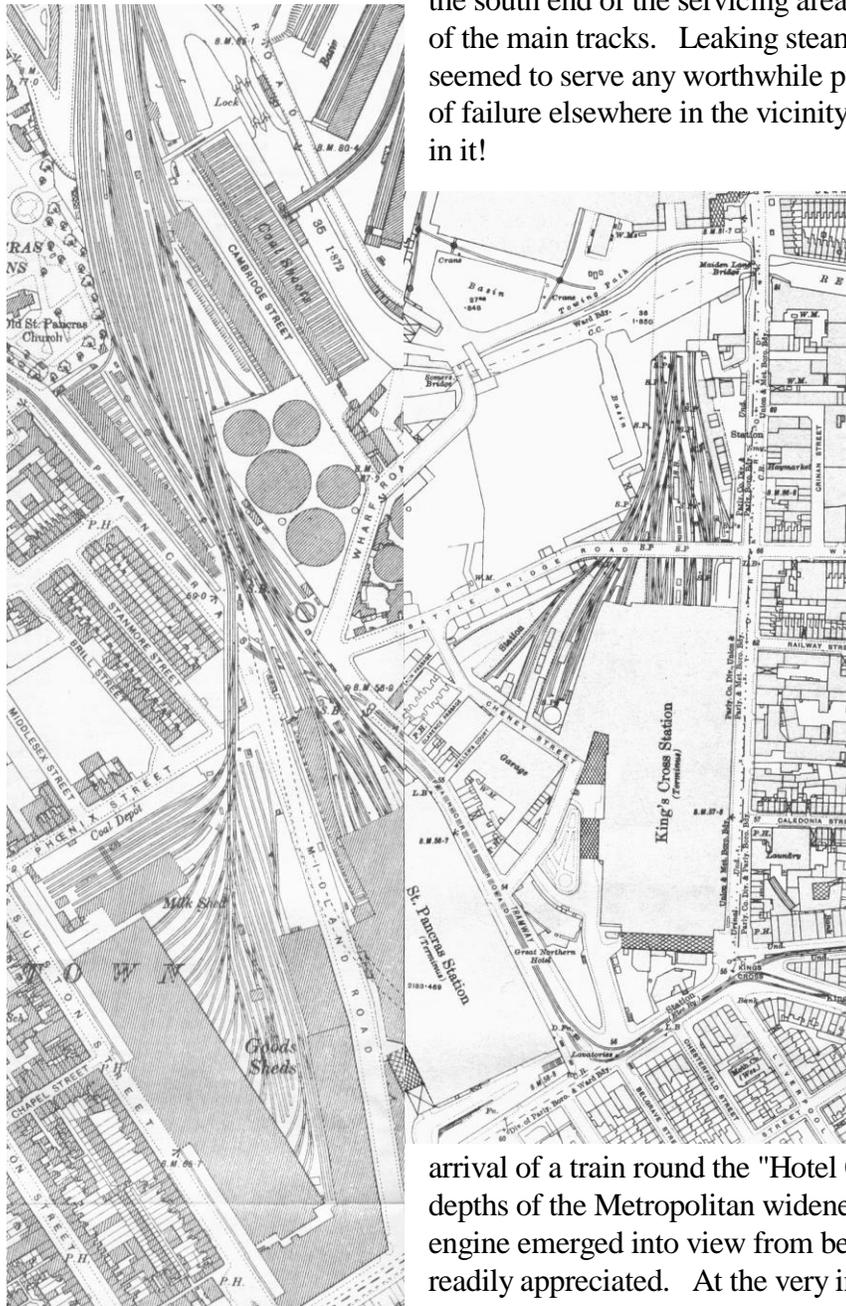
Having surveyed the arrivals scene, we would invariably walk down the length of the broad, open principal platform 9 to its far end, the usual haunt of a crowd of spotters, giving a good view of the station throat and locomotive servicing yard. This platform and its neighbour, no. 8 were used by such famous trains as the "*Flying Scotsman*" and "*Heart of Midlothian*", by then mainly comprised of B.R. Mark 1 carriages, but often retaining examples of fine Gresley teak paneled or Thompson LNER stock, especially the restaurant cars, whose lines were now despoiled by red and cream or maroon paint. This was indeed the place for named expresses, several of them being "Pullmans", and one of my favourite sights was the old fashioned wooden bodied cars of the "*Queen of Scots*" Pullman, headed up by a gleaming Doncaster or Grantham based A1 pacific. Later in the afternoon, two sets of such stock would be present side by side in these platforms, forming the "*Tees-Tyne Pullman*", due off at 4.45pm for Newcastle, and the 5.30pm "*Yorkshire Pullman*" for Leeds.

The spotters generally raved over the A4s (they still do!), but I had a particular affection for the older A3s, then at their most elegant before modification with various types of foreign looking smoke deflectors or double chimneys. Some even retained the original Great Northern pattern 8-wheeled tenders with through corridor connection and open coal rails on top. As at Paddington and Euston, certain engines seemed to appear at our every visit; *Persimmon, Sandwich, Bongrace, Robert the Devil, Bon Accord, Amadis, Happy Knight, Lord Farrington and Silver Link* were some of the pacific regulars.

I was baffled by what appeared to be an A4 with no name. It was difficult to get a good look at this beast, as its vast boiler stretched away beyond the platform-end on which we stood, but with the cab just level with the sloping ramp a gaze downward confirmed that this was indeed the unique British 4-6-4 no. 60700, still on front-line express duty just weeks before it was withdrawn from service and scrapped (in 1959). It surely deserved to have been given a name?

Across in the loco servicing yard might be another A3 and a couple of V2 2-6-2s; if we were very lucky, a rare, named example of the latter, together with an increasing presence of the new diesels from late 1958 onwards - mainly those in the D200, D5300 and D6100 series. Conspicuous by their absence at Kings Cross were B.R. standard locomotive types; unique among all the London termini I never saw a single example of any of these here.

There always seemed to be a particularly filthy example of a B1 4-6-0 lurking at the back of a parcels platform at the south end of the servicing area, almost at right angles to the general direction of the main tracks. Leaking steam everywhere, this dejected machine never seemed to serve any worthwhile purpose; it was probably a standby loco in case of failure elsewhere in the vicinity, but I would not have had too much confidence in it!



Between our vantage point and this dock lay a group of suburban terminal platforms numbered 10 - 13, a self contained part of the station outside the main overall roof, accessible from its own separate frontage through dingy arches leading off the side of the main concourse. This area was mystifyingly known as the "York Station" though it seemed to host only relatively local services by the 1950s. The B1s worked Cambridge trains out of here, and L1s would be seen on the semi fasts to Hitchin. Inner suburban trains were in the hands of Great Northern Railway designed N2 class 0-6-2 tanks carrying smoke box and bunker destination boards for Hertford and Potters Bar. These comprised Gresley "Quad Art" coach sets of similar vintage and condition to those found at Liverpool Street, but with only 4 vehicles articulated together instead of 5 and thus normally of eight carriages.

Every so often, from beyond the suburban station would be heard the pounding beat of a steam engine working very hard, followed by a column of smoke and steam erupting behind a grimy brick wall. This heralded the

arrival of a train round the "Hotel Curve", up into the daylight from the murky depths of the Metropolitan widened lines, having originated at Moorgate. As the engine emerged into view from behind the wall, the slope of this line could be readily appreciated. At the very instant the regulator was shut, the train would come to a dead stand alongside the correspondingly slanting creaky wooden

boards of platform 14. The N2s had large boilers, short squat chimneys and prominent condensing pipes which were meant to reduce emission of smoke and steam in the tunnels, but conditions were pretty foul down there nonetheless. It amazed me that these engines were able to restart their trains against the fierce gradient, but they were rugged powerful machines, very sure-footed except in damp conditions, when they seemed prone to sudden bouts of wheel slip with volleys of black smoke shooting straight up from the chimney.

In this characteristic they were by no means alone, as the main-line engines, especially the A3s, often seemed incapable of being started on the easier slope out of the main station without slipping, even in the best weather conditions - no clean, confident Paddington-style starts here! The grade started almost from the platform ends, the terminal lines inter-connecting and converging down to some six running lines and diving straight into the murky

portals of Gasworks Tunnel. It was not unknown for a departing train to stall in this tunnel, with the rearmost carriages still sticking out of the entrance, jamming up the whole layout for a while. Even more alarmingly, sometimes a train would appear to emerge coming backwards towards us, but this would just be an empty stock shunting movement, not the easiest of manoeuvres in these surroundings, with an N2 in charge at the further end, or perhaps one of the little J50 0-6-0s with large, sloping side tanks which were often employed.

Right over on the far side of the station, largely obscured from our view by the bulk of the main signal box, Moorgate bound suburban trains would glide quietly into their separate York Road platform, thence down the hole on this side towards the Metropolitan widened lines. We had to be vigilant to catch sight of these, but knew that they would reappear round the Hotel Curve on their return journey before too long. These tunnel trains were a prime candidate for dieselization, with multiple unit sets from 1959, but the acrid haze of diesel fumes which pervaded the environs of Moorgate's terminal platforms made the atmosphere even more oppressive than it had ever seemed in steam days! Up on the surface, steam suffered a lingering death, finally finishing in early 1963.

I took very few photographs at King's Cross, and to my regret most of them were of the big pacifics or the new diesels, none at all of the workaday suburban tanks. Here is a selection, the first in September 1960 and the others on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1962.....



An opportunity to see more of the behind the scenes operation of the former Great Northern Railway terminus before modernization really set in came with a school trip to the engine sheds at Kings Cross; "Top Shed", so named to distinguish it from the station servicing area - it was near the top of the first climb out of the terminus, and Hornsey in February 1960. The former was the passenger locomotive depot, sited between Gasworks and Copenhagen tunnels; the latter for freight engines, adjacent to Ferme Park marshalling yard a little further north. We walked along a grimy canal towpath and mean looking back streets to the sheds, a route I could not possibly hope to retrace today, and marvelled at the smoky atmosphere of the deep cuttings and their reverberation of the noise made by hard-working engines. The distinctive ambience of this urban backwater has fortunately been encapsulated and preserved as a backdrop to the 1953 Ealing comedy *"The Ladykillers"*, still occasionally repeated on television, and in model form by the often-exhibited magnificent layout "Copenhagen Fields".

Kings Cross Top Shed contained a splendid array of those superb main-line engines we had imagined from our small doses at the terminus, and plentiful evidence of the thorough cleaning regime then still practiced at this prestige depot. One most unexpected sight however was that of Great Central Railway A5 class inside cylinder pacific tank 69814, a most ungainly looking brute, parked all on its own over by the coaling plant. This was once a common type working into Marylebone until about early 1958, but rarely seen on the GN line. Apparently it had been on trial alongside the regular L1s, but did not have enough stamina to cope with the gradients of the Northern Heights lines; it was sent for scrap shortly afterwards, the last of its class to go.

Hornsey shed could not have been more different. All the engines here were absolutely filthy, blending in well with their surroundings, and some leaked steam profusely. Apart from the N2s and J50s used for shunting the freight yards, the inmates that cold, bright day comprised mainly "WD" austerity 2-8-0s and 9F 2-10-0s, which had worked down on heavy goods from Frodingham or New England (Peterborough). We all returned home rather black and sooty after this particular educational trip!

Hitchin station was an excellent spot from which to view the East Coast line expresses, by then now well into their stride northbound or perhaps struggling to regain lost time in the up direction; we made a detour here on our bus rover excursions once or twice. The locomotive shed conveniently adjoined the station platform, and in addition to the familiar B1, L1 and N2 types contained a couple of ancient and decrepit Great Northern J6 0-6-0s, nos. 64176 and 64240, which seemed to do very little work, at weekends at any rate, and certainly never ventured any nearer to London.

Another favourite station was Wood Green, with its impressive arrays of signals and platform canopies, dimly lit on a winter afternoon.....



## St. Pancras

After an hour or so spent at Kings Cross, we might call in next door at St. Pancras, to see what of interest was on offer here (for plan, see Kings Cross, above). The ornate architecture of the former Midland Railway terminus was at that time unfortunately treated as something of a laughing stock and a major liability to B.R, and accordingly sadly neglected, the pink brickwork encrusted in several decades worth of accumulated grime. But at least it could be seen and appreciated, not perpetually shrouded in polythene and scaffolding as it seemed to be in later, more

enlightened years! I was once treated to a guided tour of part of the station offices, formerly the Midland Hotel, and marvelled at the ornate staircases and decoration. I was sad that all this was not normally open to public view, and amazed that such a lovely building was not considered to be viable as a hotel, like those at Liverpool Street and Paddington.

In the public areas of the station, the remarkable wooden-pannelled ticket hall with informative roller blind arrivals and departures indicators is particularly recalled, being at that time virtually unchanged from pre grouping days. The single span train shed roof was then generally accorded due reverence as "the biggest in the World". After all this, the locomotive activity at St. Pancras was something of a disappointment; it seemed to be quite a sleepy location, lacking the concourse bustle and constant sounds of train movement of Kings Cross, Liverpool Street and Euston. A stroll along the wide taxi-cab road down the centre of the station and out into the daylight at the far end, with its backdrop of prominent gasholders, was sufficient to take in the whole scene. The Midland route also had suburban trains running down onto the Metropolitan widened lines to reach Moorgate, but they left the main line well outside the terminus, at St Paul's Junction, and we would have to venture down into Farringdon Street or Aldersgate station if we wanted to see these. However, the locos used - ugly, squat looking Fowler parallel boiler 2-6-2 tanks with condensing pipes, and later Stanier taper boiler variants - also worked in and out of the terminus with local trains to Bedford and excursions to Southend via Tottenham. The former engines were known as "Bread Vans" or "Surface Raiders", always accompanied by plenty of smoke, noise and fuss! They worked alongside the larger 2-6-4 tanks, mainly the Fowler and Fairburn varieties on this line, and they were also used extensively for empty carriage pilot work, shared with the "Jinty" 0-6-0 tanks. All these engines were based at Kentish Town depot, a mile or so out of the terminus. We never did manage to persuade our school art master to arrange a visit to this one, but most of the inmates could be seen from the carriage window by taking a short suburban train trip to West Hampstead and back.

My interest started just too late to see any of the famous Midland compound 4-4-0s, but I was delighted to record 40632, one of the smaller conventional engines of this wheel arrangement, simmering at the buffer stops of the easternmost platform 7 one afternoon in summer 1959. This was a Bedford based engine, presumably deputizing for one of the large tanks as they were no longer used on more important trains, even as pilot engines in which role they were once very common, by that time.

Main-line services at St Pancras were handled by Jubilees, Royal Scots and both LMS "black five" and BR standard 73xxx type 4-6-0s. A couple of Patriots were seen, and Britannia pacifics 70044 & 70053 worked down on the Leeds expresses. Both "crab" and "flying pig" mogul variants were also often seen in the station. This mixture, and the carriage stock they hauled, was very similar to that just down the road at Euston, but somehow had an intangible "Midland" flavour here. The early diesels certainly had, as the "Peaks" and peculiar looking Co-Bo machines (D57xx series) could not be seen anywhere else in London. There were several attempts over many months to replace the local trains with diesel multiple units, the infamous "BedPan" sets, before any semblance of adequate reliability was finally achieved.

Here is a selection of our 1960s pictures at St Pancras, including a somewhat drunken "arty" attempt at capturing the distinctive architecture!.....





To see the freight engines, we had to rely once again on our bus rovers. Out at Cricklewood, almost opposite the large bus garage, were extensive marshalling and storage sidings, and the Midland lines main London area freight locomotive shed. There was a peculiar sharply curved connecting spur which dived under the main lines and enabled independent transfer workings between the up and down side yards. It did not look to be much used, so I was once quite startled by the looming bulk of an 8F 2-8-0 plodding under the bridge, flanges squealing profusely as it opened up for the climb up the embankment. I can recall seeing the last of the mighty LMS Beyer Garratt 2-6-6-2s, no. 47994 in the sidings here, worked down from the Nottingham area on a heavy coal train, which was their prime purpose; this impressive machine was withdrawn and scrapped in 1958. The more conventional occupants were numerous Stanier 8F 2-8-0s, BR standard 9F 2-10-0s, 4F 0-6-0s and more "Flying pigs" (43xxx 2-6-0). These were either locally based or visiting from such sheds as Toton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Bedford, for servicing between their coal train and return empties duties.



The best time to visit Cricklewood depot was on the Saturday of the F.A. Cup Final in May. In those days, before high speed coach travel on motorways, most football fans travelled by rail in numerous special trains, the flavour of which reflected their points of origin, according to which teams had survived this far. Servicing of the visiting locomotives during the match was shared between Neasden, Willesden and Cricklewood sheds, but a good proportion seemed to be dealt with at the latter. At normal times, gaining access to the depot could be unpredictable, but on the big match day staff seemed to become extraordinarily benevolent and threw open the gates to all comers. We were able to wander freely around, stand in the sunshine and savour the unusual spectacle of ex LMS and LNER engines from Northern sheds side by side, with perhaps one or two Southern visitors which had arrived over the North and South Western Junction line via Kew Bridge. The bus depot staff remained surly as ever; they would presumably much rather have been watching the match!

## Euston

After our brief interlude at St. Pancras, down the road to the "old" Euston, another architectural enigma, but a much plainer one and certainly overshadowed by its near neighbour.

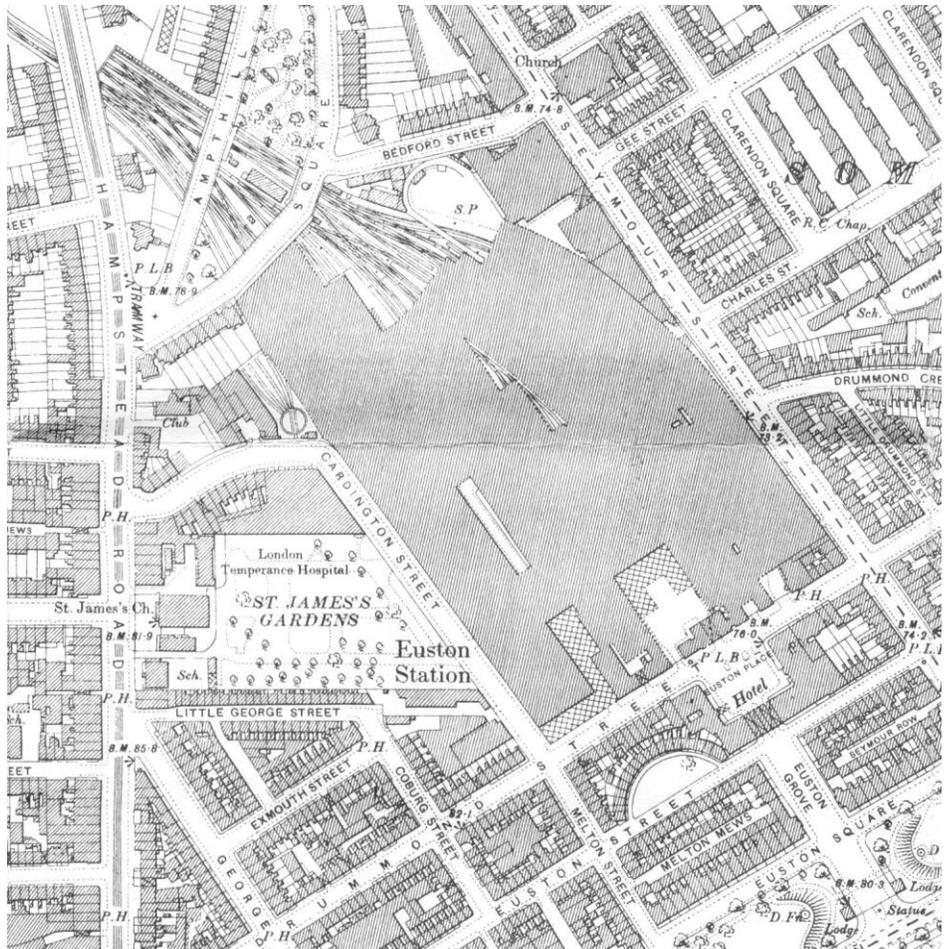
The chunky, soot blackened and late lamented Doric Arch was an impressive enough introduction, though its grandeur was diminished by the taxis scuttling round its base, the adjacent hotel, and the proximity and noise of the Euston Road traffic, busy even then. Behind it lay the principal station offices, and we could rest awhile with our sandwiches and drinks in the Great Hall, surely the most dignified waiting room facilities available to the ordinary traveller without charge, presided over by an enormous bronze statue of George Stephenson himself.

This hallowed figure commanded silent reverence from the assembled throng since, as in many an old style public library building, the slightest cough or heavy footfall would echo around the high ceiling.

All this opulence did not fit in well with the desired "modern" image of British Railways; despite hope offered by lengthy appeals both the Great Hall and the Doric Arch were summarily demolished in 1963, the latter after all the stone blocks had been carefully identified with painted numbers; I wondered what happened to them all. What a sight they should have made today, had it been possible to incorporate them into the new plan, their stonework suitably cleaned and restored to pristine newness! Also lost in the great rebuilding was the cast iron and glass arcaded roof of the principal main-line arrivals platforms 1 and 2 on the east side, gracefully curving as far as the eye could see. These were the redeeming features of the old Euston, the rest it has to be said was an absolute shambles: a labyrinth of dark corners, confusing direction signs and passageways; gates leading to hidden platforms, some of which still comprised creaking, worn and dirty wooden boards.

The main platforms were host to the mighty Duchess / Coronation pacifics, both in the cherry red livery of the English based examples and the standard BR Brunswick green of their Scottish brethren, which I must say I thought suited the great bulk of these machines better, though the red did have novelty value. Their trains were largely of ex LMS stock, with quaint "porthole" end windows, by now often painted in lined maroon (a definite darker shade than the engines) but with many still in the early BR carmine and cream, generally quite grubby. All carried concise destination roof boards, but maroon background ones frequently appeared on the older liveried coaches and vice-versa, somewhat spoiling the co-ordinated image!

A walk down the length of platform 10 would invariably reveal the distinctly American looking shape of the LMS main line diesels 10000 & 10001, lurking quietly in their own oil fume smog in a short bay platform siding. If this was the shape of modernization to come, I was not impressed; these two always appeared as an inseparable pair, presumably needed to do the work of one Duchess, and they never seemed to do a lot anyway according to our casual observations at the time. I did however read some years later that they were merely cooling off here for a



couple of hours in mid afternoon, between working down and up Scottish trains, a daily round trip of some 800 miles with 14 or 15 coaches, so in reality quite a commendable effort! More promising were the activities of those other early diesels to be seen here occasionally, nos. 10201-2-3. These did at least appear capable of working a train single-handed, could claim a previous Southern Region pedigree which surely had to count for something and showed an element of British design elegance; they must have been O.K!

Assuming we had chosen a platform leading out to some sort of reasonable view of the station workings (usually nos 2/3), a feast of LMR main-line steam power in the form of the long lanky Princesses, Royal Scots, Patriots (both in original parallel-boiler form and rebuilt, somewhat resembling the "Scots"), Jubilees and standard Britannia's was paraded for our enjoyment on a typical Saturday afternoon. Some only of the Princesses shared the red livery with the Duchesses; all the rest were in standard lined green, as also were the aforementioned diesels. As at other places certain locos seemed to pop up at every visit, one such being the Jubilee "Camperdown" which was usually resplendent in this livery. The older Patriots, in contrast, were a dowdy lot, generally adorned in a coat of thick, grey soot.

The engine types seen here were well associated with particular workings, the Duchesses and Princesses coming down from Scotland and Carlisle, Britannia's from Manchester, Scots and Patriots from Liverpool and North Wales, Jubilees from Crewe and Birmingham, and the ubiquitous "Black 5s" from Rugby and Northampton. There were many exceptions, of course, but this seemed to be the general pattern. Bletchley semi-fasts were the province of 2-6-4 tanks, of Fowler, Stanier and Fairburn LMS variants plus BR standard 80xxx series. There was thus a great variety of motive power to be seen here in the late nineteen fifties, before total rebuilding and 25kV electrification destroyed all the interest.

Most of the main-line trains were assisted in the rear out of the platforms, up the steep gradient of Camden bank, by the piloting locomotives that had brought the empty stock in from carriage sidings. Likewise, the express locos would assist the pilots in removing their empty stock for disposal, so this was a place of quiet, creeping arrivals which might easily pass un-noticed, and vociferous departures with the sight of two locomotives working flat out for the price of one. Empty stock movements used a large variety of engine types, and one could never be sure what would turn up next. Most prevalent were the "Jinty" 0-6-0 tanks, which I always thought of as "clockwork engines" due to the presence of a little "keyhole" at the bottom of their side tanks (no doubt provided for maintenance access) just like the Hornby "O" gauge models! However, anything else that was handy could be used on occasion, including freight types such as the 3F/4F 0-6-0s and Stanier 8F 2-8-0s as well as one or two of each of no less than five varieties of 2-6-0 moguls; the "Crab", "Flying Pig", Ivatt, Stanier and standard 78xxx series. Fowler and Stanier 2-6-2 tanks were common, as at St. Pancras, and once a very clanky and grubby LNWR "clog-iron" 0-8-0, no. 49395, turned up. Even Willesden-based LMS or early-BR type diesel shunters numbered in the 12xxx series and the handsome new D8000 "switcher" single ended diesels would put in appearances, bringing the total number of distinct locomotive types I saw here to nearly 30, far and away the highest at any London terminus.

I took just one, poor-quality image at the old Euston, rare Caprotti valved "Black 5" 44748 on a parcels train in March 1962, and a couple of the steam banking operation at the "new" station emerging from the scaffolding and builders rubble; 8F 2-8-0 48754 on another parcels train, and standard 2-6-0 78012 banking it out of the platforms on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1965. The new image is represented by electric loco E3117 drawing into platform 1 on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1966....





Even in the 1950s there were electric trains too, rattling in and out of the short platforms somewhere in the middle, 4 and 5 I think, destined for Watford, on the original LNWR suburban system which also encompassed Broad Street and once upon a time Kensington Olympia as well. This seemed to require four rails, so inefficient compared to the Southern's perfectly adequate and much more widespread three! The stock was mainly 1920's LMS panelled three car units, supplemented by a few last survivors of the original LNWR "Oerlikon" sets with big picture windows, clunky sliding doors and open saloon layout with leather straps to "straphang" from, until these were all finally condemned about 1958. In turn, extremely boring BR 3-car all steel standard sets very much like the contemporary Southern stock took over; these were to be avoided at all costs as they had unsightly metal bars fitted across every opening window, reminiscent of a children's nursery and very restrictive to our activities!

By about 1962, all the LMS sets had gone, and we had no choice but to put up with such inconveniences.

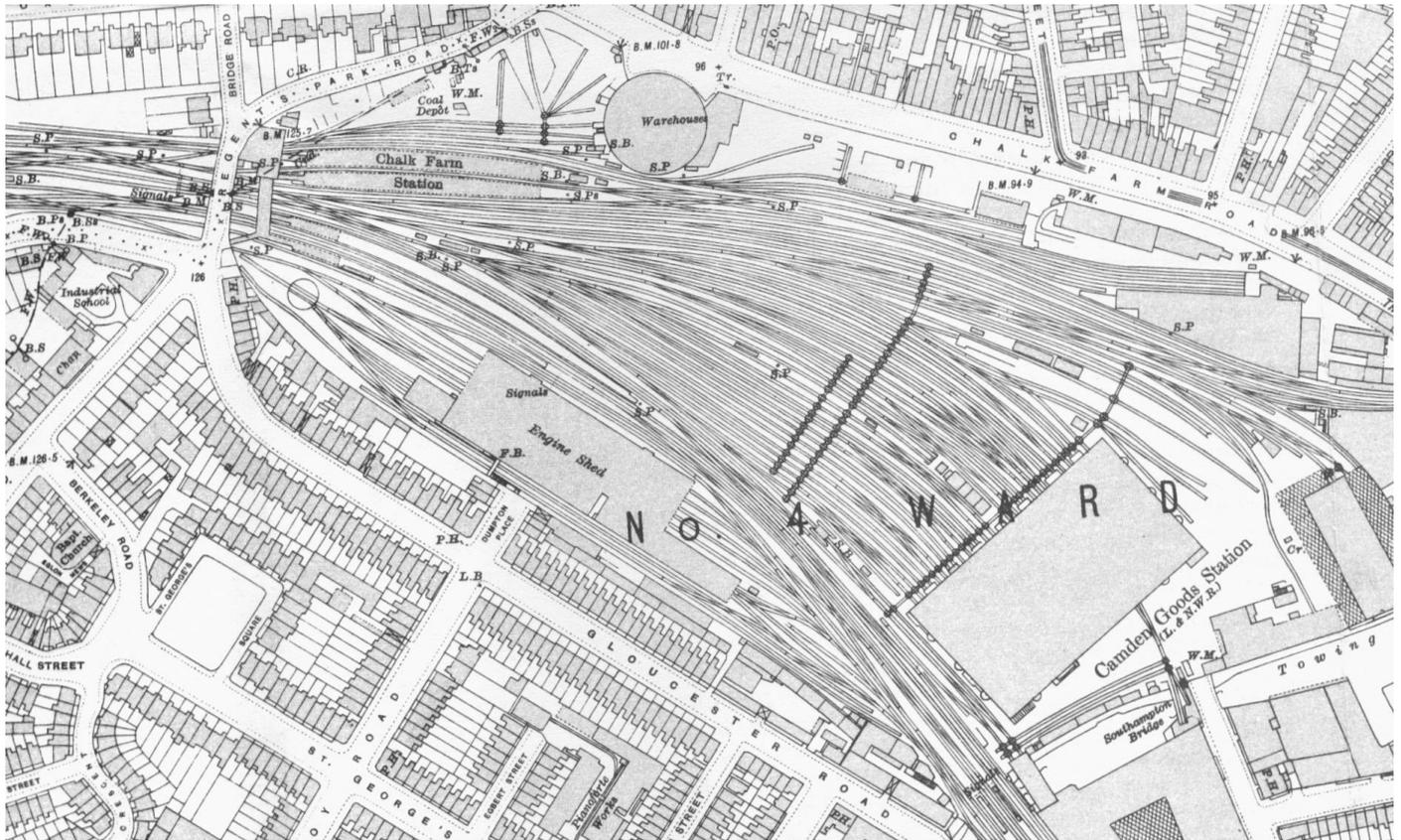
Here is "Little & Large" in the terminal platforms at Watford Junction on 17 August 1963; the LMR electric alongside an LT Bakerloo Line tube train.....



We photographed a couple of steam workings at Watford the same afternoon; here are Jubilee 4-6-0 45644 "Howe" on a down Birmingham express, and standard 2-6-0 78029 on a goods bound for Willesden yards.....



We sometimes took a short ride on the electrics out to Willesden Junction "New Station". If we were lucky, and the view was not further restricted by passing or parked trains, a tantalising glimpse of more express motive power might be had as the train sped past the compact Camden shed, the main passenger engine depot for the ex L&NWR London area lines. ....



We had the opportunity to visit Camden more comprehensively in early 1960, on an organised school trip. The sheds near Willesden Junction were much larger as these provided all the freight locos as well as many further passenger ones, but in practice examples of most of the common types could be found at both depots; indeed some individual machines seemed to be re-allocated to and fro every few months or so. Willesden was well worth a visit - Cup Final day was often a good time, as at Cricklewood - and we had a school group visit here also, taking in neighbouring Old Oak Common. Most of the inmates were relatively modern types well known to us, but a curious survival from an earlier era was the group of much modified 0-8-0 tender locos 49070 & 78, 49122 & 49413 originating with the old London & North Western Railway, the only representatives of same to be seen here long since. The shed environs were typically filthy, along with most of the occupants, but occasional effort had been made to produce a gleaming surprise, perhaps a "Britannia" or red "Duchess", which stood proudly in the sunshine awaiting its next call to duty.

Willesden Junction's draughty main-line platforms were an excellent place from which to observe heavy down expresses getting well under way, freed at last from the restrictions of the terminus and steep climb out past Camden. I have fond memories of the majestic "Coronation" pacifics storming past only a few feet from where we stood, bearing elegant tartan pattern headboards proclaiming the prestigious "Royal Scot" and "Caledonian" workings, their matching sets of new BR mark 1 stock resplendent in gleaming maroon paint and with comprehensive destination roof boards fitted throughout. They really made the ground tremble beneath our feet! Unfortunately the main-line platforms were blitzed out of existence around 1959, leaving only the electric served ones on the far side and a footbridge leading to nowhere. Rather than return to Euston from here, a more likely option would be to make our way home via the North London line to Richmond, changing there for Staines. This train, which originated at Broad Street, rumbled into Willesden High Level platform amongst the girders, and was more likely to be of the older type stock than the Euston services; we would then clatter, lurch and groan on our way

via derelict, bombed out Gunnersbury and over the Thames at Kew Bridge. The North London service at that time had a poor reputation and was little patronised outside of the peak hours; it was under continuous threat of closure or at least, serious pruning.

## Baker Street

When we had had our fill of Euston, we might alternatively return home on one of the Northern line's clerestory roof tube trains to Waterloo, or along the original Metropolitan cut and cover section back to Paddington. If there was time, a break of journey would be made at Baker Street to visit the Metropolitan main line platforms, out in the open air, with their distinctive canopy valences incorporating "arrow-head" motifs. In the triangle formed by these sharply curved lines and the circle line platforms, just off the spacious concourse, lay a bay platform road used by terminating trains from Aylesbury, wherein would normally lurk a set of brown panelled coaches with one of the lovely little maroon electric locomotives uncoupled and standing at the buffer stops, and another moving into position at the far end ready for the return journey. These L.T locomotives were all named, "Sarah Siddons", "Thomas Lord", "John Hampden" etc. and were invariably smartly turned out. Years later, and with a better camera I caught up with no.5 at London Transport's Acton Works (left, 1968) and no. 12 in preservation, also at Acton.....



A very similar- looking type of coaching stock was also formed into electric multiple units, the 'T' stock, running through from Liverpool Street, on which our rover tickets were valid. We could thus board one of these and rattle along past Neasden, hoping to catch sight of one or two of the old Metropolitan or District Railway steam locos, or their newly acquired maroon painted GWR 57xx pannier tank replacements shunting in the extensive LT depot and works yards. Again much later, these examples are at Lillie Bridge depot in 1968.....



Very occasionally, a steam train on the old Great Central lines running parallel along here would roar past as we waited for a train back to Baker Street.

## Marylebone

A quick detour on foot would bring us to sleepy Marylebone, origin of these workings, en route to Paddington and home. This terminus had an almost permanent "Sunday morning" ambience; according to published anecdote, it was recommended by an ecclesiastical expert as the best place in London for serious meditation! My total spotting record over some six years of visits from 1958 amounted to about 50 steam locomotives, and this included those seen along the line out to Aylesbury. The flavour alternated between London Midland Region and Eastern Region as the line was swapped between departments every so often; we never knew quite where it should belong, and neither seemingly did B.R. Thus, sometimes there were LMS 2-6-4 tanks and numerous Black 5 4-6-0s with occasional filthy and run-down Royal Scots, or otherwise ex LNER B1s, K3s and L1s as seen also at Kings Cross and Liverpool Street, in largely similar condition. There was always a fair selection of standard classes to be seen; 73xxx, 76xxx and 80xxx on passenger trains, with WD 2-8-0s on freight out in the suburbs, worked down from Woodford Halse and points north.

I only once ventured out of Marylebone by G.C line train (as opposed to the Met, which we used frequently), in late 1965, at the absolute nadir of its fortunes. The main-line service once the subject of such great hopes by its promoters, even extending to a vision of a Channel Tunnel, were then about to face the axe, and it seemed quite possible that the terminus itself might soon close down altogether as well. I was bound for a university interview at Sheffield; whereas others with more sense would have gone speedily via St Pancras or even Kings Cross I deliberately chose Marylebone on this dismal, damp November morning, for the 8.38 departure to Nottingham Victoria. It was already no longer possible to travel "Great Central" all the way to Sheffield as in earlier years, so I planned to change onto the Midland route in Nottingham for the final leg. Even buying a ticket for this journey was a complex and long drawn out affair, involving long-hand calculation of the fare, handwritten documents and various oblique asides questioning my sanity. The morale of the staff seemed every bit as run-down as the rest of the service.

In due course a decrepit steam leaking Black Five with morose crew, trailed by four dull maroon, cold and damp Stanier coaches shuffled off into the drizzle, about twenty minutes late. I settled back into my seat, glad to be off on my own private adventure at last (I think I was the only passenger on the train) and assuming all would now be well.

This was not to be, the pathetic pace worsened if anything; we were 40 minutes late by Loughborough, and I had to bail out at Leicester to avoid the possibility of missing my connection northwards, which started from St Pancras fully one and a half hours after I had left the Metropolis. It seemed quite probable that this last vestige of the once proud G.C which I left behind hurriedly and thankfully at Leicester Central might not make it to Nottingham at all.

Needless to say, my return from Sheffield later that day was made directly into St Pancras, thus ensuring a reasonable chance of catching a train home to Staines before services ceased for the night. After the melancholy which was Marylebone, regaining the bright lights and relative civilization of Paddington or Waterloo was always a great relief!