

The railway at Staines Central, and the former L&SWR lines to Waterloo

Introduction

Our local station was Staines Central, which I passed on the way to and from school every day in the period 1955-59. I would also frequently walk to meet my father there (travelled down from Waterloo) in the evening peak hour. In the holidays, when not going further afield, mornings would often be spent around the station and the east shunting yard. Saturday afternoons in the summer were something special, with holiday train empty-carriage-stock workings calling for the engines to take on water at Staines.

A favourite vantage point was the station footbridge (from where all the signals could be seen); here it is, an amazingly elaborate affair, somewhat wider than normal which despite only spanning two tracks has no fewer than six entrances/exits!

And here is what we typically saw.....



On 17th March 1962, S15 class 4-6-0 30497 is heading westwards with a train of vans from Feltham, while Q1 0-6-0 33014 passes behind with coal empties. Had the Q1 arrived just a couple of seconds later this would have made a much better photograph, but that's life!

Another favourite spot was the footpath leading from the Kingston Road bridge steps, past the back of the signalbox, then in front of the cottages beside the East Yard sidings. It was from the top of these steps that I have my earliest recollection of steam locomotives, as my mother used to stop with me in my push-chair - aged 2 years - on the way to the shops, so that I could "watch the trains go by" (She probably regretted doing this ever since!) The picture shows what we probably saw, but was taken many years later; the locomotive is another S15, no. 30496 making its way back to Feltham light engine on 12th March 1963.

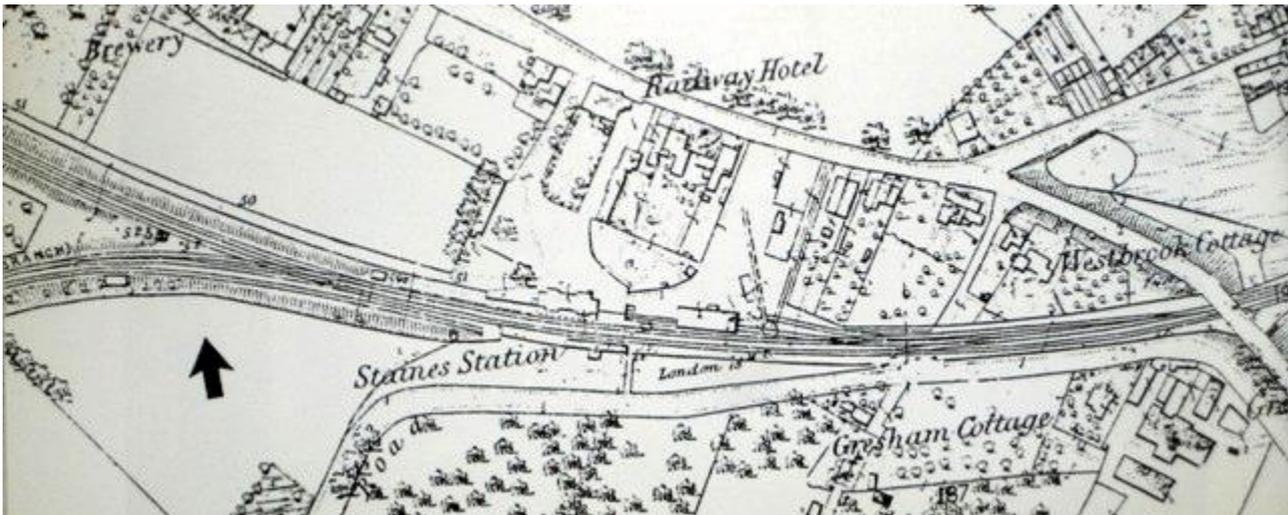


Towards Ashford, another good spot was the Shortwood Common crossing at the far end of East Yard. Here we have class 9F 2-10-0 no. 92206 heading westwards on 30th July 1963.....

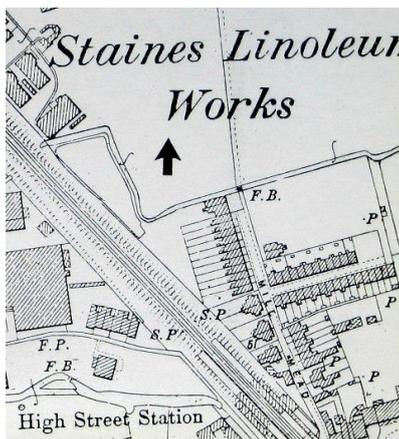


A bit of history

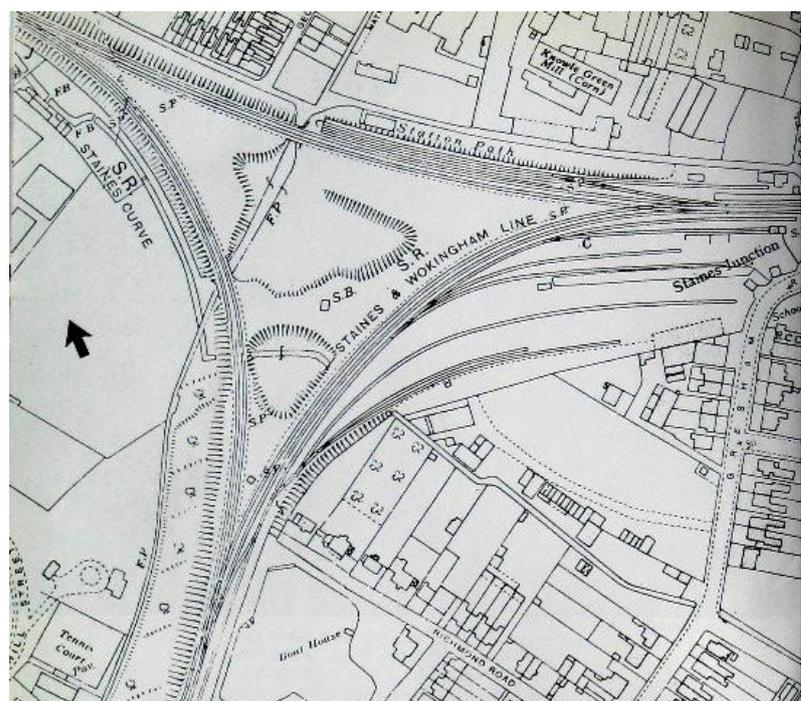
The railway first came to Staines in 1848, when the Windsor, Staines & South Western Junction Railway extended their line westwards from Richmond to Datchet (and thence into Windsor in late 1849). The loop line via Hounslow was completed soon after, in 1850. The station at Staines has always been on the same site, and it became a junction in 1856, when the Staines, Wokingham & Woking Junction Railway opened its branch to Ascot. It is clearly apparent even today that the Windsor route was always regarded as the “main line”, forming a continuous gentle curve through the station, whereas the branch is sharply-curved and contorted. The link to Weybridge was completed by the opening of the Virginia Water to Chertsey section in 1866. All the lines were actually operated by the London & South Western Railway from the outset, and the local companies were eventually absorbed into it.



This extract from the 1st Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of around 1870 shows the station as it was then, with the goods shed much closer to the main line, and no sidings in the east yard. The branch to Ascot appears to converge to a single line, although there is a refuge siding on the site of the later west goods yard. This was a drafting error, the Ascot line was already double-track then.

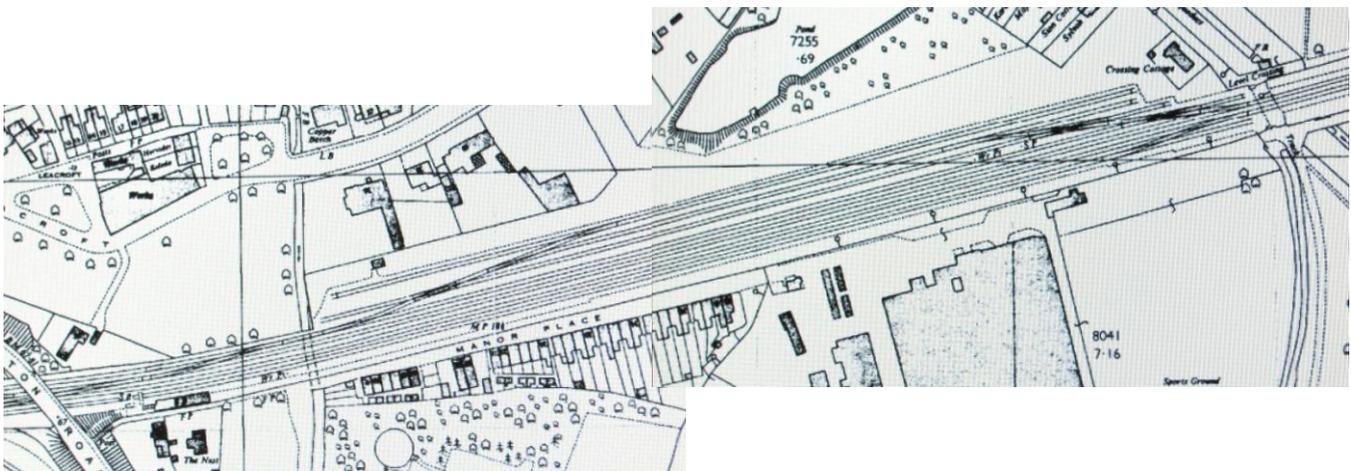
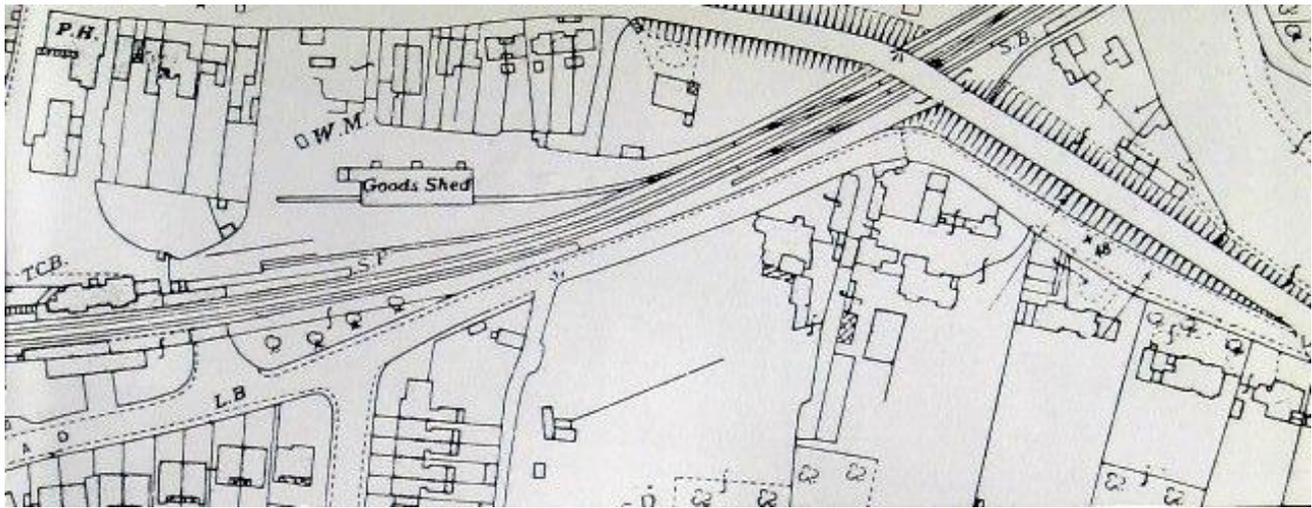


The “West Curve” was installed in 1877, and remained available for use until 1965.....



Staines station was renamed “Staines Junction” in 1885 to avoid confusion with the new Great Western station in the town, and a new station “Staines High Street” was opened on the Windsor branch about the same time. This was no doubt intended to meet the new competition, but lasted only until 1916. The later map extracts show the final situation, which was to remain

largely unaltered for many years.....



Staines Junction became “Staines Central” in 1923, but reverted to plain “Staines” again in 1966, after closure of the GW line.

The lines out of Waterloo as far as Richmond and Hounslow were electrified by the L&SWR as early as 1916, but this was not extended through Staines to Windsor until 1930. Staines - Weybridge was converted in 1937, but the Waterloo - Reading services remained steam-worked until 1939. Here are some old images of the pre-electrification services.....



Looking west about 1880 (before the footbridge)



and about 1900 (after)



From the footbridge, about 1927. These two splendid prints were sent to me by the photographer Henry Casserley many years ago.

This is looking east from the footbridge about 1900. The villas on Gresham Road have not yet been built, and there is a large older house in the right background. The signal box on the platform is one of several replaced by the large box adjacent to the Kingston Road bridge.



Here are two views of the main station building in December 1969. In the road side view (left) the little entrance porch has just been demolished, leaving scarred brickwork in the name of “modernization” and the old characteristic green “Southern Electric” signs have also been replaced.

The electric train service

By the 1950's the normal passenger service consisted of frequent electric trains to and from London Waterloo, the basic off-peak pattern being four per hour each way. In the "down" direction, two of these were fast from Waterloo as far as Staines, thence all stations to Ascot, where they divided into equal portions of 2 or 4 coaches, the front part for Reading South, and the rear for Aldershot and Guildford (later Woking). The other two were stopping services calling at several stations en route, then similarly dividing at Staines, front portion for Weybridge, rear for Windsor & Eton Riverside. The up service was the same pattern in reverse.



The fast trains carried the headcode "28" (denoting non-stop Waterloo via Richmond) and were always composed of the Southern Railway "semi fast" 2-car units of types 2-HAL (one compartment coach, and one with side corridor and lavatory; the code presumably meant "has-a-lavatory" or something similar) and 2-BIL (both cars with side corridor: "both include lavatory"). Most of these were built in the 1930's for just this kind of duty, and had steel clad bodies over wooden framing, with a distinctive shape to the

motor car ends typical of S.R. stock of this period. The BIL units could be distinguished head-on by a prominent rainstrip across the width of the roof end; the HAL's omitted this, so looked somewhat sleeker. The headcode plate was a metal stencil slid into a holder between the front driving cab windows, illuminated from behind at night. Occasionally, one of the 10 or so units built as a post-war all steel version would appear; these had flat driving ends resembling the contemporary suburban stock, but retained the internal corridor with large windows, giving these cars a distinctive appearance on this side.



4-EPB ("electro pneumatic brake", thus breaking the traditional association with lavatories), and were common on our line from May 1957 onwards.

The slow trains carried headcode "18" (stopping, via Richmond line). For very many years, they were formed of the "2-NOL" (not-one-lavatory), old paneled wooden bodied units, converted from ex - L & S.W.R steam hauled stock in the early 1930's (but originally dating from around 1908, and looking it). Soon after the disastrous reared collision at Barnes in 1955, in which one of these units caught fire and blazed uncontrollably adding to the carnage, British Railways -built all steel 4-coach units were introduced as replacements. These were of type



However, some of the antiquated 2-NOLs lingered on until late 1958, as they did allow some off-peak trains to be run as only 6 or 4 coaches as required, rather than the standard 8, which the modern units did not. The 4-EPB's had semi-automatic, "buckeye" couplings which made the coupler's job much easier, and illuminated roller blind headcodes instead of the stencils.

All S.R. electric trains in the 1950's and early 1960's were painted in a rich shade of mid-green, which looked (and smelt) very smart when new, and even made the 2-NOL's look quite respectable; with a lack of foresight typical of B.R at that time, units were often to be seen freshly painted just before they were scrapped! There were none of the disfigurations of coloured stripes above the doors denoting seating class, or the yellow end panels/complete ends which were deemed

essential for safety in later years. Internal woodwork was heavily varnished; there were rope-net luggage racks, framed mirrors and scenic prints above the seat backs. Ceilings were painted cream, and the compartments illuminated by a single opaque white globe in the centre. Door windows could be lowered by means of traditional leather straps with a series of holes, secured by hooking them over small brass studs. The large corridor windows of the semi fast stock had brass handrails at a convenient height for leaning on. All these features were common in British railway carriages from Victorian times until the 1970's; recalling them now is to realise how much has subsequently changed in such a short time. The BIL's and HAL's often had a distinctive aroma, probably nothing to do with the lavatories, but more like a mixture of the disinfectant used for cleaning (frequent, then) and the linoleum on the floors.



The electric train timetable was a masterpiece of S.R regular interval precision, and remained unchanged over many years until about 1961, when the experts tried to rearrange everything to squeeze in a few more peak hour trains on the heavily used lines into Waterloo. The result was absolute chaos, since everyone (staff and public alike) knew the old times by heart, and could not get used to the new; the scheme was abandoned after a few weeks! The service was arranged so that up and down trains were at Staines at the same time.....

BASIC OFF-PEAK ELECTRIC SERVICE (MON-FRI)

Minutes past	Headcode	
each hour		
16 & 46	28	Up fast ex Reading & Guildford calls; leaves for Waterloo
16 & 46	18	Down slow arrives; is divided into two parts
17 & 47	18	Front part of down slow leaves for Weybridge line
18 & 48	18	Back part of down slow leaves for Windsor line
20 & 50	18	Front part of up slow arrives from Windsor line
22 & 52	18	Back part of up slow arrives from Weybridge line; couples up
22 & 52	28	Down fast arrives from Waterloo; leaves for Reading & Guildford
24 & 54	18	Up slow leaves for stations to Waterloo

The up fast 28 preceded the stopping train, so that it would have a clear run through to Waterloo, and called just after quarter-to and quarter-past the hour. At the same time, the down slow arrived, divided, and the first part departed for Egham, Virginia Water, Chertsey, Addlestone and Weybridge. Then the junction points on both lines were reversed to the Windsor route; the first part of the up slow arrived from Windsor and pulled up at the far end of the platform. Simultaneously, the back portion of the down slow left for Wraysbury, Sunnymeads, Datchet and Windsor & Eton Riverside. The points were changed back again to the Weybridge lines, and the resident coupler/uncoupler jumped down and crossed over by the board crossing to the up platform, just as the rear portion of the up slow crawled over the junction under authority of a small calling-on signal (below the main arm). This train came to a stand in the platform about six feet behind the front part, and at the coupler's direction, buffered up tight to it. He then jumped down to lift the heavy screw coupling link over the hook on the adjacent vehicle, and tighten it; grease encrusted heavy rubber gloves protected his hands. On the later units fitted with buckeye couplers, the operation could be conducted from the platform, by pulling a lever under the buffer, whilst the driver of the rear set buffered up. When coupled, the brake hoses were connected up and the brakes tested. While this was in progress, the down fast 28 arrives and departs without fuss. This train had a long list of stops after its fast run to Staines. The whole train called at Egham, Virginia Water, Longcross Halt, Sunningdale and Ascot, where it divided. The front four cars then stopped at Bracknell, Wokingham, Winnersh Halt, Earley and Reading South. The

rear portion was for Bagshot, Camberley, Frimley, Ash Vale, Aldershot (reverse), Ash, Wanborough and Guildford. I can still recall this list by heart after some 30 years, having heard it announced at Staines so many times. One day the male-voiced (and often somewhat abridged and garbled) "station announcer" (in reality, the up-side ticket collector) was replaced by a tape-recorded system - one of the first of its kind - with soothing and measured female tones. As can be imagined, the long and precise announcement for the Reading/Guildford train's stops was often still playing through when the train itself had left the station, and was accelerating round the curve towards the River Thames bridge!

Lastly, the up slow left for Ashford, Feltham, Whitton, Twickenham, Richmond, Clapham Junction and Waterloo. This complete four-train sequence occurred in a total period of only some 8 minutes (it takes longer to describe), leaving two clear periods of twenty minutes every hour during the day for the passage of freight trains, in each direction.

In the morning and evening peak hours there were of course many more commuter electrics, the service frequency becoming one train each way every 4 to 8 minutes approx. New headcodes appeared: 17 and 27 were the equivalents of the 18 and 28, but travelling via the Hounslow loop line rather than Richmond, with the slow trains calling normally at Hounslow instead of Whitton, Twickenham and Richmond (the Clapham Junction stop was omitted in peak periods). There was less time available for dividing or coupling the slow trains, so 57's and 58's ran whole to Windsor whereas the 17's and 18's went just to Weybridge.

The morning peak seemed mainly to comprise trains of the normal stock, but the evening down slows brought more variety in the form of the 4-SUB type inner suburban 4-car units. 4-SUB was a generic code covering some 4 or 5 distinct types of stock, differing greatly in age and appearance. The majority group was of immediate post-war all steel construction with distinctive high roofline, like the 4-EPB's, but having the old type stencil plate headcode panel instead of the roller blind type, and screw couplings (so could not be mixed with the EPB's).

Quite often, one or more of the older types of unit would appear. There were some consisting of three very ancient low roofed, wooden-panelled ex-steam-stock coaches of LBSCR origin, with a modern all steel trailer incongruously sandwiched between (4501 series; in early 1957 these were reformed into fewer but uniformly ancient 4-car groups, and the modern trailers used elsewhere).

From the 1920's came an early Southern Railway purpose built type with very pointed motor coach driving ends (4301 series) and a later version with flatter ends (4326 on). This older stock for some reason had to carry a letterhead code rather than the numerical version; the Staines line slow trains were then coded H for via Hounslow, and H (H-bar) for via Richmond (There was a well-known carriage advertisement in the 1950's featuring 5 such trains side by side with the codes spelling out the name HoVIS). All of these older style units had gone for scrap by early 1960. There was also a small number of units built immediately

MORNING PEAK - UP TRAINS FROM STAINES CENTRAL

Time	Headcode	
7.06	28	from Reading line, calls at Twickenham & Richmond
7.17	17	joins up, calls at Ashford, Feltham, Hounslow
7.31	28	from Reading line, calls at Feltham & Richmond
7.37	18	joins up, normal stops
7.53	58	from Windsor only, normal stops
7.59	18	from Weybridge only, normal stops
8.08	28	from Reading line, non-stop to Waterloo
8.12	18	from Weybridge only, calls at Whitton, Twickenham & Richmond
8.16	57	from Windsor only, calls at Ashford, Feltham & Hounslow
8.24	27	from Reading line, non-stop to Waterloo via Hounslow
8.27	58	from Windsor, calls Feltham, Twickenham, Richmond, St Margarets & Mortlake
8.37	18	joins up, normal stops
8.42		The pick-up goods train (8.33 ex Egham) arrives in Staines yard.
8.47	28	from Reading line, non-stop to Waterloo via Richmond
8.56	18	joins up, normal stops
9.06		Wimbledon sidings - Windsor ECS passes via West curve
9.16	28	from Reading line, non-stop to Waterloo via Richmond
9.24	17	joins up, calls at Ashford, Feltham & Hounslow
9.36	28	from Reading line, non-stop to Waterloo via Richmond
9.42	18	joins up, normal stops
9.56	18	joins up, normal stops (incl. Clapham Jct then continuing as normal off-peak service)

EVENING PEAK - DOWN TRAINS

Time	Headcode	
5.16	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
5.22	28	fast for Reading & Guildford
5.36	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
5.42	28	fast for Reading & Guildford
5.56	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
6.02	28	fast for Reading & Guildford
6.09	18	slow, for Weybridge only
6.16	57	slow via Hounslow, for Windsor only
6.23	27	via Hounslow, fast for Reading & Guildford
6.28	18	slow, for Weybridge only
6.33	58	slow, for Windsor only
6.37	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
6.42	28	fast for Reading & Guildford
6.56	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
7.02	28	fast for Reading & Woking
7.16	18	splits for Weybridge & Windsor
7.22	28	fast for Reading & Guildford

before the adoption of the all steel body design, which were of more modern appearance, but still with rounded motor coach ends (4101 series).

An example of the typical peak hour train service is shown in the table (compiled from the Summer 1959 working timetable). One up train which ran through the 1950's but had disappeared by then, effectively signalled the end of the evening peak; if I was still waiting there then, my father had been somewhat delayed. This train was the only one of the day to call at all stations to Waterloo (there were 14 of them!) and was usually announced in an even more garbled manner than the others. Why it was necessary for this particular service to make so many stops is a mystery (perhaps to distribute working notices for the following day?) as the inner suburban stations enjoyed a good service provided by the Richmond-Hounslow and Kingston circular-route trains.

The regular goods trains

Freight trains at Staines were numerous in those days before motorways and the all pervasive use of the road heavy goods vehicle. In each of the 20-minute off-peak gaps between the electrics, there was invariably one goods train in each direction, often two; and occasionally three one way, which called for slick working by both the signalmen and drivers if the electrics were not to be delayed. Many of them were fast, fully-brake-fitted trains often of 50 to 60 wagons apiece, working between Nine Elms depot in London or the Feltham marshalling yard and either Reading (for handover to the Western Region), Southampton Docks, or the Salisbury / West of England main line. There were also shorter, part fitted trip workings between Feltham and places such as Woking and Guildford, and a daily local all stations pick-up / shunting turn. Very little freight originated from the stations to Windsor, and the pick-up goods seemed to make only an occasional foray along that line (perhaps once a week or so, with coal wagons); most Windsor goods went via the Western Region route.

The most common locomotive type seen on the fast freights was the S15 class 4-6-0, in both the LSWR and later S.R. versions. (When I was very young, and insisted that my father drew me an engine at bedtime, the resulting picture usually somewhat resembled one of this type). They were often filthy; although when fresh out of works they were painted in gloss black, they more usually appeared as a uniform shade of matt grey. They were sometimes not too well maintained either, making a characteristic loud clanking noise which presumably emanated from worn side-rod or connecting-rod bearings; this could often be clearly heard some time before the engine came into sight! I logged all 20 of the LSWR Urie-designed series (30496 on) and 15 of the later Maunsell engines (30823 on) as regular performers, the former all working from Feltham depot, and the latter from both Feltham and Salisbury.

Examples of the similar but larger wheeled H15 class were also often seen, despite these being nominally passenger train engines. As such, their black livery was fully lined out, and they seemed to be more smartly kept than the S15's. They did not seem to clank so much either; we called them "Chonkers", though I have not seen this name mentioned in railway literature, so perhaps it was just a local nickname. It was not intended as derogatory, more suggestive I think of the brisk beat of these engines when running fast and freely. I recorded 11 of these at Staines over the years, mostly based at Nine Elms (London) depot, but some from Eastleigh also. They had the large S.R type 8-wheel "watercart" tenders, necessary for the longer runs as there were no water troughs on the Southern system.

"King Arthur" class 4-6-0's were regularly used on Fyffes banana specials from Southampton to Nine Elms, which were frequent when a boat was in dock, and comprised whole trains of steam-heated vans. These engines were painted in lined green, carried names and were usually spotlessly clean, thus something of a special treat on our line. In the spring of 1959, we were supposed to participate in school football sessions on one afternoon a week, adjacent to the railway line on Shortwood Common, midway between Ashford and Staines, and I often saw the banana trains passing there; much more interesting than the game in progress! Regularly seen engines in this class were 30455 - Sir Lancelot and 30456 - Sir Galahad; 30763 - Sir Bors de Ganis, 30765 - Sir Gareth and 30773 - Sir Lavaine, of Basingstoke and Nine Elms sheds.

The "Arthurs" were also used on Exeter line freights, with Salisbury based locos: 30448 - Sir Tristram, 30449 - Sir Torre and 30451 - Sir Lamorak. Later, in 1960/61 Feltham shed acquired its own examples, 30777 - Sir Lamiel (the engine subsequently preserved), 30793 - Sir Ontzlake and 30795 - Sir Dinadan.

What mystical names these were! Familiarity with such (and those of the LMS "Jubilees" etc.) occasionally enabled us trains potters to reveal a totally unexpected knowledge (if not understanding) of Classics at an appropriate point in school lessons. I have to say though that those names which were of French origin were unfortunately somewhat defiled by our London accents. Like everything else associated with Feltham Shed, these last three locos quickly turned from green to matt grey in colour. They seemed to work turn and turn about with the S15's, so were presumably surplus to requirements elsewhere and working out their final days here.

Occasionally, the B.R standard design 73XXX series 4-6-0's with re-incarnated older series "Arthur" names were seen on Nine Elms freight duties; 73086 - The Green Knight, 73089 - Maid of Astolat, 73114 - Etarre and 73118 - King Leodegrance were noted. This loco. type was frequently seen on passenger trains on the LSW main line from Waterloo, but those mentioned seemed to be preferred for freight use. I did not photograph any of these, but the picture shows one of the smaller 75xxx variety locos, no. 75076, passing the east sidings with a van train on 12th March 1963.



The un-rebuilt "West Country" pacifics also worked van trains, there being one such regular duty in mid-evening on weekdays, which I rarely saw.

The Guildford / Woking freight trips were handled efficiently by the Bulleid "austerity" Q1 0-6-0's, which we called "coffee-pots" but were more normally known as "Charlies". 20 examples were seen over the years, all Feltham or Guildford based, and, naturally, of mottled colour. Here is no. 33026 westbound approaching the station on 26th March 1964. They were universally despised by enthusiasts at the time on account of their extreme ugliness, but B.R later saw fit to preserve one for the "National Collection"; it is now on the Bluebell Railway, but somehow does not look quite right in shiny black livery!



The Reading trains were usually in the hands of one of the five Feltham H16 pacific tanks (30516-20), and we also saw numerous 2-6-0's of both U and N classes from Reading South and Guildford depots, which were also commonly employed on their Redhill-line trains - 25 different examples being noted. Feltham also had a solitary U1 class mogul, no. 31896. A very rare visitor to our line one summer morning in 1959 was elegant LBSC K class 2-6-0 no. 32346 of Three Bridges shed, presumably "borrowed" for the day by Feltham, or on its way to Eastleigh Works for overhaul (though it looked too smart to be needing this).

Most of these freights passed through Staines at full speed, with wagons jolting and swaying over the junction, but in mid-Afternoon an up train from Ascot, usually S15-hauled, would be signalled into the east yard running loop. The train might set back to pick up a few wagons for Feltham left standing under the Kingston Road bridge by the morning local goods, but often it just seemed to be held here for a while, perhaps due to congestion in Feltham yard's reception sidings. The engine would usually take on water whilst waiting for a path back out onto the main line. If wagons left here were urgently required, and such collection was not convenient, a light engine might come out specially from Feltham shed to deal with them.

On one occasion - a Sunday I think - I saw one of the massive class G16 4-8-0 tank locos, which were normally confined to shunting the "hump" at Feltham marshalling yard, so engaged (no. 30492). Judging by the groaning and squealing of wheel flanges on the east yard points, this beast was not too kind to the trackwork, but I was impressed by its sheer bulk as it towered above me passing Shortwood Common crossing. It was the only time I saw one of these other than at Feltham.

The tables below show the scheduled freight services passing Staines in the 1959 summer timetable; from my own observations it appears that during the daytime at least, quite a few of these ran in two parts due to the heavy traffic, and there were frequent additional trains running as required. In later years, the volume of freight traffic fell sharply, due to road competition, but the variety of locomotive types we saw actually increased somewhat. Feltham operated Schools class 4-4-0 no. 30911 "Dover" (normally regarded as a passenger loco type) in 1961, and Nine Elms somehow managed to "borrow" small standard mogul no. 77014 for several months in 1966. This was a type we had never seen before, as they normally worked only

FREIGHT TRAINS AT STAINES CENTRAL FROM THE SUMMER 1959 WORKING TIMETABLE

UP			
AT STAINES	DAYS	USUAL ENGINE TYPE	DETAIL
12.6 night	SX	S15	10.33 Reading - Feltham
12.21 SX		S15	Basingstoke - Feltham
12.53		Q1	10.46 Farnham - Feltham
12.58 - 1.40	MX		12.49 Wraysbury - Feltham
1.9		S15	9.10 Eastleigh - Feltham
1.28	MX	Q1	12.24 Guildford - Feltham
2.2		S15	10.10 Bevois Park - Feltham
2.27			11.25 light engine Wimbledon - Feltham shed
2.52	MX, RR	S15	11.40 Fratton - Feltham
4.15	MX		12.45 (noon) Torrington - Feltham
4.31		H15	12.35 Eastleigh - Feltham
5.2		Q1	3.35 Farnham - Feltham
5.27	MO, RR		2.10 Southampton Docks - Feltham
5.38	MO	Q1	3.45 Wimbledon - Feltham
6.8	RR		5.40 Adlestree - Feltham
6.31		H15	11.30 (night) Moreton Cutting (5.5 Reading) - Feltham
6.38	MO		Empty fish vans, Woking - Neasden
7.42			7.7 Windsor - Ashford (arr. 7.47)
8.42	SX	700	8.33 pick-up goods from Egham - Staines east yard
10.5		H15	4.30 Eastleigh - Feltham
10.35		S15	5.05 Bevois Park - Feltham
11.5		H16	9.32 Wimbledon-Feltham
11.32	SX, RR	700	11.25 Wraysbury - Staines east yard
11.35	SX	N15	5.21 Plymouth - Feltham
12.00 noon	SO		depart light engine Staines east yard - Hounslow
12.5	MSX		5.45 Bevois Park - Feltham
12.5	MO		10.33 empties Reading - Feltham
12.35	WFO		10.33 empties Reading - Feltham
1.5		H16	8.15 Moreton Cutting - Feltham
1.35		Q1	10.55 Surbiton - Feltham
1.59		N15	11.25 Southampton Docks - Temple Mills
2.5	RR		10.30 Moreton Cutting - Feltham
2.35	MO, RR		1.17 Farnham - Feltham
3.4 - 4.2	SX	S15	2.32 Ascot - Feltham (shunts & takes water in east yard)
3.35	ThFO (RR SX)	H15	1.48 Basingstoke - Feltham
4.35		H16	3.03 Reading - Feltham
5.2	SO		4.19 fish vans Woking - Neasden
5.23	SX		4.19 fish vans Woking - Neasden
5.29		S15	1.22 Southampton Docks - Feltham
7.5			2.23 Southampton Docks - Feltham
7.35		Q1	6.26 Guildford - Feltham
8.3 SX		S15	7.08 Woking - Feltham
8.35 SO		S15	4.25 Southampton Docks - Feltham
9.5	SX	S15	4.25 Southampton Docks - Feltham
9.35			7.32 Surbiton - Feltham
10.5			6.28 Southampton Docks - Feltham
10.35		S15	4.40 Moreton Cutting - Feltham
11.5		S15	4.40 Moreton Cutting - Feltham (alternative path)
11.37	SO		10.30 Guildford - Feltham
11.56 night	SO		8.28 Southampton Docks - Feltham

DOWN

AT STAINES	DAYS	USUAL ENGINE TYPE	DETAIL
12.8 night	MX	Q1	Staines yard - lino siding - Wraysbury
12.32	MX	H15	12.15 Feltham - Wimbledon
12.57	MO	H15	12.40 Feltham - Wimbledon
1.13		S15	12.55 Feltham - Southampton Docks
3.3	MX RR	S15	2.45 Feltham - Templecombe
3.33	SO		3.16 Feltham - Eastleigh
3.54	SO		3.31 Feltham - Guildford
4.13	MO	S15	3.55 Feltham - Southampton Docks
4.25	MX	S15	4.07 Feltham - Southampton Docks
4.48		Q1	2.52 Nine Elms (4.30 Feltham) - Reading
5.29 - 6.3		700	4.45 Feltham - Windsor (shunts in yard)
6.11	SX		5.54 light engine Feltham - Walton
6.17			6.00 light engine Feltham - Guildford shed
6.28		H 16	6.10 Feltham - Reading
6.40	SX	700	6.22 light engine Feltham - Egham (arr. 6.45)
7.00		S15	6.41 Feltham - Weybridge
9.00	MWFO RR	S15	8.44 Feltham - Reading (LE when not RR, WFO)
9.36	SX	Q1	9.18 Feltham - Woking
10.03	SX	S15	9.45 Feltham - Eastleigh
10.30	RR	700	Staines yard - lino siding - Wraysbury
11.02	ThFO	S15	10.45 Feltham - Exmouth
11.31		H16	11.14 Feltham-Reading
12.3 noon	SX	Q1	11.45 Feltham - Woking
1.25	SX	700	light engine depart Staines yard to Weybridge
2.3	SX RR		1.45 Feltham - Basingstoke
2.32	SX	H16	2.14 Feltham - Surbiton
3.3	SX	S15	2.45 Feltham - Eastleigh
3.32	SO		3.14 Feltham - Woking, from 19/9
4.3	SO		3.45 Feltham - Eastleigh, until 12/9
4.33	SO		4.18 light engine Feltham - Reading, from 19/9
5.2	SO		4.45 Feltham - Surbiton, from 19/9
5.3	SO		4.45 Feltham - Woking, until 12/9
6.3	SO		5.45 Feltham - Southampton Docks, from 19/9
7.1	SO		6.45 light engine Feltham - Reading, until 12/9
7.31			7.14 Feltham - Reading SR
8.3	SO RR		7.45 Feltham - Southampton Docks, from 19/9
8.10 - 9.3	SX		7.53 Feltham - Staines yard - lino siding - Wraysbury (shunts)
8.33		S15	8.15 Feltham - Woking
9.3	SO		8.45 Feltham - Salisbury
9.33		Q1	9.15 Feltham - Guildford
10.3	SO	H16	9.45 Feltham-Wimbiedon
11.2		S15	10.45 Feltham - Wimbledon (SO Feltham - Eastleigh)
11.32 night	SX		11.14 Feltham-Bournemouth

in North-East England. This one was very intensively used on all sorts of duties, and I seemed to see it wherever I went, both on the Staines line and the LSW main line. The B.R. standard 9F 2-10-0's also

appeared regularly for the first time, and worked alongside the diesels now beginning to make their presence felt (mainly the D6500 series "class 33", and Brush type 4's).



The 8.33 Egham goods

The local pick-up goods engine went down from Feltham shed to Egham at around 6.40 each weekday morning, and shunted the small yard there for a while. At the end of the morning commuter rush around 8.40am, the loco. would arrive back at Staines usually tender first, trailing a few wagons or vans with an ex LSWR "road van" or S.R. brake in the rear, stove chimney gently smoking. This is a fairly awful picture I took using my father's old Kodak folding-bellows camera in April 1959, showing loco 30698.....



If wet, the enginemmen would be sheltering behind a crude tarpaulin sheet strung up between the back of the minimal cab roof and the tender. At this convenient time I saw this train nearly every schoolday morning for several years. Proceeding straight into the east yard, the engine would bang about there, usually with wagons attached at both ends, and "fly-shunt" vans (pursued by the shunter/brakesman) into the station loading dock and goods shed sidings. After an hour or so it would come to rest between the road bridge and the signalbox, whence the crew would retire for their mid-morning brew-up; the engine would be left simmering gently for what seemed an eternity.

At last, the blower would come on as a prelude to further activity, and the return trip wagons were marshalled into order. Often an intermediate foray to the west yard was needed, and the pace of work speeded up (possibly even involving curtailment of the break) to accommodate this in the time available. Gaining a path across to the down main running line, the ancient engine then proceeded at full tilt through the station with its few wagons and brake, round almost to the Thames bridge before setting back into the west sidings. Here were located the Coal Merchants' staithes, a company dealing in concrete products, and an engineer's siding. Fly shunting was again employed, and the elderly, frail looking road van which was permanently parked (as a shunters' mess van) at the end of the siding nearest the running lines - beside the station footbridge - looked somewhat vulnerable.

Empty wagons requiring transfer back to the east yard (often long bogie bolsters used for delivery of steel reinforcing rods to the concrete firm, unloaded by a little motorized mobile crane) were then propelled by the engine with road van leading and guard vigilant, back through the station, again often at a lively pace.

Every few months or so, an empty coal wagon in the pump house siding on the up side adjacent to the main junction was replaced by a full one. This coal fuelled a pump used to raise water into the large tank at the top of the building, whence it was distributed around the various station and yard loco. watering points. For access to this siding, the long headshunt adjacent to Station Path was used, and we could observe the movement from our school playground opposite. One day early in 1959, what was by then an extreme rarity,

Feltham's last Adams LSW class 0395 0-6-0 no. 30567 was so employed. The second of the two sidings here was electrified, and was often used to berth a train of BIL/HAL sets overnight; I think this worked as empty carriage stock to/from Ascot. The darkened carriages were a favourite haunt of courting couples, accessible by bent-apart railings behind the Girl-Guide hut!

Normal motive power for the pick-up goods was for many years the LSW "Black Motor" or 700 class 0-6-0. Although shown in the working timetable as a Feltham shed (code 70B) duty, the loco usually carried a Guildford (70C) shed plate, presumably some part of a complex inter-working arrangement. Guildford used about eleven different examples of the 700 class over the years, and Feltham also had seven. One, no. 30688, was involved in a serious collision at Staines on 9th August, 1957. Having finished the morning's shunting in East yard, the engine was crossing over back to the down line right in front of the signalbox to commence its return journey, when it was struck side on by the 12.24 up slow electric service. Ironically, the latter was comprised of the modern all steel units introduced only a few weeks previously, but the front end was nonetheless extensively smashed. The goods locomotive ended up on its side, blocking both running lines. I heard about the occurrence from our neighbours, and went over to watch proceedings after lunch. Breakdown cranes and gangs of men worked all afternoon and evening to clear up, and the old 700 was to be seen the following day parked forlorn and tender-less in the furthest siding of the East yard, upright on its wheels, but looking severely distorted.....



It was later towed to Eastleigh and cut up for scrap. The smashed motor coach also remained in the yard, its damaged end covered by a tarpaulin, for some time.

The subsequent inquiry blamed the driver of the electric train for the crash, as he had left the station without checking his signal. He had relied instead upon the guard's hand signal, relayed along the platform by a member of the station staff; the guard himself not being able to see the running signals due to the curvature of the

track and the overhanging platform canopy. Also due to the curvature, the driver did not see the obstruction until he was under the Kingston Road bridge, accelerating fully as normal; by this time it was too late. Some months later a repeater was installed under the canopy which showed the word "OFF" when the up main starter signal was clear, so that the guard could check this before waving the train away, but presumably the final onus of responsibility still remained with drivers.

This sign "OFF" was a source of mystery to me (and probably to most members of the public, unaware of its purpose); apparently in railway terms OFF means go, and ON is stop, but to those of us used to electric trains the opposite seemed more logical to our young minds. A railwaymen explained it to me "OFF you go; ON with the brakes", this was the way they learnt and I thus remembered it ever since. As far as the semaphore signals of the time were concerned, ON was when the "peg" or "board" (arm) was on its stop, OFF for when it was raised above it, which is probably how it all came about originally.

On the down line, the similarly obscured twin junction starters had long been repeated by banner type arms under the canopy, for the benefit of the rear, Windsor bound train crews. Once, when I was quite

young, I made up a miniature semaphore repeater from Meccano, and stood at the bottom of the footbridge steps operating this; I hope it was appreciated!

The predominance of the 700 class engines on the local goods came to an end a couple of years later. As a result of electrification of the Kent coast lines, the South Western section found itself inheritor of a varied collection of surplus steam locomotives, mainly of older designs. These comprised examples of SECR type 4-4-0 classes D1, L and L1, C 0-6-0's and H 0-4-4 tanks, together with some LBSC E4 0-6-2 tanks and C2X 0-6-0's. Most of them were placed straight into store, where they languished for up to two years before being scrapped; there was a rusting line of 4-4-0's to be seen in Feltham yard. However, those examples in better condition were tried out on various duties, such as parcels trains, carriage piloting from Waterloo - and our local pick-up goods. In a period of approximately 10 days in August 1959, it seemed that some kind of comparative trial was being conducted, as a different type of engine appeared nearly every day, making attendance obligatory just to see what would turn up next. Examples of all the above listed types were noted; the L's (nos. 31760 and 31773) and the D1 (31494) seemed particularly unsuited to the shunting work, the driver constantly winding the heavy screw reverser handle back and forth. In contrast, the H tank (31162, I think) is remembered as being particularly brisk and efficient. Feltham retained a couple of the C2X engines (32437 and 38), and somewhat later, in 1960 acquired several C's on a more permanent basis. These, along with Guildford's examples of this type, saw some limited use; the rest never returned, and neither did the 700's.

Through 1960 to 1963, the pick-up goods was normally in the hands of one of Guildford's seven Q1 0-6-0's seen, or a U or N class 2-6-0. Here is U class no. 31616 shunting the station goods sidings in April 1960.....



By late 1963 2-6-4 tanks were in vogue, with the benefit of their fully enclosed cabs. Examples of both the BR standard type (80137 and 80154) and briefly, in early 1964, the SR type W (31914); by now the turn was operated by Feltham shed, not Guildford. Since 1959 I had attended Strode's School in Egham, necessitating a three mile bus ride every morning. Normally this was by London Transport red bus on route 117 directly door-to-door; if there was time I stayed on this to its terminus at Egham station, just in time to see the train depart from the yard there, before going into school. Sometimes I would instead walk to Staines Central and catch the green RT country bus on route 441, which went the long way round via Thorpe Lea, and was often held at Pooley Green crossing gates for the goods to pass. It was here that I first saw the W class engine, hitherto unknown in our area. The following morning I went armed with camera, hoping it

would turn up again, but the timing of the bus was critical; if it was stopped, I would leap off, take the photograph, and leap back on again. Success finally ensued on about the fourth day (right)

A few weeks later I caught up with this one shunting at Staines, in the Easter holidays.....



Finally, the pick-up goods duty passed to ultra-modern motive power in the shape of the new multi-purpose electro-diesels specially built for just this sort of work (E6000 series). Before long though, it was abolished completely, an anachronism amongst modern operating methods. It was strange how the locomotive power was gradually increased in the last years, just as the need diminished.

One of these locos (E6020) attended a slight mishap to an oil tanker train on 20th December 1968, by coincidence at exactly the same spot as the 1957 collision.....





Empty carriage stock – “Round the Houses”

Freight movement on Sundays was fairly rare. On Saturdays, things started similarly to a normal weekday, but all ceased well before lunch, whereafter the quiet periods between the electric services were needed (in Summertime) for a totally different kind of working, also nowadays largely obsolete; that of Empty Carriage Stock or ECS. By late morning, returning holiday trains up the main lines from the West Country and South coast began to arrive at Waterloo with increasing frequency, as the departure of down trains was also in full swing.

Arriving sets of carriages which were no longer needed until Monday, or in some cases until the following Saturday (such was the over-provision of stock to maintain the level of service on just a few weekends every summer) were taken to be berthed in various sidings on the up side of the main line between Weybridge and Walton-on-Thames. So that these ECS workings would not interfere with the intensive main-line train movements, they were routed out of Clapham Junction on the Windsor tracks, thence via Staines and Weybridge, so never needing to cross over the main running lines.

Usually some 5 or 6 full train sets of stock thus came down to Staines on summer Saturday afternoons, and the motive power was always the M7 class 0-4-4 tanks, working chimney first. Feltham shed maintained a few of these as its own (nos. 30043 & 30130, and later 30031, 32 and 35) which saw little other work, and they were used alongside those from the Nine Elms allocation which normally worked most ECS duties between Clapham Junction and Waterloo all year round. The run was a long one (normally via the Hounslow loop) for these small engines with the rakes of up to 11 or 12 heavy carriages, and they always needed to stop to replenish their water tanks at Staines, allowing a pair of electric trains to pass them before continuing. Some had also had a previous layover at Brentford. I never understood why the S15's or even Nine Elms' T9 4-4-0's could not have been used, enabling a non-stop run (this was probably due to the severely restricted platform lengths at Waterloo).

On walking over the common from Kingston Road after Saturday lunch, an engine would thus normally be seen simmering gently alongside the hydrant in the down loop line, at the head of a set of green main-line carriages complete with roof destination boards proclaiming far-flung west country names still in position. This first train encountered would most probably be the BR mark 1 stock labelled as the "Royal Wessex", which had arrived at Waterloo just before 11 o'clock. Subsequent ones were normally comprised of Bullied or Maunsell stock, or mixed rakes; even Pullman stock would make an occasional appearance, presumably off a Southampton Ocean Liner special.

One of the portions of the "Atlantic Coast Express" arriving at Staines just after five, would be my prompt to think about going home for tea. Not only could we see these marvelous trains every week, but there were also some nice printed cardboard cut-out models on the back of "Weetabix" cereal packets to be collected and made up at about this time - they seemed to be mainly of the local Southern engine types together with assorted carriages of both Pullman and ordinary green varieties.

The passing of a down fast electric "28" was the signal for the water standpipe to be turned off, the flexible hose removed (if the loco. tanks had not already overflowed!) and the blower put on to raise steam pressure to maximum. As soon as the electric had cleared the station section, the loop line signal came off

and a cloud of steam erupted from the cylinder drain cocks as the small tank got its train very slowly under way.

If one went instead to the Shortwood Common crossing, there would often be a second ECS train just drawing to a stand at the bracket signal controlling entrance to the loop, before the train already in the loop had started up. Here is another of my very early and primitive photos, of loco 30319 approaching the crossing in spring 1959....



How the second train got down the line so quickly after the fast electric was something of a mystery; I suppose they must have moved quite smartly once under way. As the first train cleared the far end of the loop, the second drew up (under permissive block working) to tuck itself safely inside, for a rest of some 25 minutes. This one-out, one-in manoeuvre would sometimes be carried out between the slow and fast electrics, inevitably delaying the latter considerably.

From the station footbridge, one could never be absolutely sure whether an ECS train was lurking beyond the road bridge, ready to come out. The loop signal could only be seen above the parapet when it showed "off", and the first sign of life from here was the all-enveloping cloud of steam, only clearing to reveal the black shape of the locomotive plodding hard and slowly under the bridge. An age would seemingly pass before the train trundled through the platform and round the curve, climbing up towards the Thames bridge at no more than walking pace. It always seemed to make it, but only just, without stalling completely on the gradient.

Sometimes however, either due to problems with the Common Loop or its hydrant, or merely because of the volume of traffic, use also had to be made of the station hydrant, beside the footbridge. Obviously in this case the operation had to be completed briskly, between the electrics, as they could not pass by. There were two other major disadvantages to this scheme; firstly, with the train standing at the platform and the station staff less than vigilant, intending travellers (usually those in a hurry) could board unchallenged and endure a slow (but non-stop) ride round to Weybridge in the company of the carriage cleaners. Others, slightly doubtful, might ask me the destination, or whether this was "the proper train", one was tempted to reply "of course it is!" Secondly, the loco. was faced with an immediate sharp curve and gradient on trying to restart its load, and often stalled part way round, with the back end of the train still in the station, while the engine raised more steam and tried again, delaying everything in its wake.

In the autumn of 1958, a new phenomenon became evident, whereby the train was accelerated out of the loop up to maybe 25 mph by the station footbridge, the engine sure-footed and positively barking at the gradient; this was borrowed W.R. pannier tank no. 9770 on trial. Such sights as this could produce instant converts to the ways of the old G.W.R ! From mid-June 1959, several others of this type (mainly in the 46XX series) were acquired by Nine Elms depot and the feeble efforts of the old M7's were then heard rarely at Staines (though they lingered on the short Waterloo - Clapham Junction ECS duties for some years further, working alongside the new arrivals).

Around 1962, the panniers were in turn superseded by B.R. standard class 4 2-6-4 tanks on our trains, but even these were still subjected to the Staines Common water stop. Shortly after, however, traffic levels on the main line had diminished sufficiently (due to private car ownership and West Country line closures) that these extremely wasteful empty stock runs could be completely eliminated.

Apart from the above feeble effort, for some reason I never photographed any of these trains at Staines; we thought them too commonplace maybe. Even more surprisingly, I have never seen any published images of them either – I would always be glad to have a copy, if anyone knows of any!

Special train workings

It remains to describe some of the special passenger train workings through Staines in those years. They can be grouped into four main categories: Sunday diversions, Ascot Week race specials, Windsor

excursions, and railway enthusiast tours. The Sunday diversions were due to occasional engineering works on the LSW main line, and brought both Portsmouth line 4-COR electric sets (with their gangwayed ends and peculiar groaning noise when moving at lower speeds) and steam hauled trains with their normal locomotives; "West Countries", "Lord Nelsons" etc. The Sunday traffic was however fairly sparse, so the diversions often seemed remarkably few and far between; it was amusing to observe the long-distance travellers' expressions as they trundled round unfamiliar suburbs. The passage of the "Bournemouth Belle" Pullman train (usually with a "Merchant Navy" loco., and the coaches with white tablecloths, curtains and brass lamps at every window) was the most impressive part of the proceedings.

Ascot race week in early June would bring in a fair variety of specials, many of which returned through Staines at the height of the evening peak, everything else seemingly having to take second place. Both these and the Windsor excursions, fairly evenly spaced through the summer season, would often consist of engines and carriages worked through from the Midland or Eastern regions via Kew and the North & South Western Junction line.

These would be the only occasions when "blood & custard" or later, maroon painted Gresley and Stanier carriage stock appeared at Staines. The locomotives were usually London area based LMS moguls or class 5 4-6-0's, LNER B1's or their standard equivalents. I did however see at least one "Jubilee", and a real prize, LNE "footballer" no. 61661 "Sheffield Wednesday" of Cambridge, working back home from Windsor on 5 May 1959, only a few weeks before it was withdrawn from service.

Other Windsor excursions (those from the South and South-West) had an annoying habit of using the "back curve", the only traffic through Staines to do so, and were thus only glimpsed from a distance. If one was vigilant, and realised the reason for an abnormal delay to the down electric train standing in the station or happened to see the west curve signals come off, it was possible to sprint down Station Path then left into Packhorse Path to see the train at close hand as it crossed a small overbridge; most times however I would seem to miss it by just a few seconds. The 4-COR electrics working Windsor - Portsmouth excursions (usually 12-car sets) struggled round the curve; rusty rails causing intermittent current pick-up with frequent tripping and resetting of the motor circuit-breakers.

I saw the deep-maroon painted Royal Train several times, usually in the charge of an immaculate "Battle of Britain" class loco., but this again passed via the West curve more often than not. On one occasion, it bore a special headboard commemorating a visit of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to Windsor, and the carriages were trailed by numerous horse-boxes in smart maroon livery.

January 30th, 1965 was a sad day, as the funeral train of Sir Winston Churchill passed by, en route from Waterloo to Handborough, Oxfordshire, via Reading and Didcot. It was hauled by loco. 34051 itself, with headcode discs arranged in the form of his famous "V" sign, and witnessed by silent crowds all along the way....

Sister engine 34066 "Fighter Command" was stationed as standby locomotive at Staines, parked on the down loop by the Common; one of the last to use this track.....





Some time after the main train had passed, it quietly crossed over to the up line and returned to Nine Elms tender first.....

These were truly splendid-looking engines, always my favourites.



Enthusiasts' specials embraced extremes of motive power. The earliest I recall seeing brought vintage Adams radial tank 30582 up from the Lyme Regis branch on 19 March 1961, back to its old haunts as this type was common on our line before electrification. Hauling three period coaches down from London, it paused to take water at the station column, watched by a sizable crowd, before departing for Windsor.



My picture (left) needed severe cropping, due to the intrusion of a burly shoulder and head of a fellow photographer in the left half – one of the perennial hazards of such occasions; I was only little then! Sensing my disappointment, dad managed to obtain



a much better image a few months later via an appeal in the railway press, here it is.....

I am the youngster on the left, in the dark raincoat, clutching my father's brown camera case, and he is inconsiderately blocking the view of the third carriage!



In complete contrast, Britannia pacific 70020 "Mercury" - a type never before seen here - ran through our almost deserted station on 8 March 1964.

In April 1965, an "S15 commemorative special" saw old favourite 30837 in unusual guise - hauling green main-line passenger coaching stock. Shortly afterwards, on 9 May 1965, the preserved LNER pacific "Flying Scotsman", by now repainted in apple-green livery, came down our way with a train of maroon carriages:



Towards the end of steam on the Southern, a complex series of specials over two weekends (16 and 30 April 1966) brought the big blue Longmoor Army Dept. 2-10-0 "Gordon" to Staines from the west, on a train which reversed in east yard for a shuttle trip to Windsor and back, double-headed by last remaining survivors of the Southern U and N class moguls. The borrowed NER standard mogul 77014 also put in an appearance on the first train, returning it towards Ascot, with "Gordon" following up light engine.....



Lastly, well after the end of normal S.R. steam operations on 7 April 1968, David Shepherd's preserved standard types 92203 followed by 75029 ran down light engine en route for a temporary new home at Longmoor, approximately 1/2 hour apart.....

This was another sad day, truly the end of an era at Staines Central.

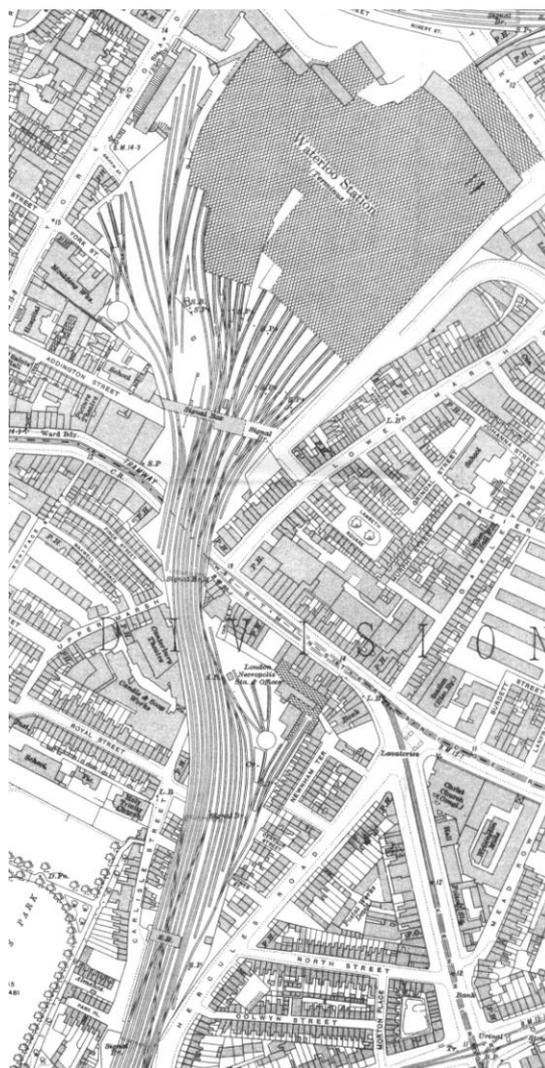


point in the train. As it rounded the curve into Staines, I would thus be looking for a BIL unit with its corridor sides facing south, and tried to get to the correct place on the platform to board either one of its two cars. The only means of access to the corridor was through a compartment, and this drew some odd looks from the other passengers, as to why anyone should wish to stand for the whole journey when seats were available (many of them doubtless had no such choice in the Monday - Friday peak hours); however the large corridor windows offered a good wide view up the line.

The first site of interest was the enormous Feltham freight marshalling yard, extending for over a mile between that station and the triangular junction for the Hounslow loop line. We could often catch a glimpse of one of the 4-8-0 hump shunting tanks at work, usually 30494 or 495 (I never saw the fourth one of the class, 30493). These unique machines were largely superseded on this work about 1959 by mere standard 0-6-0 diesel shunters in the B.R. D3040 number series. Feltham loco. shed was a fair way back from the main running line, but one or two engines which never ventured near Staines could sometimes be positively identified: O2 class 0-4-4 tank no. 30179, LBSC E6 tanks 32408 and 32416 or G6 0-6-0 tank no. 30349. None of these ever seemed to do much work; one can only speculate why they were retained here. At the further end of the yard, an LNER J50 class tank locomotive would often be waiting impatiently to leave on a cross-London freight transfer working, bound for Ferme Park, on the lines out of Kings Cross.

From the summer of 1959, a trio of ex-SE&CR 4-4-0 locomotives were stored here for over a year pending removal for scrapping; they became increasingly decrepit as the months went by.

For the record they were D1 class nos. 31727, 31545 and 31246, and we were very surprised to encounter them all again at Ashford works in April 1961, but that's another story....



The other area of interest on our journey was around Clapham Junction and on to Nine Elms, almost into Waterloo.

Apart from the M7 carriage pilots already mentioned, there was always one of the elegant and immaculately-maintained T9 class 4-4-0's to be seen - either 30338 or 30718 - waiting on the Nine Elms engine yard release road with safety valves lifting noisily, or pulling a rake of empty stock slowly through the Clapham carriage washing plant (is this why they stayed so clean?) An SECR H class 0-4-4 tank (usually 31265) headed up the unadvertised Clapham Junction to Kensington Olympia workman's train. This engine was based at Stewarts Lane shed, Battersea, by which we passed very close in the vicinity of Queens Road station, but whose contents (Eastern section locos, some of types relatively unknown to us) remained tantalizingly just out of sight amongst the great complex of viaducts and running lines hereabouts. Nine Elms shed also had a strange variety of less common locomotive types, some acquired as surplus from the S.E. division in Summer 1959, occasionally seen helping out with the piloting duties. The following were noted from time to time in the period 1958 to 1961: quaint old SER class O1 0-6-0 no. 31370

(with outside springs on its tender); 3 of the LSW class 700 0-6-0's; 2 SEC C class 0-6-0's (31004, 31510); 4-4-0's of class D1 (31247), L (31780) and several L1's - the latter lasted longer than most, and often ventured far down the main line towards Woking on ECS and parcels trains. There were also a couple of resident LBSC E4 tanks most of the time (32487 and 32497 in 1959, then 32472 and 32500, later 32557), and latterly a solitary W class 2-6-4 tank (31922). All these were eventually purged by a clutch of approximately 14 B.R standard tanks in the 82XXX series - uniform and boring - working in the period 1963 - 1966.

The pilots brought the sets of carriages into Waterloo from Clapham sidings (no less than 42 roads, between the main station and the Windsor line platforms), and removed them from arrivals, a low stock-utilisation procedure then common at many large termini, but which did allow for frequent and thorough carriage cleaning while the main-line locos were being turned and serviced. The terminal rails at Waterloo were often very greasy, so the incoming engine would normally give the departing train a helping shove down the length of the platform, then quietly drop off the back once it was well under way. I was greatly amused by a published recollection of a Southern driver concerning one M7 pilot which remained coupled up to the back end of its main-line train one night due to an oversight by its crew, who were otherwise distracted. When it came to drop off it couldn't, and was first spotted by the Raynes Park signalman being towed westwards at approximately 70 mph. The crew of the express locomotive professed not to have noticed the extra weight, and greatly resented being stopped so that it could be removed; they would probably have taken it all the way to Bournemouth!.

One of the strangest sights at Waterloo which I can still recall (though I must have been aged only about five at the time) were the Bulleid "Tavern Cars". One half (only) of each side of these was painted externally to resemble an "Olde Worlde" English Pub, with red-brick lower parts and half-timbering beams where the windows should have been, the remainder being in standard B.R red and cream livery. Apparently, the interior decor was in similar vein, making them probably the most outrageous carriages ever seen on our railways. Customer reaction was generally one of ridicule, so they did not last long in this form. Indeed from about 1956, all Southern main-line stock was repainted back into a distinctive green livery, similar to that always carried by the electrics. (Little fuss ever seems to be made about this particular regional livery policy, nor indeed that also by which the LMR painted its premier engines maroon, compared to that accorded to the Western, who "dared" to re-instate former GWR colours about the same time!)

Here is a selection of pictures we took at Waterloo in the period 1962-66.....





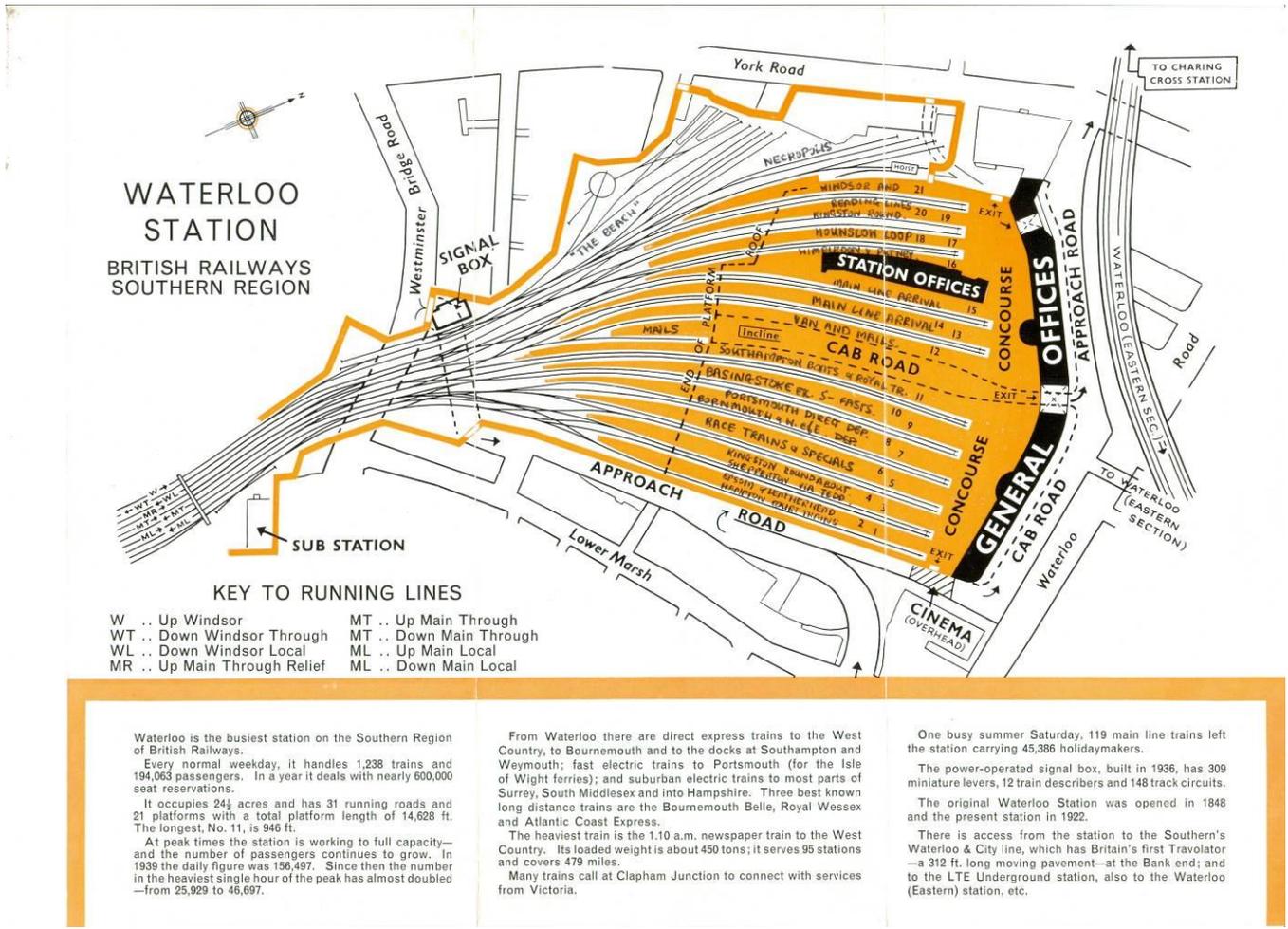
In 1963 the Southern Region Public Relations & Publicity dept. produced a series of informative leaflets on their London terminal stations, with a plan, an aerial view and some facts and figures. That for Waterloo is reproduced in its entirety below, for its historical interest.....



WATERLOO STATION

FACTS & FIGURES

British Railways
SOUTHERN REGION



The South-Western main line

Some favourite vantage points down the main line were from a cricket ground near Earlsfield where my father played away games on occasional summer Saturdays, and at Durnsford Road bridge, Wimbledon, a longish walk from there; also at Weybridge station, where expresses were by now well into their stride going westwards.....





Clapham Junction lacked this exhilaration of speed, but had the advantage that trains on the Brighton line from Victoria would also be seen. Over the years I saw all of the "Merchant Navy" and most of the "West Country / Battle of Britain" type pacifics (apart from those permanently based down at Exmouth Junction, Exeter), plus all of the "Lord Nelson" 4-6-0's. Also along here were noted many further examples of "King Arthurs", "Schools" 4-4-0's, both Southern and B.R. type moguls, B.R. standard 4-6-0's, and a couple of Nine Elms Q1's which had not appeared at Staines. All this was quantity, not variety, for as already noted, very nearly all these loco. types could have been seen on our own Staines line from time to time. However, an example of modern motive power which I associate particularly with the Brighton side of Clapham Junction's activity were the former Southern Railway electric locos nos. 20001 to 20003, used on all sorts of trains from freight to express passenger.

Guildford

Although not on the main line west (merely on the Portsmouth electric route) Guildford was a provincial junction with an interesting assortment of trains, as it was also the hub of the Reading - Redhill line operation, and the end of a long straggling branch from Horsham via Cranleigh. The engine shed was clearly visible from the road overbridge, but this being of the half-roundhouse type meant that often only a row of tender backs was visible amidst the smoke and grime. I recall visiting three times, firstly at Whitsun 1958, en route to a weeks' holiday at "Treetops", Farley Green, changing from the train at Guildford to a Tillingbourne Motors Bedford OB bus (with the usual droning gearbox) for the last leg of the journey. This holiday retreat was itself not without railway interest, for much of the accommodation comprised grounded ex - LSWR coach bodies, but unfortunately we did not have one of these. During the week, I also found my way down to the delightful local station at Gomshall & Shere, though there was not much activity here.

The second visit was, I think, with my mother on a weekday shopping trip about 1960, but I seem to recall spending the larger part of the afternoon around Guildford station and the loco. shed. There were several engine classes stationed here which did not normally work through Staines, the most interesting being the shed pilots, tiny B4 class 0-4-0 tanks nos. 30086 and 30089, and LSWR G6 0-6-0 tank no. 30238. In addition to the 700 and Q1 class 0-6-0's that were very familiar to us, there were several of the SEC C class (31037, 31054, 31723) and a handful of M7's (30026, 30124, 30246, 30378) used mainly along the branch towards Cranleigh. The most common types seen were the S.R. moguls, which were the staple power on the Reading - Guildford - Redhill - Tonbridge cross-country route for many years. This line was also worked by ex - GWR engines ("Manors" and 43XX 2-6-0's) at about this time, but I somehow missed seeing any of these.

Lastly, the Horsham-Guildford branch line closed on 12th July 1965. Here is the last train from Horsham arrived at Guildford in the evening; the loco then took water, ran around the train and departed back to Horsham for the final time.....

