



ABOVE: The London & Birmingham (as far as Rugby) became in due course part of the West Coast Main Line to Scotland and home to sights such as this – and there can be none better. LMS 'Coronation' Pacific No.46246 *City of Manchester* in BR crimson lake stomps up the climb out of Euston and through the short tunnel at Kensal Green with the northbound 'Mid-Day Scot' in September 1961. (A. C. Sterndale/Colour-Rail.com BRM1786)

BELOW: The cleaners have set about LMS rebuilt 'Royal Scot' 4-6-0 No.46163 *Civil Service Rifleman* and turned it out in sparkling order, this scene captured in November 1959 near Northchurch. The train is the up 'Emerald Isle Express' (but without its headboard) from Holyhead which had connected with the steamer from Dun Laoghaire. (J. P. Mullett/Colour-Rail.com BRM412)

ON THE LONDON & BIRMINGHAM LINE

An article this month looks at the building of the London & Birmingham Railway, Britain's first trunk main line and, as David Jenkinson described it in his 1988 book on the subject, 'A Railway of Consequence'. Let's take a look at the route in steam days.





ABOVE: Rebuilt LMS 'Patriot' 4-6-0 No.45527 *Southport* heads north through Watford Junction with the Euston–Liverpool Lime Street 'Shamrock' on 30th April 1955. Connections would be made at Liverpool with sailings to Belfast and Dublin. Plenty of spotters are alert to note the number (a 'rebuilt Pat' was a good catch!) and even on the far platform passengers focus on the train's passage through the station. At that time the colourful carmine and cream carriage livery still held sway. (Trevor Owen/Colour-Rail.com BRM2757)

BELOW: A green 'Coronation' was almost as good as a red 'un, especially if as well turned out as Camden's No.46239 *City of Chester* is for this Euston–Windermere train leaving Northchurch Tunnel in August 1962. Appearances notwithstanding, steam was in decline on the WCML by then as it looked forward to electrification, with Camden shed closing the following month and its remaining Pacifics moving across London to Willesden. (J. P. Mullett/Colour-Rail.com BRM399)





TOP: Rebuilt 'Patriot' No.45529 *Stephenson* is about to cross the Grand Union Canal at Apsley with a northbound express freight in 1962. Modernisation is coming to the WCML and Robert Stephenson's original skew arch has been strengthened by being encased in concrete.

(Celyn Leigh-Jones/Colour-Rail.com BRM1953)



MIDDLE: Coventry station, like much of the city, was badly ravaged during the war and was radically rebuilt and extended in readiness for the WCML electrification – and with better results than in many contemporaries. That was still pending when LMS Class 3 2-6-2T No.40135 was found there with a load to its liking and resting awhile before moving it a bit further.

(Ray Reed/Colour-Rail.com BRM2439)

BOTTOM: Harrow & Wealdstone is gone in the blink of an eye as LMS 4-6-0s Class 5 No.45034 and 'Jubilee' No.45737 *Atlas* whisk the up 'Midlander' from Birmingham New Street to Euston through on a summer day in 1962. (Colour-Rail.com BRM2604)





ABOVE: BR 'Britannia' Pacific No.70001 *Lord Hurcomb* is making good speed with a down fitted freight as it heads out of Tring cutting towards Cheddington in August 1963. On the up side some supports for the imminent installation of the overhead wires have been erected. (Colour-Rail.com BRM2316)

BELOW: A bit moody but still magnificent: even a coating of dust can't diminish that. 'Coronation' 4-6-2 No.46254 *City of Stoke-on-Trent* is accelerating through the Home Counties on its way north through Bushey station in July 1963. (Paul Riley/Colour-Rail.com BRM1928)

