

Railway Notes

By R. A. H. Weight

Far and Wide with Stop Watch and Notebook

I am able to report interesting travels and observations of very varied nature this month.

Until the advent last summer of the 1½-hr. *Bristolian* runs, and the much accelerated 1.15 p.m. Paddington-Bath service, the northbound businessmen's express leaving King's Cross at 7.50 a.m. for the north was Britain's fastest train with its 66.3 m.p.h. timing between Hitchin and Retford stops, 106½ miles apart. With a 10-coach load, or about 350 tons, and facing a good deal of adverse grading, the severe slowing through Peterborough and perhaps other slacks imposed by the track engineers, it still requires a high standard of locomotive performance. It is worked by Leeds (Copley Hill) engines and men in the link also handling the *Queen of Scots* and one-way running with the *Yorkshire Pullman* and the *West Riding* between Leeds and London. The usual motive power is an A1 4-6-2

Doncaster, whence *Blink Bonny* went on to Leeds with the first four carriages.

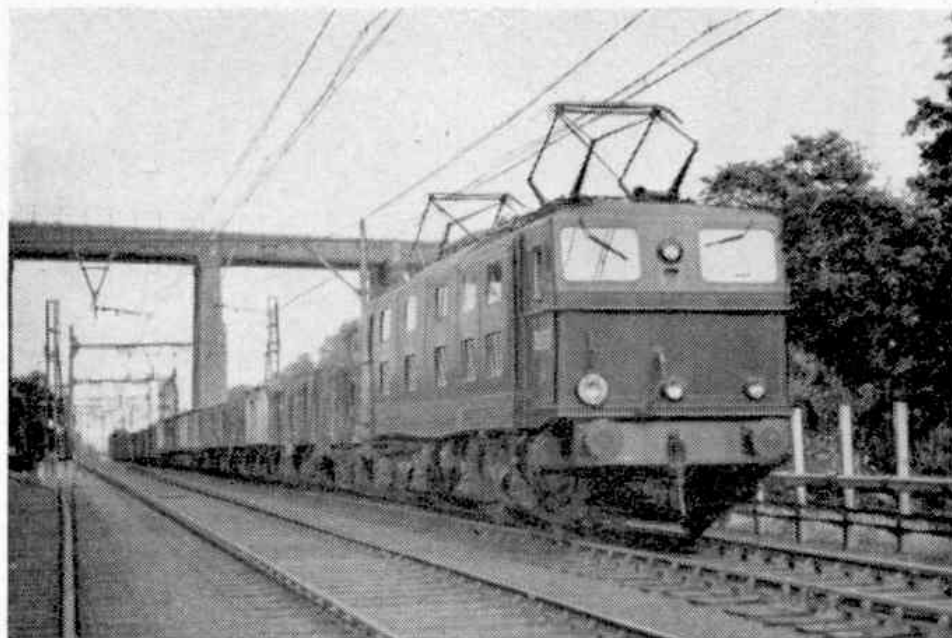
As customary for the northern stage to Newcastle and back, a sister A3 provided and manned by Doncaster shed took over the other six coaches, including restaurant cars. This proved to be another Pacific that had been very busy lately on first class work, No. 60055 *Woolwinder*, which once having attained full speed hurtled along on the level or slightly rising track at between 74 and 85 m.p.h. for 64 miles, apart from necessary slowings past Selby and to a greater extent through York. Notwithstanding a signal stop outside, Darlington platform was reached in a few seconds over the fast allowance of 72 min. for 76½ miles, or in about 69½ min. nett. Mr. Ord secured the photograph reproduced on the opposite page as we rounded the curve by Clifton Engine Sheds, just north of York station.

At Darlington I saw some of the small B.R. 2-6-0s now becoming prominent in the neighbourhood, A8 4-6-2Ts, J21 0-6-0s, B16 4-6-0s and other former N.E.R. types. The up and down non-stop *Elizabethan* expresses passed at speed on the outside through tracks, headed respectively by *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and *Union of South Africa*.

The new light diesel cars have been described and

illustrated in the *M.M.* In one of the dark green twin units, well filled, I found the trip from Harrogate to Leeds quite exciting. Through the large windows one obtains a wonderful view ahead or astern. I was in a back seat enjoying the fine scenery passed through at first, watching the curves and gradients, steam trains going by in the opposite direction, signals going to danger and so on from a rearward aspect. Never had I ascended the steep gradient through Bramhope Tunnel at such a speed, nor had I viewed the 3,750-yd. bore from such a privileged aspect.

Journeys by other light diesel sets on the Leeds-Bradford line one evening showed how popular and speedy the cars are. The complicated track layout in the vicinity of Leeds and Holbeck, with its network of main lines, connecting



A Cudworth to Mottram mineral train leaving Wombwell main exchange sidings hauled by Bo-Bo locomotive No. 26039 with rear-end assistance from another similar unit. This and the upper illustration on the next page are from photographs by C. Ord.

of recent design and class 8, though to my very interested surprise when travelling the engine was No. 60051 *Blink Bonny*, one of the original Gresley Pacifics of 1924 now rebuilt to A3 standard, class 7. This had been overhauled recently in Doncaster Works and has since been sharing a good deal in these important duties.

Aided by down gradients, the start from Hitchin was very fast in rough and rainy weather; 88 m.p.h. was attained near Tempsford and the first 27 miles to passing Huntingdon were reeled off in 24 min. An unfortunate signal stop occurred just south of Peterborough station and then, when we were climbing towards Stoke summit in grand style, came a long slowing owing to permanent way relaying near Corby Glen. These delays had cost quite 7½ min. and the express was 8 min. late passing Grantham, but by covering the last 33 miles to Retford stop in less than 29 min., with speeds uphill and down between 66 and 78 m.p.h., a stop was secured only 6½ min. late, representing an unchecked average of 67 m.p.h. overall. Several minutes were regained by fine running along the more easily timed 17½ miles on to

links and sidings, can now be observed to greater advantage than ever before.

A1 4-6-2 No. 60120 *Kittiwake*, hauled the corresponding southbound evening business express from Leeds to King's Cross. After attaching the Newcastle portion brought back to Doncaster by *Woolwinder*, and calling at Retford, this engine provided 90 m.p.h. travel down part of the Stoke descent towards Peterborough and a very fast finish from Huntingdon to the stop at Hitchin. The 4-6-4 No. 60700 was noted taking a freight train out of Doncaster yards.

Southern Notes and Travels

On secondary cross-country lines, mainly in Sussex, some of them passing through beautiful rural scenery having only a single track except at passing places, where L.B.S.C.R. locomotives once held sway, I travelled behind class 2 L.M.R. type 2-6-2T No. 41318 from Lewes to East Grinstead. At the latter station platforms and lines are on two levels almost at right angles to one another, with a double-track connecting link from the high level to the low. This is used by