

THE Railway Magazine

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Railway Staff Difficulties

A CONTINUED serious shortage of operating staff in certain areas appears likely to hamper the efforts of British Railways to attract traffic. For instance, in August, the Western Region announced that it had become necessary to curtail off-peak local passenger services between Maidenhead, High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Oxford. Sunday services are not affected. During the coming winter, it is expected that difficulties will arise in moving goods, including coal, in the Midlands, and misgivings have been expressed as to the ability of the railways to carry winter fuel. It will help if as much coal as possible can be consigned between now and Christmas, in anticipation of delays from severe weather in the new year. Plans are being made to minimise the effects of a hindrance to traffic, and everything possible is being done by British Railways to recruit additional staff in the areas most seriously affected.

New Western Region Pullman Trains

THE all-Pullman diesel multiple-unit services between Birmingham and Wolverhampton and Paddington, and Bristol and Paddington, were introduced by the Western Region of British Railways on September 12. The timetables of both services appeared in our August issue, with a description of the trains. A peculiarity of the schedules of the up morning trains is that both are due to reach Paddington at the same time (9.35 a.m.) and should therefore run side by side for the last three miles of their journeys, from Old Oak Common. During the day, the trains make an additional return journey between London and Birmingham and London and Bristol respectively. Short turn-round times at the termini characterise these services.

Named "The Birmingham Pullman" and "The Bristol Pullman," the trains allow passengers to spend some seven hours in London, and should be appreciated by those who wish to make a one-day visit for business appointments.

The Last Slip Coach

WITH the introduction of the winter timetables on September 12, the Western Region of British Railways withdrew the Bicester slip coach from the 5.10 p.m. train from Paddington. This was the last of the once-numerous slip coach services in Great Britain. The earliest were introduced in 1858 by the L.B.S.C.R. and the S.E.R., closely followed by the G.W.R.; the last-named was always their principal exponent. At the turn of the century there were 124 slip services in this country, and the total grew to its peak of nearly 200 in 1914, but nearly all ceased during the first world war. The Great Western was the only railway to revive the practice on a considerable scale after that war, but its maximum of 79 in 1908 had fallen to 47 in 1924, and to 23 ten years later. There was a complete suspension in the second world war, followed by re-appearance to a limited extent on the Western Region.

London Transport Train Services

DEVELOPMENTS on the railways of London Transport give an indication of changes that are occurring in the trend of passenger traffic. The introduction of electrified services between Rickmansworth and Amersham, and on the Chesham branch, on September 12, is an instance of the need for increased facilities in certain areas. The completion of the associated quadrupling between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Watford South Junction (near Rickmansworth) will make

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Contents for October, 1960

	Page
Towards London's Northern Heights	} Plate
Stopping Train Through Somerset	
Editorial Notes	675
The Oxford, Witney and Fairford Line.	
Trevor J. Saunders	677
Victoria Station, London, in the Twentieth Century.	
Charles E. Lee	684
Emergency Timetables. W. H. Duck	693
William Bridges Adams and his "Roads and Rails."	
Michael Robbins	695
British Locomotive Practice and Performance.	
O. S. Nock	712
The Manchester to Crewe Line—2. G. O. Holt	721
Diesel-Powered Parcels Vans for British Railways	729
A Caucasian Collection. Bryan Hill	731
Letters to the Editor	734
Notes and News	737
The Why and the Wherefore	746
Railway Literature	748

Front cover: Class "B1" 4-6-0 locomotive
No. 61124 leaving York with a train for Doncaster
[Photograph by Canon Eric Treacy]

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