

FAMOUS TRAINS: XXIX.

The "Pines Express," L.M.S. Rly.

By Cecil J. Allen, M.Inst.T., etc.

PERHAPS the most singular thing about such a title as the "Pines Express" of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway is that the pines are not "L.M.S. pines" at all! It may seem equally strange to see "The Devonian" running over L.M.S. metals when that company owns not a yard of track in Devonshire. Through running of L.M.S. rolling stock over the systems of other railways solves the puzzle, however. The Great Western Railway sees to it that "The Devonian" is safely deposited in due course on the South Devon coast, and the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway similarly takes charge of the "Pines Express" at Bath and brings it at last within sight and smell of the pine-woods of Bournemouth, the final stage of the journey being over the metals of the Southern.

If you look at a railway map of England you will see that the ramified L.M.S. system extends one great tentacle southward and westward from Birmingham, into the heart of Great Western territory, as far as Bristol, where the two companies jointly occupy the Temple Meads Station, to which we travelled in one of the two-hour expresses from London last month. This is the route followed by "The Devonian" from Bradford and Leeds to Torquay. Branching southward from this main line at Mangotsfield, near Bristol, a short spur runs into Bath, where one station is again used by two companies—the one-time Midland and now L.M.S., and the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway. The Somerset and Dorset Railway, when in a bad financial position, was taken over jointly by the Midland and London and South Western Railways, away back in 1875, the principal object being to give the Midland direct access to Bournemouth. Now, of course, it is jointly owned by the L.M.S. and Southern Railway but, like the Midland and Great Northern Joint, it is the proud possessor of its own locomotives and rolling stock. So it is to the care of a royal blue Somerset and Dorset locomotive that the Midland red L.M.S. engine hands over the "Pines Express" on arrival at Bath.

In the course of its long journey from Liverpool and Manchester to Bournemouth, the "Pines Express" does some curious things. It was first instituted by the London and North Western and Midland Railways in conjunction, the former bringing it down as far as Birmingham, where it was handed over to the latter. In exactly the same manner it is now handed over from the Western to the Midland Division, and is in this way the only regular passenger train that crosses from one set of tracks to the other outside the great New Street Station. Apart from this, it is the only daily express that is worked by the Western Division from Birmingham away to the North out of the opposite end of New Street, as though it were off to London. This has the remarkable result that, whether you are travelling to Bournemouth or from Bournemouth, in either case you run out of the east end of New Street, and yet without any reversal of the train!

Again, as it leaves Wolverhampton out in the cold when going north, it is the only daily express to run over the short length of line connecting the Portobello and Bushbury Junctions just outside that town. At summer week-ends the "Pines Express"

gives the great city of Birmingham the "go-by" too, running round a much more extraordinary route through Walsall and Sutton Coldfield on to the main line from Derby, and then by the connecting spur up to King's Norton, where the West of England main line of the Western Division is joined. Over this route it is the only express train ever seen.

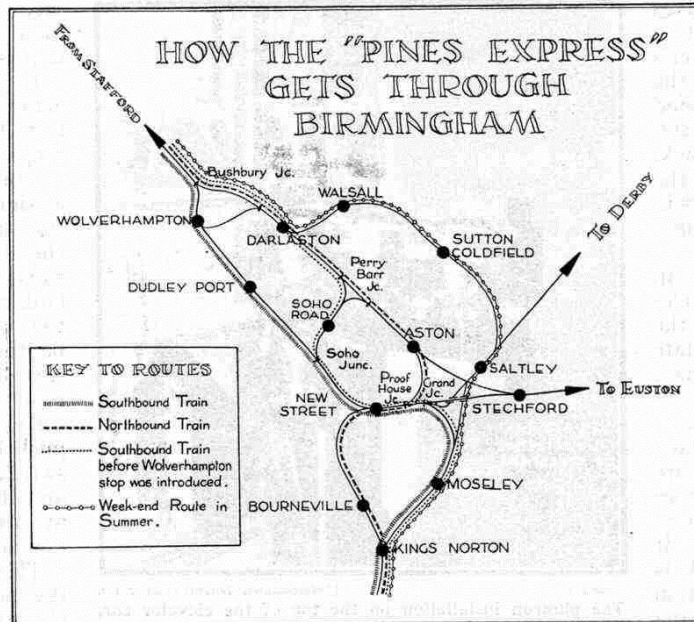
A word or two now as to the composition of the train. The main section of it, including the ubiquitous restaurant cars, works through between Manchester (London Road) and Bournemouth.

In pre-grouping days this was Midland stock, and the restaurant cars only ran between Birmingham and Bournemouth; the Midland Division still finds the coaches and the cars, but the latter complete the whole journey in each direction. So far as through working is concerned, Liverpool has to be content with one through "composite" for Bournemouth, but this is strengthened by a four-coach corridor set for Birmingham, to which we travelled in one of the two-hour expresses from London last month. This is the route followed by "The Devonian" from Bradford and Leeds to Torquay. Branching southward from this main line at Mangotsfield, near Bristol, a short spur runs into Bath, where one station is again used by two companies—the one-time Midland and now L.M.S., and the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway. The Somerset and Dorset Railway, when in a bad financial position, was taken over jointly by the Midland and London and South Western Railways, away back in 1875, the principal object being to give the Midland direct access to Bournemouth. Now, of course, it is jointly owned by the L.M.S. and Southern Railway but, like the Midland and Great Northern Joint, it is the proud possessor of its own locomotives and rolling stock. So it is to the care of a royal blue Somerset and Dorset locomotive that the Midland red L.M.S. engine hands over the "Pines Express" on arrival at Bath.

There is one more coach in the Liverpool section, and that is destined for Southampton. The "Pines Express" carries it as far as Cheltenham, where it is detached in order to work over the one-time Midland and South Western Junction Railway through Swindon to Andover, and thence

over the Southern to Southampton. In the grouping the M. & S.W. J.R., which was previously an independent company, became the property of the Great Western Railway, and the G.W.R. therefore advertises itself in the formation of the "Pines Express" by providing its own Liverpool-Southampton coach, the gay cream and amber livery striking a brilliant note on the tail of the long procession of Midland red vehicles. When the whole train is assembled, between Crewe and Birmingham, it is therefore very heavy, seldom consisting of less than 14 corridor vehicles, though the proportion of the total journey over which this loading prevails is fortunately short.

It is at 9.40 a.m. that the Liverpool portion of the "Pines Express" is due to leave Lime Street, just ahead of the 9.45 a.m. "Merseyside Express" from Liverpool to London. It is, of course, much pleasanter to be going to the seaside than to be coming away from it, so that naturally we patronise the south-bound train; though, truth to tell, we are but a few miles away from the Irish sea when thus we make our start for the English Channel. Up the tremendously deep rock cutting, varied by a remarkable succession of short tunnels, we mount at 1 in 93 over the route of the original Liverpool and Manchester Railway—whose centenary is to be celebrated next year—until we reach Edge Hill. A brief stop, and we are away again at 9.46 a.m., threading our way through the maze of junctions between here and Wavertree, which need to be seen on a plan in order that their complexity may be properly appreciated. We also pass the great Edge Hill concentration sidings, which were among the very first in the country to be laid out for marshalling by gravity.



KEY TO ROUTES

- Southbound Train
- - - Northbound Train
- Southbound Train before Wolverhampton stop was introduced.
- o-o-o-o Week-end Route in Summer.