



## **Up on the Cab**

### **By Ron Carter**

The one thing that I remember vividly was I was at Kings Cross Station and we used to be invited by a lot of the drivers up into the cabs of the engines. We saw a lonely engine; the train was pulled out of the platform at Kings Cross and it was about to go back into the sheds I think and they invited us up onto the cab. It was a streak, as you called them then, it was an A4. We were sort of asking questions about how it worked and that sort of thing and the driver said would you like a ride up to the end of the platform. We jumped at the chance, my hand was on the regulator with the driver's hand on top of me and my mate called David Marney he was on the reversing gear with the fireman. The fireman changed the reversing gear, the driver took the brakes off and we travelled up towards the end of the platform. When we got out I looked at the side of the engine and I saw a little plaque that said this engine was renowned for travelling at 126mph or words of that effect. I suddenly realised that I had actually driven Mallard up to the end of the platform at Kings Cross.

When I used to go in the cabs of engines I used to get absolutely filthy dirty. I was covered in soot, smoke and general coal dust etc. I always came back dirty from climbing up on the engines. I think it was Britannia I went up on and the fireman climbed out he went up to the front of the engine and he came back with an old crow that had obviously been hit on the line and he said we quite often find these on the front of the engine. He just chucked it in the furnace and that was goodbye to him and he said we quite often hit those on the way down.

I always used to go on holiday by train. We used to go to Bognor Regis. I was only about 5 or 6 maybe 7 years old we went to Bognor Regis and we stayed in a place called Feltham which is near Bognor. They had these, camping coaches that just on the seafront. They were old coaches devoid of their bogies and we used to stay in these. The carriages themselves were devoid of their bogies and they were sort of camping coaches but not really camping coaches but they were converted bedrooms and they had a kitchen there and it was a bit confined but they had all the facilities there were used. I can't remember the specific things but I remember the green so I expect they were ex-Southern Region coaches. We used to go straight out the coach straight onto the beach. We went as a family; my uncles and aunts came down with us. We used to go down to the rocks and go rock pooling.