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ISSUE 250
MARCH/APRIL 2019

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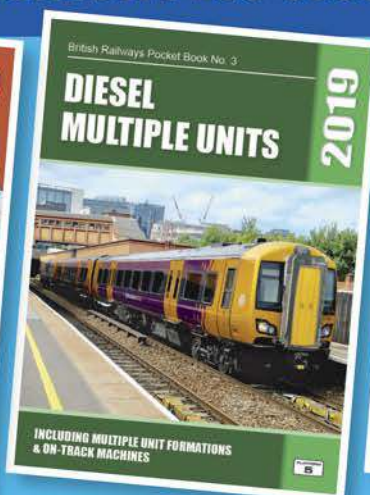
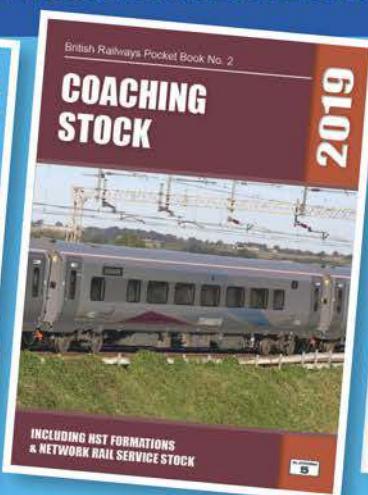
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TRACTION
issue 251 will
be on sale
Friday 5th
April

Welcome

It's a real pleasure to write this introduction to TRACTION as it represents something of a milestone for the magazine since it is our 250th issue. I know many of our readers have every issue since number 1!

The response to the increase in size of the magazine, which started with the last issue, has been completely positive with many readers taking the time to contact me.

We start this issue with a fascinating account of traffic on the Boulby potash mine branch during the 1980s by Geoffrey Allen. It's the first of several articles about this interesting and, in places, spectacular line in north eastern England.

In complete contrast to this relatively quiet line, Andy Armitage begins a series of articles about his time working at Euston Power Signal Box in the 1970s. He kept detailed records of the traffic at Euston on a daily basis, noting incidents and the method of operations. In this part he looks at a week in September 1975 when he was on 'late turn' in the afternoon and evening.

For many years the North Wales Coast Line was a Mecca for enthusiasts wanting to photograph and travel on loco hauled passenger trains. Lewis Bevan visited the line several times in the 1990s to record these workings on film and presents a selection.

David J. Hayes returns with the second part of his article about the Wednesbury and the Dudley line in the 1970s with another superb set of images of those long gone days of old style freight operation.

Richard MacLennan was a driver based at Ayr depot and has already recounted his experiences about driving passenger trains to Stranraer. In this issue he describes driving freight trains over the hills of Galloway in 'Wild Men and Wild Places'

In the mid 1980s Steve Randall visited Taunton to record the final year of semaphore signal operation before the multiple aspect signalling swept away much that was attractive to the enthusiast on this part of the Western Region.

The humble Class 08 shunter has tended to be ignored by many enthusiasts so we felt it was time that it was featured in TRACTION's pages. Gavin Morrison's photographs show something of the variety of tasks that these useful locomotives performed all over Britain.

An almost completely forgotten railway is the Liverpool Overhead Railway which ran alongside the docks by the River Mersey. Colin Boocock tells us about the history of this fascinating line illustrated with many of his own photos taken in the 1950s.

TRACTION MODELLING features a delightful military inspired layout; Dovington Camp in OO Gauge, by Paul Taylor, features plenty of freight action, all in a highly realistic setting.

Will Thompson returns with another constructional article, this time an ingenious method of lighting the interior of ready to run coaches. Our review pages look at two recent O Gauge models; the Heljan Class 25 and Dapol HAA wagon are, I'm sure, enough to tempt many modellers to build a layout in this increasingly popular scale.

Stephen



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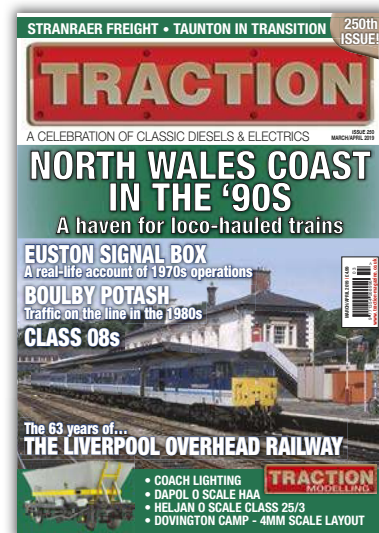


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On 30th July 31421 'Wigan Pier' is at Bangor with the 12:05 to Manchester Victoria. LEWIS BEVAN



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Friday 8th May 1981 was a first for the Boulby branch when 56083 of Toton depot worked to the mine. I was tipped off that this loco was at Boulby and about to depart. Jumping on my motorbike I intercepted it at Brotton Station hauling two empty TTAs and four 63 Ton PBAs.

Boulby Potash Traffic

Part 1 May 1981 to December 1989

In the first of a series of articles about the Boulby branch in North Yorkshire, Geoffrey Allen looks at traffic on the line in the 1980s, with emphasis on the potash traffic to Boulby mine.

I first started working at Boulby Mine on the 12th May 1979 and continued to work there until February 19th 2016 when I took early retirement, mainly due to bad health. Although I took an interest in railway working on the branch from the start, it was not until April 1981 that I started to record and then photograph the various workings. There are a couple of gaps in my records due to ill health and two instances of the shutter jamming on my Olympus O1MN camera.

The first instalment will cover traffic to and from Boulby Mine from 1981 to 1990, whilst the second will cover 1990 to 2000 and the third Skinningrove steel works traffic from 1981 to 2000. All photographs used were taken by me and from my own extensive collection. Comments within the article come from my own personal observations or as a result of conversations with the individuals involved.

My initial recording methods were to note the basic details such as loco number, type and number of wagons and time of departure or passing and any unusual occurrences. Unfortunately, until about 1990, I was never particularly interested in recording the train reporting numbers, although later on I did record some of this information. My main priority was to record the everyday operation of a branch line during the transition from the older, more traditional, railway to the more modern one we see today.

A typical week in 1981

The locos I saw going to and from Boulby



Two of Thornaby's Class 31s, Nos. 31201 and 31282, leave Boulby on Friday 4th September 1981 with 7PBAs bound for Tees Dock. This was the maximum load allowed at this time for a pair of '31s'



Cardiff Canton's 47079 'G J Churchward' accelerates northwards in the wintry gloom through Redcar Central with a potash train for Tees Dock on Wednesday 16th December 1981. In December 1999 this locomotive was rebuilt to a Class 57 as No. 57009.

during 1981 included Classes 31/0, 37/0, 40, 47/0, 47/3, 47/4 and 56. To illustrate the number of locomotives you could expect to see in a typical week let's look at what was used from Monday 7th December to Friday 11th 1981.

Monday 7th December 1981

Class 47/0 No. 47234 (Cardiff Canton)

Class 47/3 No. 47313 (Thornaby)

Tuesday 8th December 1981

Class 47/3 No. 47311 (Thornaby)

Wednesday 9th December 1981

Class 37/0 No. 37063 (Thornaby)

Class 37/0 No. 37149 (Eastfield)

Class 37/0 No. 37204 (Bristol Bath Road)

Thursday 10th December 1981

Class 37/0 No. 37059 (Thornaby)

Class 37/0 No. 37121 (Stratford)

Friday 11th December 1981

Class 37/0 No. 37200 (Thornaby)

Of the nine locos seen only five were from Thornaby; this situation was not unusual at the time as these were the days before sectorisation. During the period under review there were locos from 16 different sheds in 1981, 22 in 1982, 18 in 1983, 15 in 1984, 16 in 1985, 13 in 1986, 7 in 1987, 4 in 1988 and 3 in 1989 (during the last two years I did not record all the locos because of my illness).

As the decade progressed the number of locos you could expect to see got fewer and fewer as more powerful traction hauling more wagons led to fewer train paths being needed. Partly offsetting this situation was an increase in potash production from the mine as well as the start of salt traffic from 1985. Geographically, depots that provided locos ranged from Eastfield and Motherwell in Scotland to Eastleigh in southern England, March in eastern England and Landore in Wales. If we briefly fast forward to the situation in 2018 the present loco provider, Freightliner, will just use two locos over a fortnightly period with them refuelling at Boulby from a road tanker. They only return to their parent depot at Leeds for exams.

The first Class 56 and a '40'

Friday 8th May 1981 was a first for the Boulby branch in the shape of 56083 of Toton shed. I was tipped off that this loco was at Boulby and was about to depart. Jumping on my motorbike, I intercepted it at Brotton station hauling two empty TTAs from the weekly Boulby oil train, that had missed their allotted path, and four 63 Ton PBAs. It did a second trip when I was working the 2 to 10 shift, so I was able to photo it at Boulby. However, due to its length I was unable to get far enough back to get it all in side on! I never discovered the reason it had turned up as regular Class 56s workings did not start for a number of years. Had it been at Thornaby and the depot borrowed it to cover for the unavailability



The loaded incoming Boulby oil train was difficult to photograph as it often ran during the night. On the 12th February 1982 I photographed Bristol allocated 31294 arriving with twelve TTAs from Stanlow Refinery



On Thursday 25th March 1982, two Thornaby Class 31s, Nos. 31178 and 31292, drift down past the entrance to the still operational Brotton coal depot. The line to the right of the running line required an Annets key to release the ground frame that controlled access. This was obtained from Longbeck signal box at Marske.



Another Western Region, named Class 47/0, No. 47088 'Samson', from Cardiff Canton depot, appeared at Boulby on Monday 26th April 1982. The loco was awaiting the making up of its load. This loco was later renumbered to 47653 in August 1986 and 47781 in 1994.



Thornaby's No. 37032 arrives at Boulby on Friday 14th May 1982 with 6 empty PBAs. This loco was a regular visitor to the branch in the early 1980s. Happily it is still with us today in the guise of D6732 on the North Norfolk Railway.

Kingmoor's No. 40022 'Laconia' drifts down through Brotton Station with 7 PBAs on Tuesday 17th August 1982.



A light dusting of snow at Crag Hall on Monday 9th January 1984 does not seem to require the buffer beam snow plough fitted to lead engine 37031 of Healey Mills depot and its partner 37076 of Thornaby. Even given the wintry condition, neither should be overtaxed with a trailing load of 5 empty PBAs, weighing no more than about 150 tons.



of one of their own stud? Perhaps a reader knows the answer.

The loaded incoming Boulby oil train was difficult to photograph as it often ran at ungodly times of the night. However, on 12th of February 1982 I was able to capture Bristol allocated 31294 arriving with twelve TTAs from Stanlow refinery. I regret not photographing the entire train but, in the pre digital age, when taking slides or prints you only had a finite number of shots on the roll of film and you tended to be careful about how you used them. The loco from the incoming oil train almost always left light engine which, to me, seemed the loss of a perfectly usable path on the single track line, although there may have been operational reasons for this that I was unaware of.

On Tuesday 17th August 1982, Kingmoor's 40022 appeared at the head of 7 PBAs, which was the same load as allowed for a pair of Class 31s. The '40s' class were never employed widely on Boulby branch services. I was once told that the locos' weight meant that they should not be allowed over the new Carlin How Viaduct, although this does not seem very likely to me for such a modern structure, but they did turn up occasionally on Boulby and Skinningrove trains, to my delight.

During 1984 I saw twelve different Class 56s: five were Romanian built examples Nos. 56008/ 015/ 018/ 021 and 028; four were from the Doncaster built batch Nos. 56072/ 077/ 085 and 111; three were from the ones constructed at Crewe, Nos. 56116/ 129 and 130. At this time, during the miners' strike, a large number of relatively new locos sat around doing very little work so they were redeployed to other areas where they could be used. By the end of April 1985, most of the '56s' had returned to their former haunts, so apart from infrequent appearances would not be back in appreciable numbers until 1994.

No. 47197, of Crewe diesel depot, accelerates away from Shepherds House crossing on the morning of Thursday 19th April 1984. This was the loco that I enjoyed an unofficial footplate trip on from Crag Hall signal box to Boulby and then Boulby to Shepherds House. I then had to walk back to Crag Hall to pick up my motor bike which I had left there.



Weekend special salt trains

On the weekend of Saturday 26th to Sunday 27th of January 1985, and the following two weekends, a series of trains ran from Boulby to Acton on the outskirts of London. The wagons used were a mixture of 21 ton coal hoppers (HTVs) and 16 ton mineral wagons (MCVs and MXVs).

Salt trains from Boulby had not long been running as, prior to this, the salt mined was pumped out to sea due to an agreement when I.C.I pulled out of Boulby that no salt would be mined for a period of five years. This was presumably to remove competition for Salt Union in Cheshire which remained owned by I.C.I. These trains were a result of the expiration of this agreement.

We had no dedicated wagons for such flows, hence the appearance of life expired mineral wagons. The wagons were loaded with difficulty through the existing potash loading hoppers and despatched. However, some of the salt was deposited on the tracks en-route due to poor door seals. This in itself was not too much of a problem until it began to rain. I was told that apparently salt in solution is an electrolyte (an electrolyte is a substance that produces an electrically conducting solution) which then put a number of signals on the East Coast Main Line to danger: we were not popular!

Whatever the truth of the matter it is a good story and, undaunted, the following week some bright spark came up with a solution to the leaking door seals by putting a huge plastic bag inside the wagons as a liner.

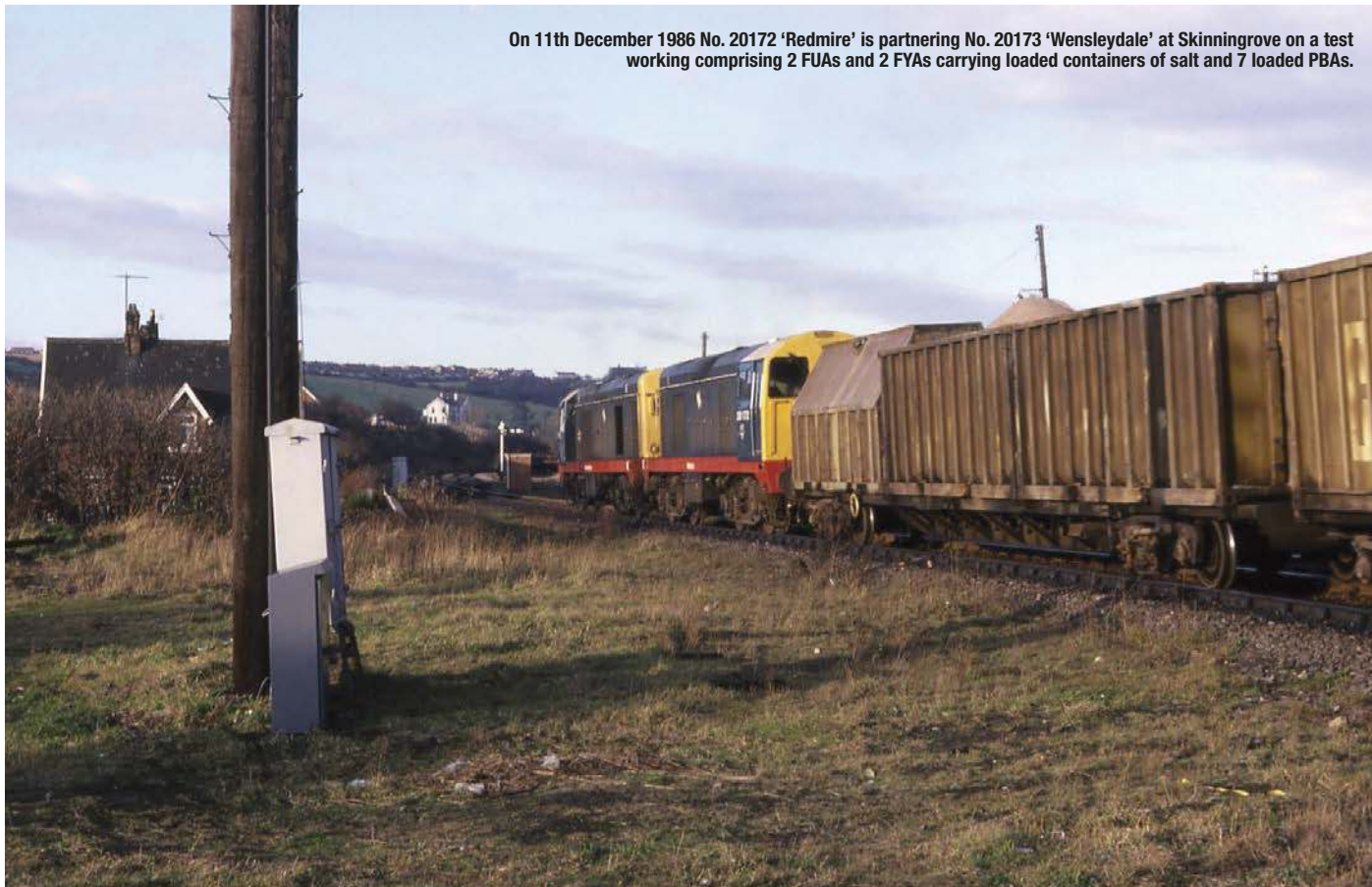
Crewe built No. 56129 of Gateshead, the first of the large logo liveried locos, sits in the loop at Church Lane crossing in Redcar on Monday 21st May 1984. At this time, during the miners' strike, a large number of these relatively new locos had very little work so they were redeployed to other areas where they could be used.



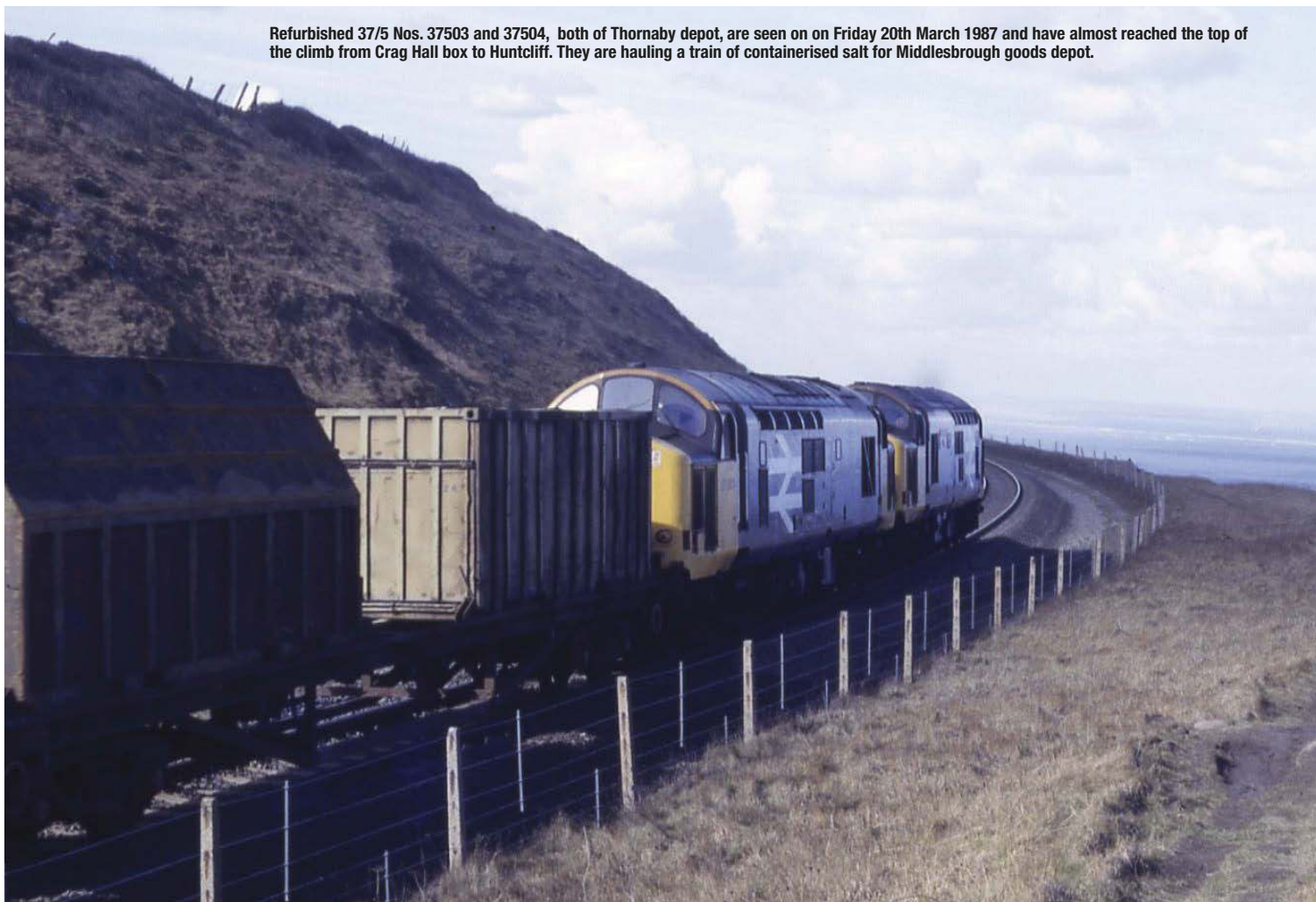
In January 1985 special freight trains ran from Boulby to Acton, with this one being hauled by Crewe diesel depot's No. 47356. The train was made up of 14 HTVs. These were B418079, B419021, B418770, B421109, B415669, B418508, B416674, B417646, B419801, B420364, B428554, B428927 and B422394.



On 11th December 1986 No. 20172 'Redmire' is partnering No. 20173 'Wensleydale' at Skinningrove on a test working comprising 2 FUAs and 2 FYAs carrying loaded containers of salt and 7 loaded PBAs.



Refurbished 37/5 Nos. 37503 and 37504, both of Thornaby depot, are seen on Friday 20th March 1987 and have almost reached the top of the climb from Crag Hall box to Huntcliff. They are hauling a train of containerised salt for Middlesbrough goods depot.



The problem of leaking salt was cured, but this only led to a new problem, how to get it out at the other end. So it was that a man with a Stanley knife had to go underneath and slit the plastic bag; health & safety what was that? The proper solution of course was to get wagons more suited to this traffic and that was what happened along with a dedicated loading facility.

The Class 20s arrive

The jungle telegraph burst into life again on Tuesday 11th December 1986 when I got word that two Class 20s were on the branch. The locos used on the test working, which was comprised of 2 FUAs and 2 FYAs carrying loaded containers of salt as well as 7 loaded PBAs, were 20172 'Redmire' and 20173 'Wensleydale'.

I roughly calculated that the total weight of the train was in the region of 1,082 tons, 142 tons of loco and 936 tons of train. It was halted on the bank just before Skinninggrove works and restarted from a dead stop. The noise generated was truly incredible and something I will never forget. On the basis of this test the class was passed for service on the Boulby branch. It would have been interesting to see what the result would have been on a wet day. This test must have been deemed a success as the load for a pair of Class 20s from Boulby was subsequently set at 1080 tons.



Although slightly outside the time scale of this article this driver's slip shows the typical make up of a Class 20 hauled potash train from Boulby to Tees Dock. The second wagon in the list (11415) appears to have been overloaded hence the warning, instead of the normal weight of about 93 Tons it is nearer 102! There were quite often problems with the loading system and weigh bridges and this would seem to be such an occasion.

TRAIN LIST 1021 22/05/90

WTT NO		6P65C						TIME		DATE					
FROM		BOULBYMIN						TO		TEESDOCK					
	SQ	WGN	NUMBER	CL	TPB	LH	WEIGHT	BF	SPL	HD	DESTN	R	C	HAZARD	TAG
			20156		X		73.000	35							
			20138		X		73.000	35							
			8.TRN.15430.												
RA	01	STS	11412	JAA		60	236.650	120		M	15635				914
	02	STS	11415	JAA		120	328.450	170		M	15635	9			914
	03	STS	11430	JAA		180	419.500	220		M	15635				914
	04	STS	11416	JAA		240	508.050	270		M	15635				914
	05	STS	11413	JAA		300	598.500	320		M	15635				914
	06	STS	11409	JAA		360	688.550	370		M	15635				914
	07	STS	11425	JAA		430	778.400	420		M	15635				914
	08	STS	11422	JAA		480	867.950	470		M	15635				914
	09	STS	11408	JAA		540	958.600	520		M	15635				914
	10	STS	11418	JAA		600	1048.150	570		M	15635				914

1048.150 TONNES 600FT 570 POT AIR B/F
WARNING-RA-WGN R/A GREATER THAN HEADER R/A BR29973 REQD SEE WM P6 C1/6(3)

TRAIN LIST ACCEPTED SEE WM P6 C2/3,C3/7.

THE RULE BOOK SECTION H CLAUSE 4.1.1
CARRIED OUT AND TRAIN IN GOOD ORDER TO PROCEED.

PREPARED BY ISSUED AT TEES YARD SIGNED DEPOT SUPVR VALIDATION GRADE

AUTHORISED	ACTUAL
MAX LOAD 1080 TNNs	1049 TNNs ACTUAL LOAD
OR : -	
NUMBER OF WAGONS 0	10 NUMBER OF WAGONS
BRAKE FORCE TYPE E1	
FOR ACTUAL LOAD- 340 TNNs	570 TNNs BRAKE FORCE AVAILABLE (AIR)
RA 8	9 HIGHEST R/A IN TRAIN
LENGTH LIMIT 0060 SLU	600 @ FEET ACT LENGTH 32 SLU *
LOCO CLASS 20/20	60 MPH MAX TRAIN SPEED
	0 PIPED VEHS IN POTENTIAL
	BRAKED PORTION OF TRAIN

TRAIN SINGLE PIPED FROM -----

@ = EXCL. POWER LOCO (S)

* = SLU INCLUDE ADDTL LOCO LENGTHS

DRIVERS SLIP		TIME	DATE
WTT NO	6P65C		
FROM	BOULBYMIN	TO	TEESDOCK
AUTHORISED		ACTUAL	
MAX LOAD	1080 TNNs	1049 TNNs	ACTUAL LOAD
OR :-			
NUMBER OF WAGONS	0	10	NUMBER OF WAGONS
BRAKE FORCE TYPE	E1		
FOR ACTUAL LOAD-	340 TNNs	570 TNNs	BRAKE FORCE AVAILABLE (AIR)
RA	8	9	HIGHEST R/A IN TRAIN
LENGTH LIMIT	0060 SLU	600 @	FEET ACT LENGTH 32 SLU *
LOCO CLASS	20/20	60	MPH MAX TRAIN SPEED
		0	PIPED VEHS IN POTENTIAL
			BRAKED PORTION OF TRAIN
TRAIN SINGLE PIPED FROM		-----	
		@ = EXCL . POWER LOCO (S)	
		* = SLU INCLUDE ADDTL LOCO LENGTHS	

TRAIN SINGLE PIPED FROM -----

@ = EXCL. POWER LOCO (S)

* = SLU INCLUDE ADDTL LOCO LENGTHS

END SIGNED DEPOT

Loco namings at Boulby

On Thursday 4th June 1987, two Thornaby Class 20s, Nos. 20137 and 20122, were named at Boulby. No. 20137 received the name 'Murray B. Hoffmeyer' (a South African who played international rugby union for England as well as first class cricket) and No. 20122 became 'Cleveland Potash'.

At this time Cleveland Potash was owned by Anglo American and, given the company's relationship to South Africa, the original plan for 20137 to be named by a representative

of the firm was shelved due to the delicate political situation at the time. Instead a local BR manager named the 20137 and the mine's general manager Mr. Frank Chilton named 20122.

One interesting point is that Thornaby depot only had two of its depot kingfisher symbol transfers available so these were applied on one side of the locomotives just before the naming.

After the ceremony, local BR & Cleveland Potash 'dignitaries' went on a jolly to the Tees

Dock terminal aboard the 'Stourton Saloon' Class 100 DMU Nos. DB975637 (ex E56300) and DB975664 (ex E51122). The special then went on to Middlesbrough, followed by a 'booze cruise' down to Whitby. Unfortunately, despite my best efforts, I could not wheedle my way onto the train!

Queen's Award for Export Achievement

To commemorate the winning of the Queen's Award for Export Achievement by Cleveland Potash in 1988 a special train was run from Boulby to Redcar and back on Friday 22nd July 1988. On the day itself the East Cleveland weather gods made sure that, even though it was nominally summer, the mist that descended made photography almost impossible as we rounded what should have been the scenic highlight of the day, the trip around Huntcliff near Saltburn. However, at Redcar the weather had improved sufficiently for me to be able to take a photo of 20122 and 20137 running round the train. The empty stock had been worked down to Tees Yard from Heaton before carrying on to Boulby. The formation of the train is shown on the panel.

Train formation

20122 'Cleveland Potash'

20137 'Murray B. Hoffmeyer'

E9410 Mk2 Brake Open Second
Sc5125 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
Sc5097 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
Sc5114 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
E5076 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
E5131 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
E5088 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
Sc5128 Mk2 Tourist Open Second
E9385 Mk2 Brake Open Second

Train schedule

Boulby dep.	15:35
Redcar arr.	16:24
Redcar dep.	16:51
Boulby arr.	17:30

One of the difficulties for the Boulby rail loading staff had was to keep up with the round the clock train paths due mainly to problems such as plant breakdowns at the mine and insufficient empty wagons being returned to site by British Rail.

To be continued in a future issue of TRACTION.

Acknowledgements

I must acknowledge the huge amount of help I received over the years, especially from the B.R carriage & wagon staff based at Boulby: Clive Walker, Derek Jones and Jason Lambley. I'd also like to thank the CPL Rail Load Out staff including Fred Campbell, Tony Coonan, Gary Dowey and the late Ken Rispin. Finally a huge thanks to Terry Robinson, a friend, fellow railway enthusiast and, for a while, my boss! Terry has kindly allowed me to use some photos of his to fill in some of the gaps caused by my occasional bad health and camera problems.



On Thursday 4th June 1987, prior to being named, Thornaby duo Nos. 20137 'Murray B Hoffmeyer' and 20122 'Cleveland Potash' await the arrival of the naming party in the 'Stourton Saloon' DMU. The eagle eyed amongst you will notice that the Thornaby kingfisher symbol is not yet present on the otherwise immaculate locomotives.

Nos. 20055 and 20178 of Thornaby depot bring 10 PBAs, a trailing load of roughly 930 tons through Skelton on Friday 28th September 1989.



The 'Stourton Saloon' Class 100 DMU Nos. DB975637 (ex E56300) and DB975664 (ex E51122) approach Shepherds House crossing near Brotton with the naming party's special from Boulby to Tees Dock. Nos. 20122 and 20137 followed about half an hour later with 7 FEWs loaded with containerised salt.



On Friday 22nd July 1988, Nos. 20122 and 20137 are seen at Redcar running round the special train that ran to commemorate Boulby mine winning the Queen's Award for Export Achievement in that year.





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Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th March 2019



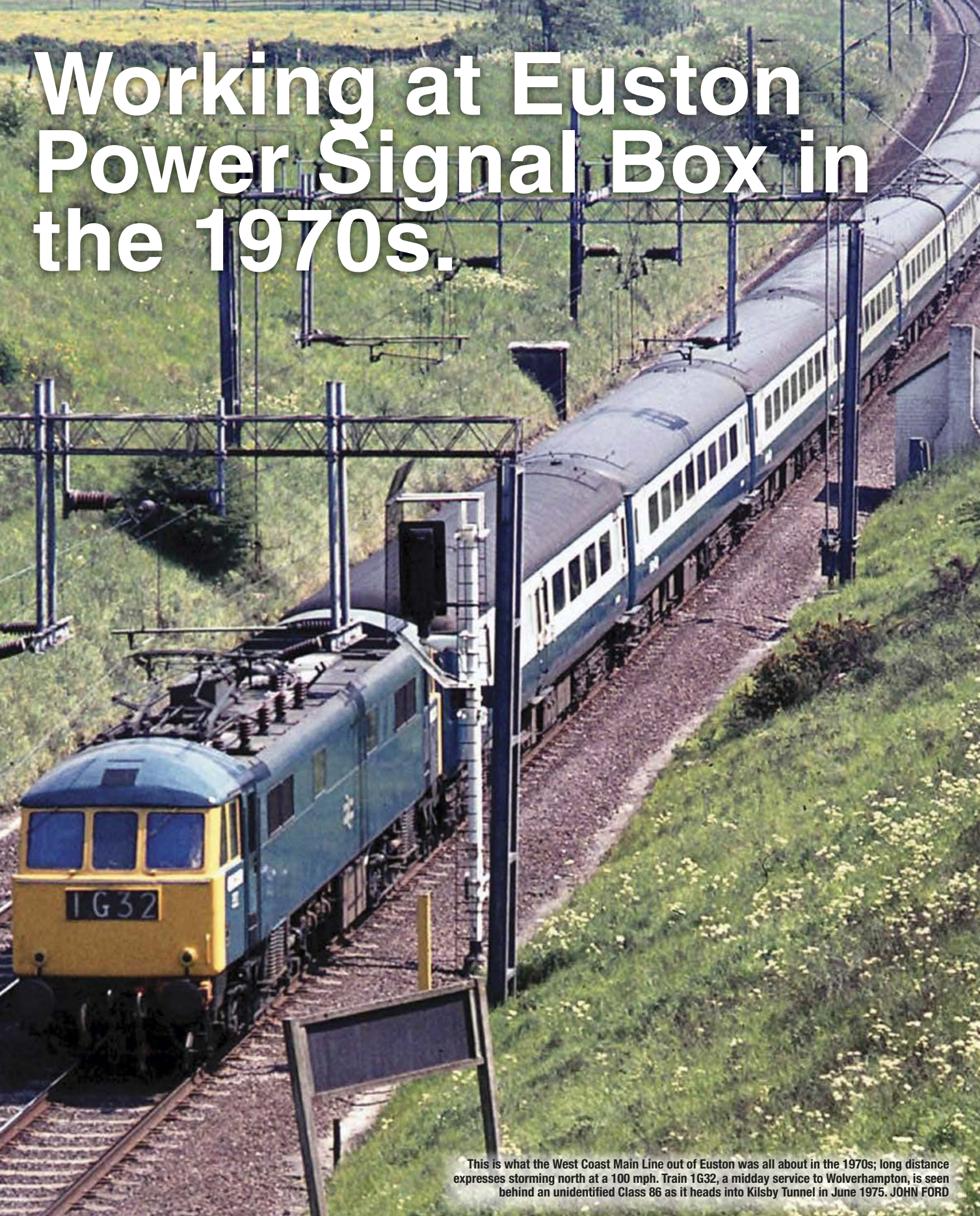
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Working at Euston Power Signal Box in the 1970s.



This is what the West Coast Main Line out of Euston was all about in the 1970s; long distance expresses storming north at a 100 mph. Train 1G32, a midday service to Wolverhampton, is seen behind an unidentified Class 86 as it heads into Kilsby Tunnel in June 1975. JOHN FORD

Andy Armitage transferred from St. Pancras Signal Box, where he had been employed as train recorder and station announcer, to Euston Power Signal Box in August 1974. In this first article of a series he begins a detailed account of operations at Euston in the 1970s.

I had started at St. Pancras in October 1972 as a Clerical Officer 1, the lowest grade, but I had found it to be a fascinating job with a great view from the box at the top end of platforms 1 and 2. In 1975 I moved along the Euston Road to take up a similar position in Euston Power Signal Box. At that time the grade was 'Assistant Controller', roughly midway between a Clerical Officer 1 and 2. The job was divided up between two assistants on the early and late shift, with just one assistant on nights. One position would be the train recorder, who sat alongside the box supervisor (at that time a grade D), and about six feet in front of the signalling panel at the station end.

Before full automatic train reporting came about, all the arrivals and departures were logged by hand on daily train sheets. All delays had to be itemised, and normally required a few phone calls to various places to find out the reason if they were not signalling related. These were then forwarded to the Area Manager Euston each day. The train recorder had the teleprinter next to him, and train reports of inward services would be put on from Rugby, Bletchley and Watford, although other reports would sometimes be included from Crewe, Birmingham and other places at 'times of crisis'.

Any problems likely to arise from late running were passed to the box supervisor to keep him 'in the picture' with potential delays. There were regular updates with the Divisional Control Office, and information on problems further afield would be passed on to us. With this information the train recorder operated the six 'Arrivals' Solari indicator on the station's concourse. These were set up using a computer punch card for each train, fed into a card reader.

The information was displayed on the cards with the first four rows to show the arrival time, the next two the originating point of the train, then a further eight sets of two figures for the calling points. We had a book that showed what each flap had on it, and we could make up extra trains with a blank card and a hole punch. A set of 'thumb wheels' on the console allowed you to put in the expected time of arrival, or 'On Time', plus the expected arrival platform. From looking at all the running reports from the teleprinter it used to be a point of honour to try and be 'spot on' with your guesswork.

There was a large wall mounted repeater in the box showing the train indicator summary information. When I first arrived there the repeater board was out in the open, and its constant 'chatter' as the flaps changed was deemed 'a bit irritating' to the other staff. Not long after, the repeater board was 'boxed in' with it being covered by two large Perspex sliding doors which deadened the noise somewhat. However, consideration hadn't been given to reflection of the box lighting, which made reading the board problematic. So along came the electricians who installed lighting inside the cabinet, solving the viewing problem.

The other day assistant's job was termed



Class 83 No. 83013 waits at Euston with a commuter service to Northampton on 17th September 1976. LEWIS BEVAN

'Broadcast'. This person sat at the back of the box on a raised podium and handled all the station train announcing (keeping a log of any special announcements in an old BR205/1 A4 size book), as well as operating the station Solari train departure boards. These operated in the same way as the arrival boards, although there was an extra set of 'thumb wheels' for the remarks column. This usually had things like 'Restaurant Car', 'Buffet Car', and 'Inter City Sleeper'. However, there were quite a few others like 'Please listen for announcements', or the dreaded 'Please travel from Paddington, or St. Pancras, or King's Cross'. It wasn't something you wanted to see on your way into work across the concourse, as it meant the job was in 'fallen apart' mode. There were ten departure boards controlled, although an 11th departure board was operated locally from the supervisor's office on platforms 8-11, known locally as 'The Wood' for the Watford DC service.

There were also four repeater boards on the local 8-11 concourse, three controlled by us, and one for the DC service operated by the platform supervisor. Sharing the podium at the back was the signal box cat, 'Minnie', who had her own bed which was normally a wire paper tray with a blanket in it. Being on the second floor, it was necessary to escort the cat downstairs and out into the service road at the back when she required her own PNB (Physical Needs Break). Being mostly an indoor cat she didn't stay out longer than necessary to visit the bit of waste ground next to the car parking area. Of course, the most important duty of an assistant was making the tea, usually shared between the two sets of day shifts depending on who had a spare few minutes. At this time there were two signalmen on each shift, so you had to try and remember how each person liked their 'brew'.

The night assistant was a 'one man band' doing everything that was done by the two shift system during the day. The night shift

would make up the next day train recording sheets, putting in the train reporting numbers and scheduled departure or arrival times, including any extra traffic, having been gleaned from the Special Traffic Notices. Any extra passenger trains needed to have cards made out for the Solari indicators, and additions made for the station announcer's script with the calling points; if it was a particularly busy weekend you could spend quite a bit of time punching out new cards. At this time the night shift was fairly busy with sleeper, newspaper, and parcels trains. It was only very quiet after about 01:00 on Sunday morning until things got going again after 08:00. Night shift also sometimes allowed the assistant to 'have a go' on the panel too. All in all it was quite an interesting job, otherwise I would probably not have stuck with it for nearly five years. The take home pay averaged out at about £42.00 a week, which included all the shift allowances. The box closed sometime around 2001, with the area coming under the control of the new signalling centre at Wembley. After having discovered some of my records, there follows a description of typical events at Euston in this long past period. My records start on Wednesday 17th September 1975. On that day I was late turn train recorder.

Wednesday 17.09.75

The day started with a 20 minute commute on the Northern Line to Euston. On coming up on the concourse, it would be a 180 degree turn and down the stairs to the taxi rank. From here you would gain access to the basement area and onto the old parcels sidings area on the west side of the station. It was then a brisk walk along No. 20 road up to the signal box in the north west corner of the station area; entry was via a door on No. 22 'short dock'.

The signal box operating floor was only a very small portion of the second floor, the



A Watford line DC electric Class 501 runs into Euston whilst 86247 is ready to leave with a northbound express. The date is 17th September 1985. Directly above the insulator on the roof of the Class 86s is the corner window of the signal box panel room. If sitting at the broadcast podium it was possible to look across the station throat. Above the Panel Room on the top floor were the offices of the signal & telegraph and telecomms departments. GARY HATCHER: IVAN STEWART COLLECTION

rest of the building was taken up with various departments of the signal & telegraph, and telecomms, plus a reasonably large relay room just along from the panel room. This non official way in was the preferred method of entry, if you came in from the public road side the door was locked, and you would have to try and attract the security warden's attention so you could be let in. It could be a bit of a wait if he had gone 'walkabout'.

Anyway, on this first day of my record it was something of a peaceful shift, not much happening. All I noted was that 1A64, the 16:13 from Manchester was 40 minutes late after the train required the attendance of the carriage & wagon department before leaving Manchester. 1A73, the 15:52 from Carlisle was 15 minutes late after a minor problem with the loco at Bletchley, requiring the local fitter coming over to 'give it a bit of TLC'.

My final note of the day was a ride home on one of the fast diminishing number of 1938 Tube stock left in service on the Northern Line.

Thursday 18.09.75

I was late turn train recorder again. After another run into work on a Northern Line 1938 tube set I walked into the box just after 14:00 (the official shift was 15:00-23:00, but we usually changed over early) and all was running well.

I mentioned in the first post that we received our information via a teleprinter, but things were still a bit old school, as the information was put on the teleprinter network via Rugby telegraph office. Boxes

would pass the train running information to them direct. At Euston we would phone in the departures to Rugby, along with any delays expected. Usually this was done about three times each hour. Off peak you could normally reduce this to twice an hour as the train service pattern at the time had a basic clock face system starting with 40 past the hour Wolverhampton or Shrewsbury, 45 past the hour Glasgow, 50 past the hour Liverpool, 55 past the hour Manchester, 00 on the hour to Holyhead, Carlisle or Blackpool, 05 past the hour to Birmingham via Northampton semi-fast stopper, 10 past the hour Birmingham. There was then a gap until the 35 minute past the hour local to Bletchley, although these were reported only if significantly delayed. So there was a gap of about 30 minutes between the next batch of departures. On this afternoon, the class 1 trains were coming up from Rugby in 50 minutes, making estimated arrival times on the Solari indicator quite easy and accurate. One thing to look out for was if the estimated arrival time conflicted with an outgoing train, in which case you would add a few minutes onto the 50 minute run from Rugby.

On this particular day the evening peak service went like clockwork, but little did I realise the spring in the clockwork was about to break! Normally, after the 18:50 Bletchley departed I would gather up the tea cups on a tray and take them into the kitchen area next door to give them a wash and make the next brew. After only a few minutes there came the awful shout from the box supervisor "Wires down at Bletchley!" so I hurriedly completed

the tea run and went back to the train recorder's desk.

Information was leaking through that all lines were currently blocked. Something on the Down Slow Line in the vicinity of Bletchley station had managed to 'unravel the knitting'. Control was soon on the phone to tell us not to let anything (other than the Watford DCs) else leave towards Bletchley. 1P49, the 19:00 to Morecambe was the first to be held back.

The last train to come through unscathed was 1A66, the 15:22 from Blackpool, which rolled into us on time at 19:04. The following services were not so lucky, all coming to a stop north of Bletchley, some caused by the circuit breakers popping on the overhead wires when the initial 'de-wiring' happened.

My nice neat looking arrivals on the Solari indicator were now looking hopelessly optimistic! Like most mishaps it takes a little while for the response to 'kick in'. I was glad I wasn't on 'Broadcast' today. My colleague, Arthur Gage, wasn't too happy, as now it meant constant announcements over the station PA on what was, or more likely wasn't, happening. The look on his face said it all.

An assessment on site at Bletchley came to the conclusion that the slow lines were well and truly out of action, but the Up Fast could be re-opened at extreme caution due to the contact wire 'drooping a bit', but the Down Fast wasn't likely to be open until 23:00. Before all this could happen the necessary isolations of the damaged wiring had to be made before the power could be switched on again.

In the meantime, arrangements were made

This is 20 year old me at the train recorder's desk and shows the layout of the position. To my left is the Solari console where you can just make out the thumb wheels for the departure and arrivals. The boards were selected by pushing in the buttons which would light up yellow. The consoles were identical for the arrivals and departures.

The top row of buttons were for the departure boards 1 to 10 and the row underneath were for the arrival boards 1 to 6. There were 10 buttons but the four on the right were not in use. The bottom row of three buttons were for the repeater boards on the small local concourse for platforms 8 to 11. Only one console could be used at the same time. You were supposed to only push the on button when you were using it, but some would leave the switch on meaning the other console couldn't be used. It was usually resolved by shouting "Switch!" at your opposite number to get them to turn their switch off.

The card reader for the punch cards is behind my left shoulder, with the tray of cards below my left elbow. In the background can be made out the Solari summary board on the wall, it had been 'boxed-in' at this stage to deaden the noise, and you can see the divider of the two large sliding perspex doors.

To my right you can see the teleprinter, which was quite an up to date version. I seem to recall it was nicknamed 'The Angry Duck' for the noise it made when printing. You can just make out the batches of train reports on the paper roll. They would mainly be printed, for example, as, "Rugby 1M20 1415".

In front of me is the telephone concentrator. The two rows of lights, top and bottom, had a white light when someone was calling. You would then select the switch in the middle, either up for the top row, or down for the bottom row, the white light would go out and the green light would come on when connected. This was mainly to show that the circuit was in use as there were five identical telephone consoles, one at the train recorder's desk, one for the box supervisor to the right, another 'spare' console to the right of him, plus the



signalmen had one at the station end and one at the 'country end'. Their telephone consoles were arranged back to back with the train recorders and the spare desk.

The signal post telephones were on the panel itself, when they buzzed the number of the signal the call was being made from would light up in an indicator next to the phone. On the desk phones most of the individual switches would be direct lines to a number of locations, like individual platforms, yard supervisor, engine arranger, various places including Up-Side Carriage Shed, Downside Carriage Shed, Camden EMU (although called EMU it was also used for empty parcels vans storage, and the carriage washing plant), Camden Yard, Camden Ground Frame (access from the yard onto the Up Fast Line at the top of Camden Bank). There were a number of 'location phones' dotted about the place so outside staff could contact the box. There were no radios or mobile phones in those days!

One oddity was a circuit of its own for the telephone at banner repeater signal 94R. This was at the entrance to the Up Empty Carriage Line (nicknamed 'The Rat Hole',

which took a single line from the Up Slow Line at Primrose Hill under everything else, including the Regents Canal to emerge on the Down side between Camden EMU and the Downside Shed. There was an instruction at one time that allowed drivers to stop at 94R if the signal was at danger, if they judged the weight of their train might cause them to stall on the climb out of the other end. By this time it was unusual for this to happen, but in damp weather it could happen with the loco slipping to a stand coming up the final bit towards 94 signal. I saw it happen a couple of times (a Class 25 and a long string of vans springs to mind on a cold winter's night!), but it didn't cause much delay, there was usually another loco and staff on hand to quickly go and assist the train in trouble. Anyway, by now the phone at 94R was seldom used, except for the patrol man doing his walk. He would ring from this phone to arrange a 'local block' while he walked through the tunnel, reporting when he was clear at the other end, this would only take up to about 20 minutes to do and could normally be accommodated without problems during the day.

for the local EMU service to terminate at Tring and start back from there. The other major problem was that they wouldn't have any replacement buses to cover the gap until 21:30. Unlike the departure Solari indicators which had the 'Please listen for announcements' function the arrivals didn't have this, or even an airport style 'Delayed' flap. The only thing to do was leave all the expected arrival times blank.

The other problem now became the overnight services going out. The first ones being 1S05, the 20:50 Inverness, and 1S06, the 20:55 Stranraer. Although it was possible to platform these in platforms 14 and 15,

there were a number of services occupying platforms that hadn't been allowed to leave, making space problematic for the eventual late running arrivals. Empty stock from Willesden that was already on its way had to be sat on the 'Backing Out Roads', while the rest were sidelined at Willesden until such time as they could be accepted.

Eventually, the cork was pulled from the bottle, and one by one the delayed services crawled through Bletchley, and from then on I could start to put up the estimated arrival times. First to come was

1A67, the 17:29 from Wolverhampton -133 minutes late

1M35, the 14:10 from Glasgow - 147 minutes late.

1A68 'Manchester Pullman', the 17:00 off Manchester - 150 minutes late.

1A69, the 17:04 from Liverpool - 146 minutes late.

1A70, the 17:12 from Manchester - 144 minutes late.

The rest were still coming up, although the decision had been made for 1M42, the 10:30 from Inverness via Birmingham, to be diverted from Birmingham into Paddington via Banbury and Reading. 1M46, the 16:10 from Glasgow had reached Crewe when the problems started, and the train was diverted

via Stoke and Uttoxeter to Derby, and then into St. Pancras.

Fortunately my relief showed up at this time, but it took a while to brief him on what was going on. Things were still pretty chaotic as all the train crews were out of position, and trying to get the stock moved to free up platforms was a bit of a nightmare. It was after 22:30 before I finally left. It was the custom for the person on 'Broadcast' to leave at the same time (official time off was 23:30), but when the job was 'up the creek' you would have to hang on until booked time as the night assistant would usually have his hands full doing just one job rather than finishing off the Broadcast as well. So ended the day, one that started so well and went to pieces in the evening.

Friday 19.09.75

After the disaster of the previous day things were not so bad, but that's how it used to be, up one moment, and down the next! I was late turn train recorder again today. Coming up from the underground on the concourse at Euston I would have a quick scan of the Solari Indicators, just to see if everything was looking okay and on this occasion things were looking fine.

1M20 'The Royal Scot', the 10:10 off Glasgow was 60 minutes late after an ABI (air brake irregularity) at Garstang. The term ABI was all encompassing and could cover many aspects of a problem with the loco or train brakes.

1M19, the 14:10 off Glasgow was 20 minutes late waiting a driver at Crewe. Everything else seems to have gone off okay.

Being a Friday there were a number of additional trains going out in the late afternoon and evening,
1H14 15:35 Manchester,
1H18 17:13 Manchester,
1F49 18:00 Liverpool
1G42 18:18 Birmingham,
1D71 18:55 Llandudno,
1S07 21:00 Inverness,
1D81 21:15 Holyhead,
1S13 21:50 Glasgow, and finally,
1D86 23:35 Holyhead (this one usually only ran on certain dates around holiday times).

Saturday 20.09.75

This was another late shift as train recorder. The afternoon started off reasonably quietly with everything running to time. The first problem of the day involved one of the Birmingham and Wolverhampton workings which was slightly different on a Saturday from the rest of the week. To begin with a brief summary of the services that operated the Birmingham and Wolverhampton services is necessary.

The rolling stock was more or less confined to these services, and they were some of the first to be equipped with the later Mark 2 air conditioned coaches of the D & E variants. Most of the sets were made up of 12 coaches, the first class section being at the London end, in common with most of the services into



Electric multiple units were used on many outer suburban and long distance semi-fast services such as this Birmingham to Euston via Northampton working. Class 310, unit No. 054 is seen at Watford Junction on 15th April 1977. JOHN DEDMAN

Euston. A typical formation would be a Mark 1 BG (Full Brake), then four Mark 2D FO (First Open), one Mark 1 RKB (Restaurant/ Buffet Car), then five Mark 2D TSO (Second Open), and at the end a Mark 2E BSO (Brake Second Open). Some sets had an extra FO and one fewer TSO.

The general service pattern after initial workings from the sidings was:- 24 minutes past the hour arrival from Wolverhampton would form the next 10 past the hour to Birmingham New Street, normally using Platform 6. The 54 minutes past the hour arrival from Birmingham would form the next 40 past the hour service to Wolverhampton normally using Platform 5.

During the week, 1A46 was the 13:29 from Wolverhampton however, on Saturdays from May to September, the train started from Aberystwyth at 10:07. The stock was also different, being a 10 coach Mark 1 set. A corresponding outward working to Aberystwyth with Mark 1 stock departed at 09:40 as 1J24. There was a stock changeover when 1A46 arrived, with the Mark 1 set going to Willesden and a Mark 2D/E set being brought in for the 16:10 to Birmingham.

On this day, 1A46 (due in at 15:24) had suffered a loco failure at Talerddig (between Machynlleth and Caersws). Those who are familiar with this line will know that Talerddig is the summit of quite a stiff climb up from Machynlleth and, if something was going to happen to the loco, it was probably going to be on this stretch. The most common motive power on these trains between Aberystwyth and Wolverhampton at this time was usually a pair of Class 24s or 25s, although it wasn't unheard of for a Class 40 to turn up from time to time.

There were no details of what occurred with the loco(s) on this trip that caused the delay. On this occasion the train was 49

minutes late into Euston. Luckily, as this stock wasn't working back, the 16:10 Birmingham wasn't delayed as a consequence.

As the afternoon progressed there were a few more delays:

1A47, the 13:04 from Liverpool (due in at 15:47) was 18 minutes late, being stopped at Colwich after a report of a door open on the train.

1A57, the 15:04 from Liverpool (due in at 17:39) was 40 minutes late, the original loco having been declared a failure at Stafford. At this time a replacement loco was likely to be at hand close by, so the delay was a lot less than might be expected.

1A60, the 13:20 off Holyhead (due in at 18:11) was 25 minutes late. A pair of points at Llandudno Junction had been damaged with a 'run through'. This was a train movement taking place past a signal at danger forcing the point blades over. This would normally damage the motor or rodding and the associated locking. The train had had to be shunted at Llandudno Junction to by-pass the damaged points.

1M19, the 13:10 from Glasgow (due in at 18:16) was 25 minutes late, having been late into Carlisle off the Scottish Region. This was one of many occasions where no one could furnish a reason for the delay; it happened quite a bit with trains originating 'over the border'!

2A44, the 18:21 from Birmingham New Street (due in at 20:53) was one of the long distance stopping services that ran via Northampton. This evening it was 28 minutes late arriving, which was unusual as these trains were normally very good with their punctuality. On this occasion it had been delayed by a points failure in the Birmingham area. These trains only had a relatively tight turn round, and in this case it caused the 21:05 to Rugby via Northampton to leave 23

minutes late.

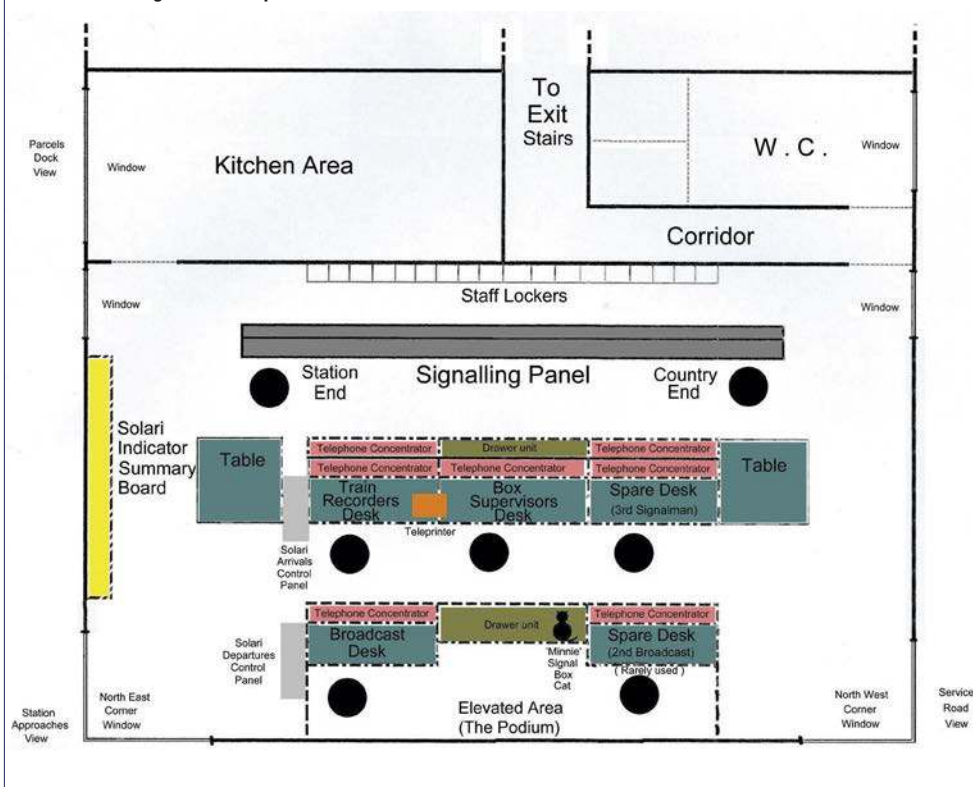
1A81, the 19:10 from Manchester (due in at 21:50) was 21 minutes late, delayed by emergency track repair work near Stoke-on-Trent.

That just about finished off the day, but at this time the Northern Line had the sometimes well deserved title of 'The Misery Line'. Being a Saturday evening there must have been multiple cancellations, as I had to wait 25 minutes before a well filled train turned up for the journey home. There would be no staff about on the platforms, and the only information on how the trains were running would be the old style illuminated train indicator which would light up about five minutes before the train arrived. This was the end of my week of 'Lates', shift change and a week of 'Nights' would start on the Sunday evening.

Andy Armitage will continue his account in TRACTION 251.

(BELOW) 25314 and 25253 are seen at Welshpool on the morning Euston to Aberystwyth train which left Euston at 09:40. The return working, obviously using a different rake of coaches, left Aberystwyth at 10:07 and was often seriously delayed as recalled by the author. Fortunately, the rake of Mark 1 coaches had no further duties after arrival back at Euston. The photo is believed to have been taken in 1980. MICHAEL ELLIS

Euston Power Signal Box floorplan



North Wales Coast Loco Hauled



30th July 1994 was a beautiful sunny day in North Wales, and an ideal day to observe the trains at Bangor station. This is Class 31 No. 31421 'Wigan Pier' with the 12:05 to Manchester Victoria, a regular Class 31 duty at this time. The loco and stock are in Regional Railways livery. 31421 was a veteran of some 35 years at the date of this photo, having been built (as D5558) in 1959. It was to last in traffic for another 30 months before being withdrawn from service in March 1997.





The North Wales main line, from Chester to Holyhead, was a haven for loco-hauled trains in the 1990s. Many enthusiasts, including Lewis Bevan, visited the area to photograph and ride behind diesel locos including Class 31s, 37s and 47s.

For many enthusiasts it was really the Class 37s, working trains from Holyhead and Bangor to Crewe and Manchester, that drew them to the line. In the run-up to privatisation, services along the coast were operated by Intercity (trains to and from Euston) and Regional Railways (previously Provincial). Several of the locos pictured in this feature are carrying Regional Railways livery, as is some of the coaching stock.

It is notable that two of the Class 37s featured here are still in existence in 2019, being in operation with Direct Rail Services (DRS) during 2018 on the loco-hauled trains in East Anglia and in the North West, and on the test trains operating from Derby RTC.

(RIGHT) 37414 is seen at Penmaenmawr on 12th August 1995 hauling the 10:24 Crewe to Bangor. Also visible in this photo are Penmaenmawr ballast terminal and the then newly completed A55 dual carriageway road that greatly eased traffic congestion along the North Wales coast.



(ABOVE) On 1st August 1997 No. 47627 is arriving at Bangor with the 15:00 Holyhead to Euston. 47627 will work this train as far as Crewe. Note the driving van trailer behind the locomotive: at Crewe the Class 47 would be detached whilst an electric locomotive would be coupled to the rear of the train ready for the journey on to Euston in push-pull mode.

(LEFT) Another photo taken at Bangor on 30th July 1994 but this time we see 37414 arriving on a Manchester Victoria to Holyhead train. Again, the loco and stock are in Regional Railways livery. 37414 carries the name 'Cathays C&W Works 1848-1983'.

Double-headed trains were fairly rare on the North Wales coast line, but this is 37408 'Loch Rannoch' and 37422 'Robert F Fairlie' at Bangor on the 15:55 Holyhead-Crewe on 22nd July 1994. 37408 was withdrawn from service in September 2005 and was scrapped in 2008, but 37422 is still with us in 2019. Now operated by Direct Rail Services it is part of the pool of Class 37s that operate passenger trains in East Anglia and the North West, as well as test trains operating from Derby RTC. 37422's name was removed in 2002 prior to it being renamed 'Cardiff Canton', a name it carried until March 2011.



37417 'Highland Region' slows for the Abergele and Pensarn stop with the 10:23 Bangor to Crewe on 6th August 1995. The name carried gives away the loco's previous allocation as it was based in Scotland for a number of years. It was subsequently named 'Rail Magazine' and then 'Richard Trevithick', and was withdrawn from service during 2010.





(ABOVE) 37426 waits at Holyhead with the 13:54 to Crewe on 1st August 1997; the loco had arrived at the terminus with the 11:17 from Crewe. This photo, like all photos in this feature, was taken while on family holidays in the area. Luckily my family enjoyed rail travel, and several days were set aside on each holiday for rail excursions. On this day we had travelled by DMU to Llandudno Junction, then behind 37415 to Bangor. Another DMU took us to Holyhead, where I was able to photograph 37426 arriving, and then we travelled behind 37426 back to Bangor.

Bangor station on 1st August 1997 sees two Class 37s at the same time. On the right is 37429 'Eisteddfod Genedlaethol' in charge of the 15:22 Bangor to Crewe. On the left is 37414, which had arrived at Bangor on the 13:17 from Crewe and has run around its stock and will return east on a later train.



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For internal rail movements, Dovington Camp has a small fleet of diesel shunters, including a Ruston 0-6-0DE. It is seen shunting 'Warflat' wagons loaded with various types of armoured vehicles.



Dovington Camp

Military depots have for many years been a source of traffic for Britain's railways, and can be an interesting basis for a model railway, as this layout by Paul Taylor shows.

The idea for Paul Taylor's Dovington Camp layout started with a question when he was exhibiting his previous layout 'Whitchurch Canoncorum', a BR Western Region layout. He was asked "What are those two 'Lowmac' wagons, loaded with military vehicles, doing there?"

"They're waiting to be tripped to the MoD depot just down the line," he replied.

And with that, the seed was sown and 'Dovington Camp' was born. The name is an amalgam of Bovington Camp, the Dorset home of the Tank Museum, and Donnington, the Shropshire MoD depot. The concept was to have a name and a layout design that was not specific as to its location. This would allow a range of stock to be run and, as military establishments tend not to change much, even different periods of operation.

Layout Design

The layout's first exhibition was as a small 6ft by 2ft shunting layout with trains being formed and then broken back down into the depot. As MoD depots often had very tight curves, it was possible to squeeze a lot of track into a small space using Peco Code

75 short radius and three-way electrofrog points and crossings. The result was a layout with overlapping sidings and a less than obvious run-round facility. The headshunt was designed to allow shunting of either four 10ft vans or two of the longer VGAs.

Eventually, a fiddle yard was added, including a shelf for cassettes, so allowing a much wider variety of trains to be run. The fiddle yard was hidden behind the barrack block and a parade ground. Having a non-railway area puts the layout into its context and gives visitors something else to look at, especially if they aren't interested in the trains themselves. Another extension was constructed, the 'river board', adding more interest and allowing the layout to be joined to Paul's other layouts.

Later Paul decided to set the time period of operations in the years between the creation of Network SouthEast in 1986 and the start of privatisation in 1994. By now the layout had grown to 17ft by 2ft 6in and operates with between ten and twelve trains. The time period is quite tight; 1990, in the build up to 'Operation Desert Storm' and before the end of Speedlink services in 1991.

Construction

The layout is built on a 6mm ply framework with 9mm ply ends and, although quite lightweight, has proved successful. The Peco track is ballasted on the main line using Greenscene fine ballast and in the MoD sidings with a mixture of powders to replicate the lighter ash ballast.

To represent the inlaid trackwork scrap, N gauge rail was soldered to copper-clad sleepers, inserted at about 6in intervals between the Peco webbing; a track gauge was used to correctly position the inside running rail and point check rails. The road surfaces were created using cork tiles butted up against the sleeper ends. The gaps between tile and the rails and between the rails on the inlaid track were filled with filler. A piece of plastic card, shaped to about 1mm below rail height, was used to create a smooth surface by rubbing it along the rails.

Gaugemaster hand-held DC controllers are used to control movements, whilst points are operated using single-pole-double-throw toggle switches and SEEP point motors with built in switching.

Looking along the layout with a rake of 'Warflats' loaded with armoured vehicles. Space is at a premium on the short sidings, so this often leads to some serious shunting operations as incoming trains are broken down into shorter rakes or assembled for despatch.



Military Buildings

Obviously gaining access to MoD premises for research isn't possible so Paul has had to rely on secondary sources. These included the three Telerail videos of the Bicester, Longtown and Chilmark/Marchwood military railways and various books including 'The Bicester Military Railway' and 'The Army's Central Railway Workshops' (Lawton & Sackett).

The buildings themselves have been largely scratchbuilt using plain and embossed plastic card, and are all based on actual buildings. The fuel tanks are from Ludgershall in Hampshire, the old locomotive shed is from Bicester, the flat-roofed stores were copies of the old Second World War Ministry of Supply (MoS) buildings at Norton Fitzwarren in Somerset whilst the 'open' shed is based on one at Ashchurch. The vehicle repair facility is a Faller military kit. The barrack block was modified from a Heljan US Court House kit into low-relief building representation of the Territorial Army centre in Bristol.

A shed at the front of the layout is built so that the viewer can see inside it and gives context to the purpose of the building. Alongside the shed is an office building with meeting room, office and toilets, all visible to viewers.

An unusual feature of the layout is the archaeological dig where a Roman villa, complete with baths and mosaic paving, is being filmed by a TV film crew!



Military Vehicles

One of the most eye-catching features of the layout is the collection of British Army vehicles. The standard Bedford MK lorries and Land Rovers are from the JB Models (now Airfix) range, as are the 105mm Field Guns seen as loads in OCA open wagons. The 'Warflats' carry a variety of Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) (CVR(T)) vehicles including Scorpion/Scimitar reconnaissance vehicles (by Airfix), Spartan Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) and Sultan command vehicles. The Sultan command vehicles, together with one Warrior APC, an FV432 APC and Ferret armoured cars are all from Cromwell Models' 'Combat Ready' range of simple resin kits. There are also two Revell Warriors, a Forces of Valor Challenger battle tank and various white metal items from BW Models, whilst the engineers' earth-movers are repainted Wiking models.

Scenic Cameos

One highly unusual feature of the layout is the representation of a visit by Her Majesty and Prince Philip (both Preiser figures). They have arrived in the Queen's Flight helicopter (a converted Revell Westland Wessex model), and are seen presenting new regimental

colours. The soldiers on parade are Airfix bandmen and colour party figures.

Over on the river board is another cameo, this time of an archaeological dig, where a Roman villa, complete with baths and mosaic paving, is being filmed by a TV film crew!

Freight Services

There are two main types of freight traffic on the layout; MoD traffic is exchanged at the depot gates whilst other traffic running to other locations on the branch use the run-round loop outside the depot.

MoD traffic is handled by Speedlink trains, usually hauled by Railfreight Distribution sector Class 37s and 47s. Wagons come from the range of BR air-braked vans (VAA-VGA), OCA opens, 'Warflats' and 'Warwells', as well as some containerised traffic, which will have barrier wagons as appropriate.

Three MoD shunting locomotives have been built to work the depot and are based on actual locomotives as seen in photos in the books referred to earlier. These are a Ruston 0-6-0 - a modified Silver Fox Class 07 kit on a Bachmann chassis; a repainted Hornby Sentinel 4w diesel and a small 0-4-ODM built from a Knightwing kit on a Tenshodo SPUD motor bogie. These models are based on photographs of MoD shunters in books.



The river board extension provides a scenic break between the camp and the end of the layout and also acts as a link section to Paul's other layouts.



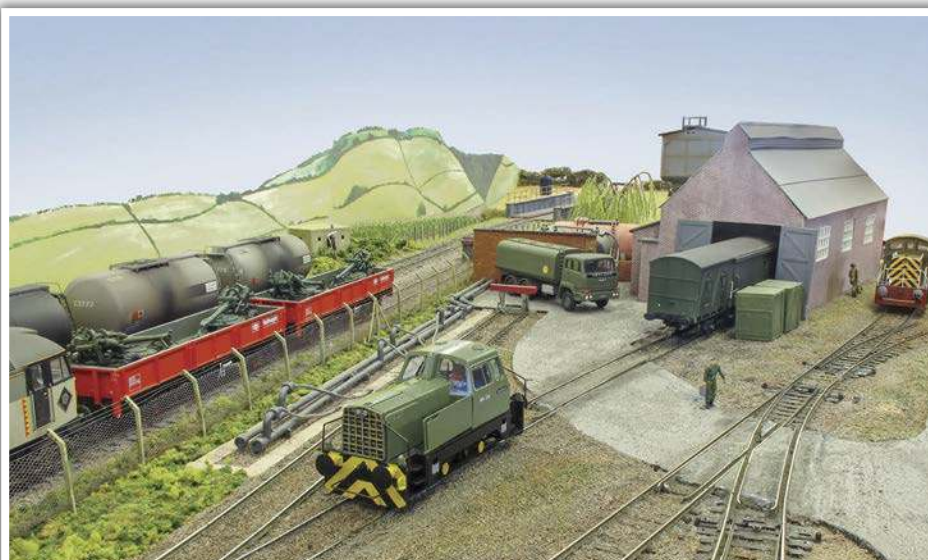
A Westland Wessex helicopter from the Royal Flight waits for its VIPs to return from their official duties at the camp. The main barrack building can be seen in the background.

The traffic on the layout varies depending on which area of the country is being represented on the layout. The photographs with this article show one based in the West Country operation, with wagons that would have been seen in Devon about 1990.

(BELOW) One of Thornaby depot's Class 47/3s passes with a Speedlink wagonload freight train. Much MoD traffic was distributed via this network from the late 1970s until 1991.



(TOP RIGHT) A recent addition to the MoD locomotive fleet is a modified Hornby Sentinel 4w diesel, repainted in drab green. In this photo the use of space saving small radius points is obvious. A van is undergoing some maintenance work in the loco shed.



(RIGHT) Inside the transshipment shed VEA vans wait to be loaded with a range of military materials.



(BELOW) With the layout being operated in West Country guise, the Railfreight liveried 50149 'Defiance' passes on a china clay working.



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The Bachmann TSO coach utilises a DCC Concepts flashing tail light.

Install coach lighting

Will Thompson reveals the method he has devised to install lighting in Bachmann coaches

I find the world of electronics rather mysterious and fascinating as I really don't understand it! However this isn't a reason to defeat anyone and, as I have an ambition to run my layout at night, I spent a while learning how to do coach lighting. My aims were simple... keep it simple, cheap and quick to do as I have about twenty or so Bachmann coaches that will eventually be illuminated

Pickups

The first problem to solve was providing the power to work the lights. On the Mark 1 coaches I've standardised on using DCC Concepts (www.dccconcepts.com) 14mm wheels which come with a handy coiled pickup, with the end being simply soldered to a small piece of PCB. For the wheels that are insulated from the axle a wiper method is deployed which uses very light brass wire; again these are soldered to a small piece of PCB. Both methods allow near frictionless free running.

There are many ways to route the wires inside the coach and each type of coach has different challenges. I've found that copper tape is great to use between the coach underframe and interiors, otherwise it's a case of feeding the wire under the interior, or up through the roof, (or even on the underside). I've found that all wheel pickup is best but this is only needed to maintain a constant flashing tail lamp.

Decoders

The pickup wires are then connected to a decoder or directly to the flicker free device depending on whether you want to be able to switch the interior lights on and off. You do not need a decoder if you want them on all

the time but I want to be able to switch them off in daytime and so added an old decoder to the circuit. Each coach in a rake of coaches is given the same DCC address so it's easy to switch them all on or off in one go.

Coach Interior Lighting

The main priority is flicker free lighting on DCC and, following extensive research and an hour or so of work, I did manage to solder up a circuit that worked. Then, to my delight, I found a really neat flicker free device from Layouts4you; it even comes with a built in dimmer! All that's needed then is to hide the unit in the coach which is almost always in the toilet compartment or in a part of the corridor that is out of sight.

Following the instructions, the correct wires are connected to the pickups and then to some LEDs and that's it. I'm using cheap LED warm white strips from China which give a nice glow and in the Mark 1s I have further tinted them with translucent paint to make them even less white.

One thing to note is the Bachmann Mark 1s experience really bad light bleed between the roof and the coach sides. This problem is solved by inserting a thin piece of black plasticard which is cut into a long strip that is deep enough to slightly overlap the gap between the roof and coach side. For the most part it doesn't foul the interior, but a sharp knife soon sorts any tight clearances.

Flashing Tail Lamps on a Mark 2 coach

The decoder that I used for the Mark 2 coach was an old and basic decoder. Therefore I used a red flashing 3mm LED which is fitted

out of sight inside the rear of the BFK coach. To avoid light bleed into the coach I covered the LED with plumbers sealant. A 1 mm diameter hole was drilled into the rear of the coach and a 1 mm light guide threaded through and attached to the LED. The light circuit is very simple and I used a 1K resistor in between the decoder and the negative LED node. The lamp itself is a 3D printed version from Modelu (www.modelu3d.co.uk) which is very carefully drilled to accept a 1mm light guide. To avoid breaking the lamp, start with a very small drill bit and work up slowly to 1mm as the lamps are very brittle. This is glued directly to the light guide and painted white. Overall I'm rather pleased with the flash rate and effect.

Flashing Tail Lamps on a Mark 1 coach

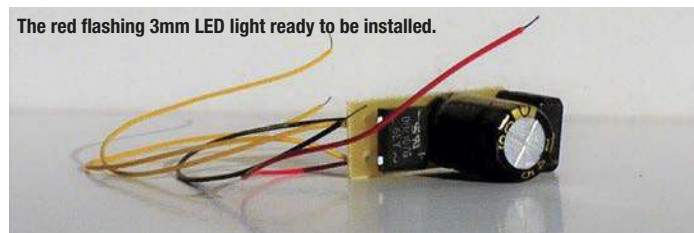
The lamp irons on the Mark 1 are on the gangway connectors so I couldn't use the same technique as the Mark 2 as a light guide would be very noticeable. However, DCC Concepts have introduced a modern tail lamp with very thin wires so I decided to use this. The rubbing plate is by MJT and the lamp is simply glued to this with very small holes drilled in the gangway to accept the thin wires. My first attempt used all parts supplied by DCC Concepts but despite trying I couldn't get a consistent flash rate. In the end I just used a lamp hooked up to a 1K resistor and decoder which is programmed to flash. This solution is very effective and I hope DCC Concepts make the lamp available separately. In future I wouldn't use another TSO as a tail coach as everything is a tight fit in order to remain hidden; I had to mount the decoder in the roof.

Conclusion

Overall I'm rather pleased with the lighting effects; importantly it is simple and pretty quick to do. I used a rather long exposure on the photographs so the lighting isn't as bright as it appears here but you can tailor this to your preference by adding more resistance. The coaches in this article aren't yet finished and I'm pleased that the lighting does seem to bring them to life. It's interesting to note that my wife suggested that I include some passengers as in her words, "It's now really obvious that they're missing!" I agree.



The red flashing 3mm LED light ready to be installed.



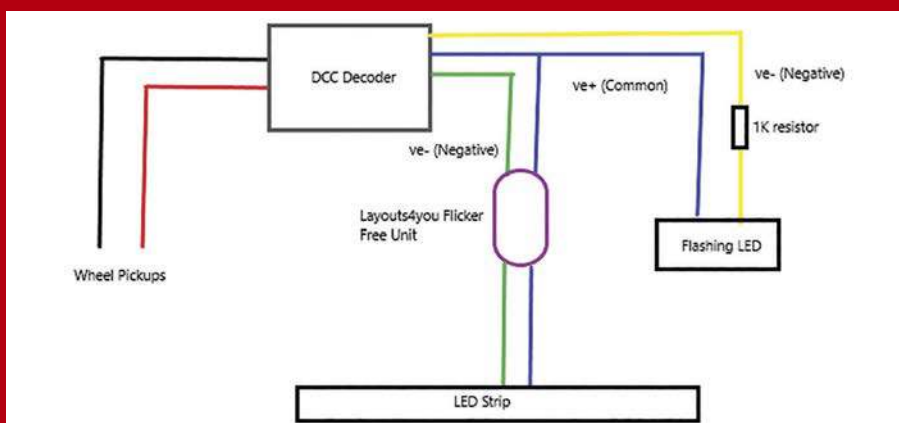
(TOP) The DCC Concepts 14mm wheels come with a coiled pickup wire which is soldered to a piece of PCB. For the insulated wheels, thin brass wire soldered to a piece of PCB and bearing on the back of the wheels is used to pick up the current.

(ABOVE) A Bachmann Mark 2 BFK coach showing the lighting effect and the Modelu tail lamp lit using a flashing LED light.



A Mark 1 coach showing the LED lighting strip in the roof and the circuitry used to control the lighting and flashing tail lamp.

The diagram demonstrates the simple nature of the wiring. The DCC decoder is optional if the coach only contains interior coach lighting powered by the Layouts4you flicker free unit and you wish the lights to be on all the time. However in my setup it's needed for the flashing tail light. If you want to have the tail lamp on all the time and not use a DCC decoder then additional components (such as a bridge rectifier) are needed.





Heljan Class 25/3 - O Gauge



Words and photography: Simon Bendall



Having now produced most of the classic British Rail diesel classes in O gauge, Heljan has begun to revisit previous models and offer some of the major design variations. In this case it is the Class 25, where the later tidied-up body style is now available.

Although described by Heljan as a Class 25/3, this is really a simplified designation to denote the heavily revised body style introduced in 1963. This was aimed to overcome design faults with the air intake grilles and filters on the earlier locomotives. Most of the grilles were moved to cantrail level and the cab front was totally redesigned, resulting in a much neater appearance.

The initial locomotives with this look formed part of the Class 25/2 sub-class, being numbered D5233-D5299 and D7500-D7567, which later became 25083-25217. Of this batch, only D5233-D5237 were equipped for steam heating with an underframe water tank.

The same body was used on the final batch of the class built between 1965 and 1967. As their control equipment had been upgraded they were designated as Class 25/3. Numbered D7598-D7677, later becoming 25248-25327, they were not equipped for steam heating, thus lacking a water tank. A

small batch, D7611-D7623, were built with a tablet catcher recess on the driver's cabsides, although the equipment was never fitted and the recesses were later plated.

Standard appearance

Heljan's model represents a typical example of both the 25/2 and 25/3 sub-classes. Steam pipes are supplied pre-fitted to the bufferbeams, as is all the other pipe work, some of which might need to be removed for certain Class 25/3s.

The Class 25 comes secured to a wooden board in the box to prevent shipping damage. Five liveries are on offer: two-tone green with half or full yellow ends; standard BR blue with the arrows either on the four cabsides or centrally on the bodysides and a weathered blue example.

Heljan's original version of the Class 25 was criticised for the overly flat nature of its cab fronts. This has been fixed this time around, though I feel that there may be a few minor issues on the cab roofs where the 'wings' of the headcode box don't taper in sufficiently.

The moulding of the bodyside is up to Heljan's high standard, including a correct flush look for the triangular bodyside access panel and subtle rivet detail. The roof fan

grille is etched and the accessory pack includes etched and pre-painted blanking plates for the boiler grilles to be fitted if desired. This version of the Class 25 comes with the bodyside steps already plated over with spares in both shades of green supplied. The glazing around the cabs is good, but the bodyside windows could have been made a flusher fit. The cab interiors are superb, requiring only a crew to complete.

Bufferbeam options

Included in the box is a pair of yellow miniature snowploughs, which can be screwed in place beneath the bufferbeams. To give clearance for these, there are alternative versions of the multiple working jumpers. Other details include sprung metal buffers and the usual array of separate handrails and lamp brackets. The wire handrails by the cab doors attempt to portray the kinked nature of the real thing but are slightly too large as they extend over the edges of the doors.

The chassis is unchanged from the first releases, except for the removal of the water tank. The bogies are impressive, with plenty of depth around the springs, while there is much detail on the solebars in terms of



conduit and fillers. The fuel tank and battery box assemblies have excellent pipe and tap detail. A small disappointment on this O gauge model is the lack of holes in the wheels that were a feature of the class.

The two-tone green livery is well applied, the colours and printing being to a good standard while the driver's cabsides feature an early blue-backed data panel as appropriate to the late 1960s and early 1970s. However the font of the alpha-numeric headcode characters is incorrect.

Internally, the model is the same as the earlier Class 25 models with two horizontally-mounted motors, each driving one bogie via a driveshaft. It also features a rotating radiator fan and directional lighting, while its substantial weight means most trains lengths will be tackled with ease. No provision is made for 'plug and play' DCC, purchasers being left to hardwire their own chip and speaker, the latter either going inside the fuel tank or beneath the roof depending on its size.

This new version of the Class 25 is certainly an improvement on the initial models and is the kind of small diesel that could find a home on many modestly-sized O gauge layouts.



CATALOGUE REFS:

HJ2555: BR two-tone green with half yellow warning panels

HJ2556: BR two-tone green with full yellow ends

HJ2557: BR blue with full yellow ends, pre-TOPS with cabside BR arrows

HJ2558: BR blue with full yellow ends, post-TOPS with bodyside arrows

HJ2559: BR blue with full yellow ends, post-TOPS with bodyside arrows, weathered

RRP: £525.00

Gauge/scale: 32mm gauge, 1:43.5 scale O

Era: BR 1963-1991

Minimum Curve Radius: 1028mm

Couplings: Working sprung screw-link

Accessories: Miniature snowploughs, bodyside step and boiler grille blanking plates, alternative multiple working jumper cables, spare bufferbeam pipes and steps

Drive System: 12V DC twin 5-pole motors

DCC Provision: Requires hardwiring of decoder and speaker, no 'plug & play' socket

Pick-ups: Contacts to rear of all wheels



**TRACTION
MODELLING**

Dapol HAA merry-go-round coal hopper - O Gauge

Words: Simon Bendall
Photography: Tony Wright

Dapol's latest O gauge wagon model depicts the HAA merry-go-round coal hoppers, which were for so long an integral and iconic part of British Rail operations. The wagons are best known for their intensive use on power station coal workings, lengthy rakes bringing 'black gold' from the collieries. The hoppers were also used on certain industrial flows, such as supplying steel and cement works and so offer greater operational scope.

Prototype choice

All of Dapol's initial releases are finished with HAA TOPS codes printed in place. This dates the models with hopper cradles painted in the original BR freight brown to the mid-1970s onwards because, in the decade prior to this, the wagons were lettered HOP AB, this standing for 'hopper air-braked'. Railfreight red paintwork was used from 1979 on the final builds, with the yellow of the Railfreight Coal sub-sector appearing from late 1987 onwards. The final livery choice is more obscure, this being the blue framing given to a number of EWS-owned examples operating from Ayrshire in 2007.

The models depict a typical late-build example, with squared off covers over the door operating mechanisms. In addition, the top of the hopper sides feature the strengthening strips on the inside and accompanying line of rivets on the outside. All of the models show the hoppers in what could be considered their standard form without the aerodynamic canopies.

Shape and detail

Dapol has done a very good job of capturing the shape of the hopper body. There are nice touches across the model, from the sprung Oleo buffers to the correct mix of disc and clasp braked wheels and their associated brake gear. The handbrake levers are appropriately shaped in metal while the bufferbeams have a pre-installed air pipe and a choice of fitting a lamp bracket or dummy tail light on the other side of the coupling hook.

There is a noticeable joint on the corners of the horizontal framing sections and some of the less-visible detail has been simplified. There are some omissions from the detailing of the model such as the door seams on the inside of the hopper body and lack of an air cylinder and distributor on the underframe. Other smaller details have been left off the chassis but their absence is less notable as they are generally tucked up beneath the hopper body. The more detail-conscious modeller could add these should they wish.

The HAAs had an unpainted stainless steel 'tub' which Dapol has opted to recreate using a pale grey colour rather than metallic silver. This is probably the best option as metallic shades don't always look convincing in model form while pale grey acts as a dulled base colour onto which weathering can be applied. The rest of the paintwork and printing is all to a high standard with legible builder's plates and data panels.

Dapol's HAA looks the part and a suitably-sized rake will make an impressive sight

CATALOGUE REFS:

7F-048-001: HAA 350274

Railfreight red cradle

7F-048-002: HAA 355203

Railfreight red cradle

7F-048-003: HAA 353823

Railfreight red cradle

7F-048-004: HAA 351351 EWS

Scottish blue cradle

7F-048-005: HAA 354317 BR

freight brown cradle

7F-048-006: HAA 359180 BR

freight brown cradle

7F-048-007: HAA 359447 BR

freight brown cradle

7F-048-008: HAA 354469

Railfreight Coal yellow cradle

RRP: £54.95

Gauge/scale: 32mm gauge, 1:43.5 scale O

Era: BR 1973 - EWS 2008

Body and chassis: Plastic chassis and body

Couplings: Working Instanters

Accessories: Lamp brackets, dummy battery tail lights

Bachmann Class 158 and 159 DMUs – OO Gauge



Two car Class 158



Three car Class 159



Class 159 cab detail



Class 159 inter car detail

Bachmann are producing various versions of their completely re-tooled Class 158 and Class 159 DMUs in OO gauge. The models will be available in Regional Railways, East Midlands Trains and GWR liveries and will feature variations to represent both the Cummins and the Perkins powered units as well as various design modifications such as air-conditioning modules, gangway door windows and headlights. The first engineering prototypes of the Class 159 were on show at the Warley show at the NEC in late November. Features of the new 158s and 159s include switchable day and night lighting modes, directional and interior lighting, working door interlock lights and a representation of BSI couplers. The models will have a 21-pin DCC socket with easy access to fit a chip via an underframe hatch. A low profile mechanism will be fitted to minimise intrusion into the interior.

31-517DS: 158849 in Regional Railways livery - DCC sound fitted

31-518: 158773 in East Midlands Trains livery

31-519: 158766 in GWR green

31-520: 159013 in Network SouthEast livery

Bachmann Mark 2F coaches -N Gauge

Following logically on from the release of the range of Mark 2F models in OO Gauge Bachmann have released photos of engineering prototype models in N Gauge. As with the larger scale, the N Gauge models cover the full range of vehicles and will close a large gap in the availability of British Rail coaches in N.

The BR Mark 2F coaches were built from 1973 until 1975 and included a First Open (FO), Tourist Second Open (TSO), Restaurant First Buffet (RFB), Brake Second Open (BSO) and Driving Brake Second Open (DBSO). Livery options in BR days were blue and grey and InterCity grey black and red, together with the ScotRail livery for the DBSO. The ScotRail DBSOs, of course, worked only with Mark 3 coaches.

FO - First Open



TSO - Second Open



DBSO - Driving Brake Second Open



RFB - Restaurant First Buffet



BSO - Brake Second Open



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Due
Nov '18

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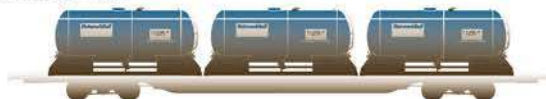
H4-RHTT-005



'Water Jet' with 2 wagons and water jetting modules - weathered - £126

Due
Nov '18

H4-RHTT-006



Additional 'Water' wagon with 3 water modules - weathered - £63

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Nov '18

To keep up to date on all the latest news regarding this project, visit:

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FEA Intermodal Wagon

00
GAUGE

Delivered between 2004 & 2007, single unit FEA wagons have seen use as intermodal container wagons as well as on infrastructure traffic carrying track panels and general materials. They see widespread use, behind any locomotives in the GBRf & Freightliner fleets.



H4-FEAE-001 FEA-E wagon 6410xx in Freightliner green

002

003

004

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H4-FEAE-005 FEA-E wagon 641015 in Freightliner green with track panel carriers

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Due
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H4-FEAS-001 FEA-S wagon 6406xx in GBRf blue

002

003

004

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Due
Nov '18

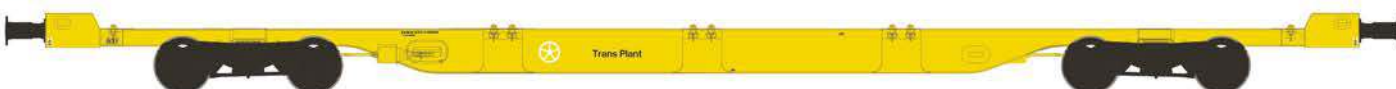


H4-FEAS-005 FEA-S wagon 6409xx in GBRf/Metronet yellow with track panel carriers

006

Pre-order for £59 each

Due
Nov '18



H4-FEAS-007 FEA-S wagon 640931 in TransPlant yellow

Pre-order for £32 each

Due
Nov '18

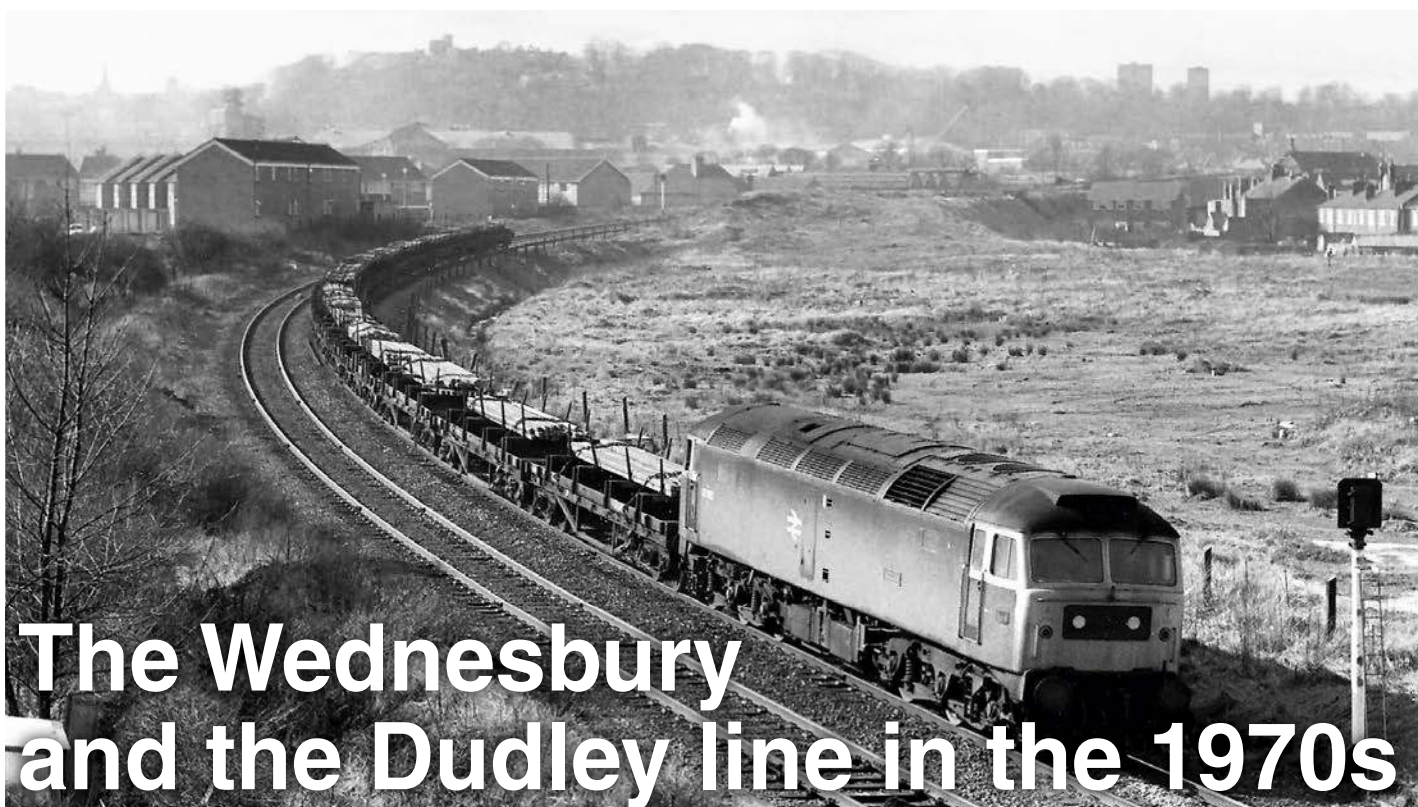
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(ABOVE) Monday 5th March 1979: With Dudley Castle visible in the distance overlooking the region from atop Castle Hill (the castle is situated in the grounds of Dudley Zoo), 47082 'Atlas' descends from Dudley and is about to pass beneath the Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton High Level main line at Dudley Port with what is believed to be 7M74, the 03:30 MO Llandeilo Junction to Great Bridge steel service. The train, formed of a fully-fitted uniform raft of vacuum-braked bogie bolsters laden with square billet from the Duport Steelworks at Llanelli, has probably been banked from Stourbridge Junction to Dudley. These workings had previously run to Langley Green, some continuing through to Winson Green Goods (closed in the early 1970s), which was connected to the former GWR main line from Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton Low Level via Wednesbury (closed to passengers and as a through route axis in March 1972). TOM HEAVYSIDE.

David J. Hayes continues his detailed study of the variety of trains and traffics that could be seen using the Dudley line axis during the 1970s. Part one appeared in TRACTION issue 249.

The Dudley line through Wednesbury was an important axis for traditional class 7 and class 8 yard-to-yard mixed wagonload freights to and from Bescot Marshalling Yard and other similar major marshalling yard hubs on the Western Region, such as Severn Tunnel Junction Yard. There were also similar workings routed via Dudley to and/or from Bristol, Exeter, Gloucester, Stoke Gifford and Worcester. The famous carpet manufacturing town of Kidderminster was a regular calling point for some of these inter-regional trunk services, thus relieving pressure on Bescot Yard.

As can be imagined, traditional mixed wagonload freights using the Dudley line produced a good variety of motive power and conveyed a wonderful assortment of wagon types laden with all manner of goods. They were also used for conveying shunting engines en-route to or from works' attention or on transfer between depots or regions. These shunter transit movements, however, could sometimes turn out to be a one-way trip for an appointment with the cutter's torch!

Some of the lumbering Class 8 wagonload freights could take the best part of an hour or more just to cover the first 11 miles or so from Bescot to Stourbridge Junction. Such

workings, depending on the trailing tonnage, would receive banking assistance from Great Bridge to Dudley. They would then be required to stop once on the other side of Dudley for the train guard to pin down the brakes on unfitted wagons for the descent to Stourbridge Junction, where the train would stop yet again in order for the guard to release the brakes before continuing on its way.

Similar class 8 services travelling the opposite way, however, could cover the same

distance between Stourbridge Junction and Bescot quicker by virtue of not having to stop to pin down wagon brakes, but may well have still required banking assistance from Stourbridge Junction to Dudley, again depending on the trailing tonnage. Wagonload Case Study samples one and two give details of two such workings.

The advent of Speedlink in September 1977 would eventually bring about the demise of the traditional wagonload network by the mid-1980s, the Dudley line by then

Wagonload Case Study One (May 1970):

8V79, the 09:50 SuX Bescot Down Yard to Severn Tunnel Junction

Location	Time	Mileage from Bescot (approx.)
Bescot Down Yard	Dep. 09:50	0
Wednesbury (Potters Lane)	Pass 10:01	2
Great Bridge (pause for banking assistance)	10:07- 10:09	3
Dudley Stop Board (stop to detach banker and pin down wagon brakes)	10:30- 10:35	6
Brierley Hill (Kingswinford Junction)	Pass 10:45	9
Stourbridge Junction (stop to release wagon brakes)	10:56- 11:01	11
Kidderminster (calls for traffic purposes)	11:20- 11:45	17
Travelling time from Bescot to Stourbridge Junction: 66 minutes.		

being traversed by trunk Speedlinks to and from Bescot and Severn Tunnel Junction (these workings will be looked at in a future article).

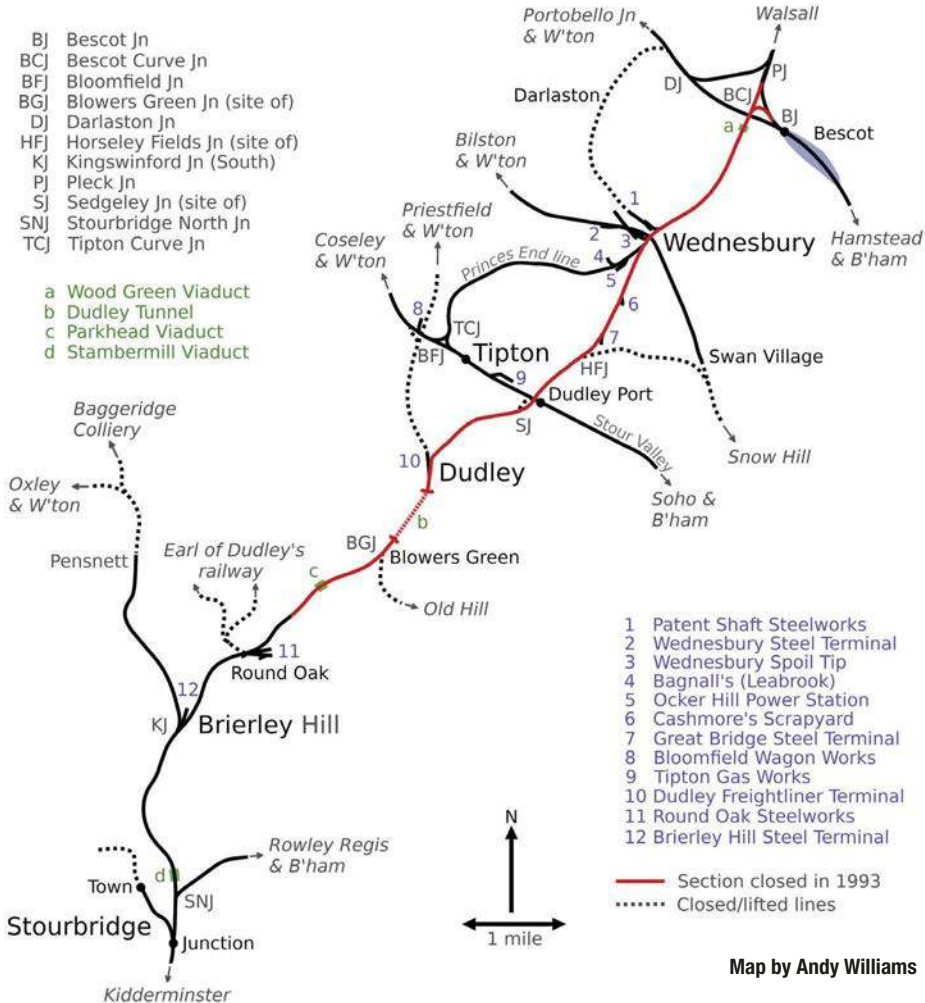
Dudley Freightliner Terminal

Opened in November 1967 at a cost of £250,000, Dudley Freightliner Terminal (FLT) occupied the site of Dudley station (closed summer 1964) and the town's Castle Goods facilities. It was a busy container hub during its fledgling years, boasting a good range of services to and from various other purpose-built container terminals then coming on stream. At various times during the late 1960s and early 1970s, such workings at Dudley consisted of trunk hauls each way to and from Glasgow Gushetfaulds, Harwich Parkeston Quay, Holyhead, Hull, Newcastle Follingsby, Southampton Millbrook, Stockton and Swansea Danygraig. The majority of these travelled via Wednesbury, the exceptions being those to and from Southampton and Swansea.

The terminal also dispatched a local feeder to Birmingham Exchange Sidings, situated about a mile outside Birmingham New Street station on the main line to Coventry, where it connected with an electric-hauled Manchester Barton Dock to Tilbury service. This feeder travelled via Bescot, Soho Road and Birmingham New Street.

There was also, for a while, a weekly working from Norwich Wensum to Dudley and return, which conveyed empty Freightliner flats both ways (the train departed Norwich on the Friday night and returned on the Saturday afternoon). These are believed to have been maintenance movements, although confirmation would be welcome. The service appears to have ended during 1971.

In addition to the workings already mentioned, Dudley FLT was also an important calling point for Freightliner services operating each way between Cardiff Pengam and Edinburgh Portobello, and between Cardiff Pengam and Sheffield Masborough (near Rotherham), and return. Those to and from Edinburgh also called additionally at Newcastle (Follingsby).



Much of Dudley FLT's workload was later transferred to the much larger Birmingham Lawley Street FLT facility, which opened in November 1969. For much of the 1970s and into the 1980s (to be looked at in a future article), Dudley continued to handle the trunk freightliner trains to and from Glasgow as well as those operating each way on the Cardiff-Edinburgh axis.

By the late 1970s, Dudley FLT was generating local trips to and from Bescot. These dealt with container portions to/from Newcastle (Follingsby) and provided

container connections into and out of a Leeds to Tilbury Freightliner service and its return counterpart. In addition, these trips to and from Dudley FLT also provided useful connections at Bescot with the fledgling Speedlink wagonload network launched in September 1977. Freightliner portions were often permitted to be conveyed in the wagonload consists of certain trunk-haul Speedlink services around this time, but strictly only over specified routes cleared for such container traffic (such clearances weren't as widespread back then as they are now on today's railway network).

Wagonload Case Study Two (May 1970): 8M74, the 04:15 MSuX Severn Tunnel Junction to Bescot Up Yard		
Location	Time	Mileage from Kidderminster (approx.)
Kidderminster (calls for traffic purposes)	09:22-09:32	0
Stourbridge Junction (pause for banking assistance)	09:57-10:00	6
Brierley Hill (Kingswinford Junction)	Pass 10:09	8
Dudley (pause to detach banking engine)	10:23-10:25	11
Great Bridge	Pass 10:37	14
Wednesbury (Potters Lane)	Pass 10:40	15
Bescot Up Yard	Arr. 10:50	17
Travelling time from Stourbridge Junction to Bescot: 50 minutes.		

Merchandise Freights

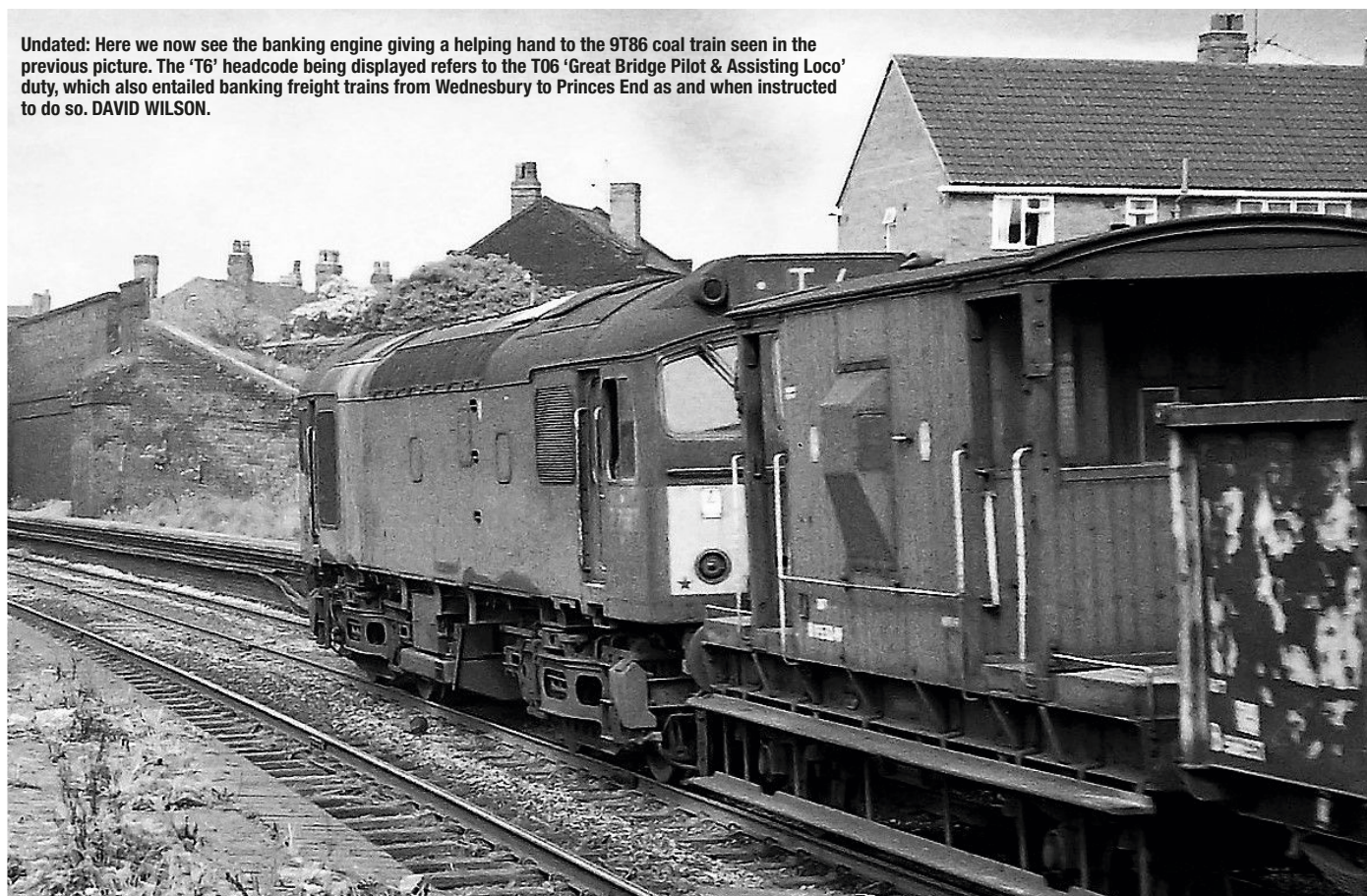
Several freights traversing the Dudley line during the 1970s were designated as class 6 'Merchandise' services. These operated on such routings as Bescot to Gloucester; Burton-on-Trent to Plymouth (calling at Kidderminster); Nottingham to Swansea (calling at either Bescot or Kidderminster); and Severn Beach to Bescot.

A couple of these services back then were amongst the very few through freights booked to traverse the entire axis from Wichnor Junction to Abbotswood Junction via Dudley. The other workings falling into this small category were Freightliner trains calling at Dudley FLT, namely those operating to and from Cardiff, Edinburgh and Sheffield, as mentioned earlier.

Undated: The Dudley line during the 1970s was traversed by an extensive network of trip workings dealing with all manner of goods and empty wagons generated by the many terminals and industrial locations served by or via the line. Some traditional block coal trains ran under local tripping arrangements, such as this Class 25 hauled 9T86 diagram seen here (circa 1970) passing through the remains of Dudley Port Low Level station (closed July 1964). The train, which is in the process of being banked from Great Bridge to Dudley by a sister Class 25 (see next picture), is being hauled by what looks like D5296 and is believed to be the 12:08 SuX Bescot Yard to Round Oak Steelworks (due there at 1pm). Similar coal trips from the Cannock area ran all the way through to Hartlebury from where the coal was forwarded to Stourport Power Station. DAVID WILSON.



Undated: Here we now see the banking engine giving a helping hand to the 9T86 coal train seen in the previous picture. The 'T6' headcode being displayed refers to the T06 'Great Bridge Pilot & Assisting Loco' duty, which also entailed banking freight trains from Wednesbury to Princes End as and when instructed to do so. DAVID WILSON.



Undated: Much of the Freightliner traffic using the Dudley line consisted of workings to and from Dudley FLT but also included several through trains each way, which also called at the facility. Some services, however, were relatively short-lived and diverted away following the opening of Birmingham Lawley Street FLT in 1969. One short-lived service was that to and from Parkeston FLT. A Class 47 (believed to be D1839) nears Dudley Port Low Level (circa 1969) with 4E69, the 15:30 SSuX Dudley to Parkeston freightliner, which will be electric-hauled from Bescot Up Loop (dep. 16:36). To the right of the loco is an embankment that once carried a connection from the Dudley Line to that of the Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton High Level 'Stour Valley' main line at Dudley Port High Level. Well-known sausage manufacturer Palethorpes once had their own private siding in the vicinity for off-loading livestock and dispatching sausages using the company's distinctive railway vehicles. DAVID WILSON.



Sunday 18th November 1973: The Dudley line was regularly open during the 1970s at weekends throughout the day and into the evening on Saturdays, and could also be traversed at times by revenue freights on Sundays, too, as witnessed here. 1876 runs 'bang road' (wrong line) towards Dudley and through the site of Great Bridge North station (closed July 1964) with a 9T21 trip freight consisting of a mixture of steel products. Included in the train consist are trestle wagons laden with large sheets of steel, which have to be carried at an angle to keep them within the BR loading gauge. On the right is Great Bridge Steel Terminal with the resident Class 25 pilot/banking loco (T06) stabled in the yard. DAVID WILSON.



Trip Workings

The Dudley line saw plenty of local trip freight activity during the 1970s. The best place to observe this was at Wednesbury where, at one point, between 15 and 20 different diagrams were scheduled to be seen during the course of the week. Whilst many passed through without stopping, quite a few called here for traffic purposes. Some would only appear perhaps once or twice during the course of the day, while others could be seen several times over a 24-hour period.

One such trip diagram spent much of its time plying to and from Wolverhampton Steel Terminal via either Priestfield or Princes End and was booked to appear up to eight times at Wednesbury depending on traffic availability. This included dealing with steel empties for movement from Wednesbury to Scunthorpe, South Wales and Teesside. Certain tripping turns would only appear when operating as instructed by 'Control', such as some of those associated with coal or engineers' duties (coal workings were looked at in Part One).

Many of the locations shown tabulated with this article in Part One would have generated trip diagrams via Wednesbury. Empty wagons in particular, such as coal and steel empties, from various terminals and industrial locations were tripped to Norton

Junction Bescot Down Empty Sidings on the Lichfield to Walsall line, as featured in TRACTION 233 & 234. Trips from Norton Junction Bescot Down Empty Sidings also ran via Wednesbury to Littleton (coal empties), Bloomfield (wagons for repair) and Cashmore's at Great Bridge (rolling stock for disposal).

Some Dudley line trips dealt with traffic to and from Kidderminster, where the goods facilities handled such commodities as coal, steel and jute, the latter used by the carpet industry for which Kidderminster is renowned. The jute arrived from Dundee and was conveyed using air-braked vans, which were sometimes referred to as 'Supervans' in the local trip notices. Such wagons were also used for other traffics and could therefore turn up at other West Midlands goods facilities located in Birmingham, Coventry and Walsall.

Kidderminster was also a gathering point for traffic to and from various terminals in the Black Country region, thus easing pressure on Bescot. Indeed, for a trial period, wagons for South Wales and the South West were tripped to Kidderminster rather than Bescot. As mentioned already, several traditional wagonload freights were booked to call there for traffic purposes.

Another type of wagon to be seen traversing the Dudley line axis in local trip freight consists during the 1970s were international 'Inter-Frigo' refrigerated vans used for perishables traffic. These may have been loaded or unloaded at Brierley Hill or perhaps at Pensnett. Any further information would be most welcome.

In addition to their local shunting duties,

Wednesday 10th November 1976: Having passed by here just a few hours earlier atop 8M77, the late running 02:36 SSuX traditional wagonload freight from Severn Tunnel Junction to Bescot Up Yard, 45029 is now seen returning back to the Western Region at 2:08pm with 7V82, the 13:35 SSuX mixed goods from Bescot Up Yard to Gloucester, which was running as a Class 8 (8V82) on this occasion. The service has just crossed Parkhead Viaduct and is now approaching Round Oak. Both 8M77 and 7V82 were booked for banking assistance to Dudley. MICHAEL MENSING (DJH COLLECTION).



Friday 16th September 1977: Framed nicely by the semaphore signals, a splendid example of a traditional mixed wagonload freight passes the site of Wednesbury Town station (closed July 1964) a little after 2pm behind 46040. The 'Peak' Type 4 has charge of 7V82, the late running 13:05 SSuX Bescot Up Yard to Gloucester service, which was booked for banking assistance from Great Bridge to Dudley and scheduled to call at Kidderminster for traffic purposes. The scene is overlooked by St. John's Church, which, having become derelict in 1980, was demolished in summer 1985. MICHAEL MENSING (DJH COLLECTION).





Wednesday 11th May 1977: 47537 approaches Wednesbury with 4S50, the 19:30 SSuX Freightliner service from Dudley to Glasgow Gushetfaulds, which will be taken forward from Bescot Up & Down Goods Loop (dep. 20:17) by a pair of electrics. The sidings in the foreground, of which there were four, were often used for storing empty steel wagons awaiting collection, such as air-braked coil carriers for Teesside. Also visible in this view is the Princes End line, which closed less than four years later in April 1981. JOHN WHITEHOUSE.



the two Wednesbury Class 08 pilots were utilized for local trip work as well. Such movements included visiting the nearby works of John Bagnall (connected to the Princes End line). They are believed to have visited the coal-fired Ocker Hill Power Station at times as well, possibly to retrieve faulty wagons.

The '08' also made short-haul forays over former Great Western metals in order to service the requirements of two scrap metal merchants in Bilston (Arnott Young and Norton Barrow) and the Swan Village coal depot at Black Lake.

Amongst the other Dudley line trips to be seen at Wednesbury were those operated by the engineers' division, which included ad hoc movements of spoil and spent ballast for disposal at Wednesbury engineers' tip. Wednesbury at this time was also a designated ballast concentration point and received rail deliveries of fresh ballast tripped over from Nuneaton (possibly sourced from the nearby loading points at Abbey Junction or Hartshill). These workings could also run alternatively to other ballast concentration points in the region at Wolverhampton (Bushbury Sidings) or in the Birmingham area.

The standard motive power used for most trips to be seen working in the Black Country region and over the Dudley line during the 1970s was dominated by the ubiquitous Class 25, although other main line diesel types such as Classes 20, 24, 45 and 47 also turned up, as did the occasional Class 40. By the late 1970s, the recently introduced Class 56 machines could also be seen performing on local workings, especially to and from Dudley FLT, this possibly being to facilitate driver training on this new breed of freight workhorse.

Banking duties

Banking engines were stationed at Great Bridge and Stourbridge Junction during much of the 1970s to assist Dudley line trains as and when necessary. The

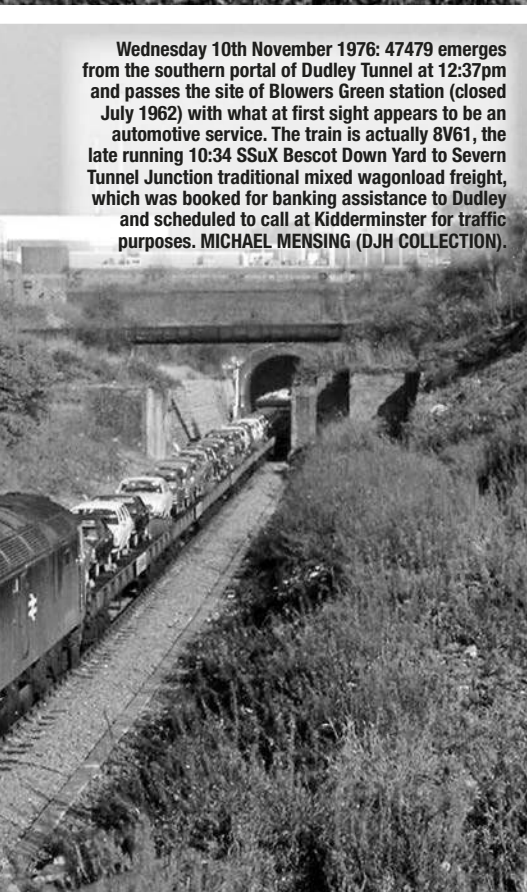
Stourbridge banking duty would assist freights through to Dudley or maybe just as far as Brierley Hill where some either terminated or perhaps detached traffic before continuing onwards to Wednesbury and/or Bescot. The Stourbridge duty would also assist heavy trains as far as Rowley Regis on the Stourbridge Extension line. Such workings included the 'Clayliner' and block tanker trains from Llandarcy to Rowley Regis, some of which could run alternatively to Bilston (Spring Vale Steelworks), Wednesbury (Patent Shaft Steelworks) or Witton IMI (Imperial Metal Industries).

The Great Bridge duty was the busier of the two banking turns. The banking engine was booked to assist most trains to Dudley and would also be summoned to assist freights from Wednesbury to Princes End as and when necessary. In addition, the loco acted as yard pilot at Great Bridge Steel Terminal, which also included shunting at nearby Cashmore's and at Dudley FLT on an 'as and when required' basis.

The banking of Dudley line trains continued into and throughout the 1980s, albeit in a much limited capacity compared to the 1970s. This type of operation on the Dudley line had diminished even further by the 1990s, as we'll see in a future article.

Acknowledgements: I am indebted to my good friend Andy Williams for his valued assistance and to those photographers whose work accompanied this two-part feature. Thank you one and all.

The final two-part article in this series, to appear at a later date, will look at Dudley line activities throughout the 1980s and during the early 1990s up until when the line closed as a through route axis.



Wednesday 10th November 1976: 47479 emerges from the southern portal of Dudley Tunnel at 12:37pm and passes the site of Blowers Green station (closed July 1962) with what at first sight appears to be an automotive service. The train is actually 8V61, the late running 10:34 SSuX Bescot Down Yard to Severn Tunnel Junction traditional mixed wagonload freight, which was booked for banking assistance to Dudley and scheduled to call at Kidderminster for traffic purposes. MICHAEL MENSING (DJH COLLECTION).



Wild Men and Wild Places!

Richard MacLennan returns with another account of driving trains on the line to Stranraer. This time he tells of his experiences working freight trains over the Galloway hills.

Considering the remote and rural nature of the area, the railways to Stranraer have carried significant amounts of freight traffic down the years. During both wars, massive tonnages of freight were transported whilst people would cram into packed carriages to get to where they needed to be, with creature comforts playing little part in the proceedings.

In the early 1920s the first vehicle carrying ferries crossed the North Channel making Stranraer a credible port for the Irish market. This allowed the movement of animals and dairy produce, as an example, all the way from the farm to the railhead before being loaded onto the train for forwards transit.

World War 2

During WW2, during the height of the blitz, the Churchill led government decided they needed to build a new deep-water port for use if enemy bombing incapacitated existing docks at Liverpool and Glasgow. Cairn Point on Loch Ryan was the preferred site and, in 1941, the building of Military Railway Number 2 commenced. The six mile long line from Cairnryan Junction to the port finally opened in 1943, although by then the tide of war was turning and, thankfully, the port was never



37031 stands at Dalrymple Junction with 6S75 on July 27th 1988 as it awaits the passage of the first Stranraer to Glasgow passenger service. RICHARD MACLENNAN

fully utilised for its intended purpose. In any case, the LMS would have had great difficulty hauling additional freight tonnage over the big hills and pathing extra freights in amongst the large amount of Northern Irish troop traffic using the line would have required both routes to operate well in excess of their intended capacity.

Following the end of hostilities, the line to Cairn Point had a short secondary existence hauling unwanted munitions for disposal at sea in the deep waters of 'Beauforts Dyke' in the North Channel. Almost 150,000 tons of munitions were dumped at the bottom of this 300m deep-sea dustbin with a fair tonnage coming by rail. This traffic usually ran in trains of around 17 wagons via Girvan or 30 wagons via Newton Stewart and ran on and off for a period of around three years. It would have taken a brave driver to thrash his steam engine up Glendoune or across the High Chain with sparks raining down from the heavens on the deadly cargo behind but it was something the drivers of the day did day in and day out.

The postwar years

For many years the long standing Stranraer to Glasgow College Yard and return service was the principle freight train on the line. The train was worked by a Glasgow Corkerhill crew who had a short nine hour long lodge in Stranraer before returning north with the balancing evening service. This was the main way of getting household coal, animal feed, electrical goods and other household necessities from factory to consumer, along with milk, cheese and cattle from farm to market. The demise of vacuum braked pick up freights, along with the changing industrial landscape of the central belt, were once again the reasons for this type of train becoming surplus to requirements.

For a number of years, there was also a spring lamb train from Glenwhilly to Carlisle with the wagons coming empty via Falkland

with the loading of three wagons at a time between trains up at Glenwhilly. In addition, coal services ran by rail from the South Ayrshire pits at Bargany and Dalquarrin mines to Girvan harbour for export to Ireland, along with Stranraer for domestic use, and this would have added to the frequency and variety of traffic south of Ayr.

From about 1962 and until at least 1968, a daily Millerhill Yard to Stranraer train ran in each direction. Unusually for freight services these trains were given names: 'The Galloway Piper' was the 19:10 service from Millerhill and 'The Lothian Piper' the return working from Stranraer. The reference to pipers was nothing to do with the musical instrument, but a reference to the vacuum braked wagons (or through piped wagons) that were to be used on these services.

The vast majority of freight traffic running to Stranraer continued to be for onwads movement by sea to Northern Ireland. This posed its own problems in that the loaded trains only worked one way and would therefore have significant amounts of empty mileage, which ultimately led to the demise of freight traffic on the route in the 1990s. To add to the inefficiency, all Irish traffic would need multiple handling as the ferries from Stranraer to Larne only had car decks and, with Northern Ireland's rail network being passenger only, all onwads shipment would be by road haulage.

Additionally, with a high tide of only around 4 metres in Stranraer, the types of vessels used would have limited the amount of cargo carried per crossing even after frequent dredging of the channel in and out of the port. The Saint class ferries namely 'Caledonian Princess', the 'Antrim Princess', the 'Ailsa Princess' and 'Galloway Princess' all plied the short sea crossing at some point down the years carrying passengers, freight and goods vehicles in all imaginable weather conditions. They were a testament to the ship building expertise at Harland & Wolff in

Belfast where all four vessels were built.

New cars from Dagenham, Luton and Merseyside, Taunton Cider, steel products from Teesside and Workington, along with milk traffic from the numerous Galloway creameries, made up the main tonnages. Following the closure of the Port Road in 1965, all of this would come the long way round via Falkland and Girvan, placing great strain on the limited mountain line infrastructure especially following the singling of the route from Dalrymple Junction to Girvan in 1965. Any delay would quickly escalate, with crossing points missed and trains kept waiting for inbound locomotives and crew.

Speedlink

By the time I transferred to Ayr in 1987, much of the freight traffic, as in other parts of Scotland, was no longer there to be moved or had transferred to road haulage. The notorious A75 between Gretna and Stranraer was a known accident black spot as HGV drivers drove hard to make the port for an onwads ferry connection. In fact, one of the bridges along this stretch carried the mantle of the most hit bridge by HGVs in the whole of Scotland.

The remaining rail freight traffic ran in two Speedlink services with 6S66 leaving Falkland at 03:40 and 6S75 a few hours later at 08:13. Because of the need for trains to be reduced in weight for the tortuous run south of Ayr, the above services would often be supplemented by a third train to Stranraer leaving around 10:00. This train would carry any traffic left behind by the booked trains along with seasonal wagons of fertiliser for use on the numerous Galloway farms.

The trains would arrive from Carlisle with a Class 37 or 47 in charge depending on the load and length. The Class 37 could only manage 950 tons over the G&SW, even when running in a slower 45mph class seven path. From memory, 6S66 produced a Thornaby

The Stockton Haulage yard at the former Stranraer Town station site. Of interest are the Class 08 and 27 stabled between duties, a Taunton Cider bogie van, various steel carrying wagons and parcels vans as well as a rake of Mark 2 air-conditioned coaches that were used on the London Euston services. HARRY ARCHIBALD



'47' far more often than not and 6S75 a Class 37 from either Gateshead or Thornaby. Within minutes of arriving in Falkland, the shunters would tie off (no coupling on/off in this part of the world) any wagons not destined for Stranraer, as this traffic would go forwards to its ultimate destination on one of the daytime trippers such as R02 or R05 to Dalry, Stevenson, Irvine or Kilmarnock.

This, more often than not, left only cars and steel with the occasional VGA for the next leg. 6S66 was worked by a Stranraer driver off the Stranraer to Euston 'Night Paddy' sleeping car service. Ayr men would follow on behind several hours later with 6S75. This was one of the jobs in my link and one of the few day shift jobs with a sociable 07:30 book on time.

The first Stranraer to Glasgow passenger train would be passed on the double line section to Dalrymple Junction and after this it was pretty much an empty railway with no other traffic to cross until 1M06 the 'Day Paddy' at Dunragit. 6S75 had an arrival time in Stranraer of 11:30 and, after shunting his train, the driver would have several hours to kill until his passenger ride home mid-afternoon. Some drivers, myself included, would enjoy a stroll around the small town and a spot of lunch before walking down to Stranraer Harbour station and a ride home on the cushions to Ayr.

However, some of my more impatient colleagues would endeavour to thumb a lift from one of the vehicles arriving off the midday ferry and, if successful, would manage to get back to base before the diagrammed ride home had even left Stranraer. I never tried hitch hiking myself but I do remember some hilarious bothy humour and anecdotes from those that did and the type of person who was willing to stop and pick up a BR driver in full uniform standing alongside the A77. Comments such as, "Have you lost your train?" or "You off to a fancy dress party?" are a couple of the more shareable ones.

Driving techniques

Driving freight trains over this underrated line took more skill than may first be imagined. The route from Ayr to Girvan has ever changing gradients and hardly a single mile of it is on level track. A freight made up of anything near the maximum length for the route of 1200 feet would lead to difficult driving conditions, as the front of the train could be going uphill as the back end was still on a downhill section. The risk of broken couplings was a real and present risk.

Moreover, on a greasy wet rail, a train could be bowling down Crosshill Bank only to encounter Kilkerran distant at caution. This required a heavy application of the brake almost immediately as the line hugged the large Glensalloch Forest and was therefore well shaded and often extremely slippery. With the section between the distant and home signal only providing the minimum braking distance, toes could curl for anyone not thinking ahead at this location. After another potentially hairy descent of Killochan

37069 is seen after arrival at Stranraer Town on Friday 29th 1988 with a train that includes a rake of car transporter wagons. RICHARD MACLENNAN



Bank, the train would pass the site of the once rail served Grangeston munitions factory, also known to locals as the 'secret works'. This site was a thriving place of important war works and even had its own station served by a morning and evening workers' train to and from Ayr.

Once through Girvan the driver would need to thrash his locomotive up the 1:54/80/56 four mile ramp of Glendoune Bank past the Girvan waterworks and out into open countryside, before plunging once again downhill through Pinmore Tunnel and onto the dip at the token point at Pinwherry. Further hard pounding would follow up the 1 in 69 climb to Barrhill and another crossing or a non stop token exchange before the final twisting climb though the infamous 'Gunners Cutting' to Chirmorie Summit at the 16.5 milepost and 863 above sea level, which was, of course, last seen at Girvan.

It was a hard enough task on a dry rail in daylight and an even harder one on a dark stormy night with little to guide a driver as to the train's exact whereabouts. Add in snow or autumn leaves and you can perhaps begin to get a sense of cab workload being high and stressful on anything other than a normal operating day. This was a wild and lonely 38 miles and in many respects was one of

the hardest roads in Scotland to drive heavy trains over. It was certainly the last place I ever worked where the driver had to feel the road beneath him at night and, with no other landmarks, a lurch to the left or right along with a slight change in speed meant something or required an adjustment to the power handle or brake controller. I suspect those who drove the West Highland Line regularly would empathise with this comment.

With all of those 863 feet to be lost before Stranraer, the train would then experience a marked rate of descent as it followed the 'Water of Luce' down to the token exchange point at Glenwhilly. This area is steeped in history and nearby places such as the 'blood moss standing stones' added to the feeling of being somewhere 'off grid'.

After another short uphill stretch, 6S75 would once again plunge downhill and around the infamous 'Swans Neck' reverse curves and the nearest I have ever seen in the UK to an Alpine hill hugging hill climb or descent. The 'Neck' as it was known to railway men was a location where heavy trains coming in the opposite direction would first encounter deep snow as they climbed away from the sea at 1:57. In autumn it was also a location where the heavy boat trains would often slip to a stand. Running southbound, the brakes would

be heating up nicely as 6S75 slowed for New Luce and the final five miles of downhill run onto more level ground at Dunragit and your first glimpse of the sea at Luce Bay and, on a clear day, the Isle of Man beyond.

An easy run would follow along the flat lands through Castle Kennedy with its former WW2 airfield and torpedo plane training school. The brakes would go on hard for Stranraer Harbour Junction as it was at the bottom of a 1:86 descent. The ultimate destination of the run would be the Stockton Haulage yard based at the stub end of the former Portpatrick branch which had closed to all traffic in 1959. Portpatrick was the embarkation point for the original short sea crossing to Donaghadee in Northern Ireland. The port only lost favour due to its being susceptible to heavy seas on stormy days and being therefore unusable for long periods.

Both return freights from Stranraer had evening departures, thus allowing the traffic to be off loaded during the day. Consequently, drivers from the former 68C Stranraer shed would be in charge and Ayr men would only take over at Falkland Yard for the evening run over the G&SW to Kingmoor Yard. This was only fair as the Stranraer men had lost so much work down the years following the closure of the 'Port Road' and, in their eyes, the Ayr men had plenty of work to Glasgow and farther afield.

The very nature of the traffic flows meant all of the Speedlink services returning from Stranraer consisted of empty vehicles and was therefore in the eyes of the new sector management unprofitable, irrespective of how many HGV trips it kept off the A75/A77.

By the time I left Ayr, the writing was already on the wall as Intercity pulled out of the Stranraer and G&SW routes in 1988, thus burdening ScotRail and Speedlink with the full costs of running this expensive to operate rural route. The national Speedlink review finally killed off daily freight traffic over Glendoune and the final freights ran for the last time in the spring of 1992. The Stockton Haulage depot soon closed, as did the unloading pad for cars at the harbour. With all its traffic lost, the R32 pilot turn soon followed and some further redundancies took place amongst the ever-dwindling ranks of Stranraer railwaymen. Thus, the final curtain came down on another chapter of Glasgow & South Western history.

In hindsight, the once buoyant freight service went into decline following the closure of the direct route to the south along with, of course, many of the traditional traffic flows ending or transferring to road haulage. The traffic flows that did cling on did remarkably well to last for as long as it did and certainly, those involved (me included) in operating freight trains the long way round via Ayr did a first class job in meeting the customers' needs, often in difficult and challenging circumstances.

The author's first book called 'A Lifetime of Deltic Locomotives' is available from Amazon, Ebay or by contacting him directly at Whitrope@outlook.com

27029 is slowing for token exchange at Glenwhilly in 1982 with a Stranraer bound parcels train.
RICHARD MACLENNAN



33026 leans into the crossover at Taunton West, bringing the empty coaching stock (ECS) back into the station having worked 2V56, the 09:15 from Bristol Temple Meads that I had travelled down on. For this move to take place, the engine at the country end was detached, ran forward, crossed over and ran up the wrong line to reach the rear of the train. Then, it propelled the whole train down far enough for it to take the crossovers in order to reach the up slow and arrive at the platform ready to work back to Bristol - how complicated! The rear of the ECS move is just passing under the magnificent western gantry that carries a plethora of signals, including a number of permissive calling-on arms that allow trains to pass the main signals at danger for access to the platforms. The '33' will be making its move in accordance with the ground based disk shunting signals.



Taunton in Transition

During the autumn of 1984, Steve Randall was half way through his degree course at the College of St. Paul and St. Mary in Cheltenham. At the start of the third-year, after a busy summer working to earn some money, he took a number of trips to the West Country in an effort to capture as many images of trains passing the mechanical signalling as possible, prior to the introduction of the multiple aspect signalling programme that was heading relentlessly westwards.

All photos on Saturday 27th October 1984



At the eastern end of Taunton station 47567, silver roofed 47533 and 37299 sit stabled in the up facing siding. I am not sure why the three locomotives were stabled there but I suspect that it may have had something to do with the extensive engineering works that were taking place in preparation for the West of England multiple aspect signalling (MAS) programme that was getting ever closer to Taunton. They left during the morning as, when I returned to the station area after lunch, they had gone.

The Somerset county town of Taunton still retained all of its Great Western signalling and two glorious signal boxes at either end of the station. At this time, there was some evidence of the re-signalling in the form of trackwork and engineering works to rationalise the track layout. For example, the relief line that went to the southern side of the station was being removed. There was also a huge amount of engineering works taking place in the eastern yard with huge piles of track stacked up.

As usual I rode my trusty bike, travelling down by train from Cheltenham on 2C14, the 07:00 Worcester to Bristol Temple Meads. This was a favoured train as it was composed of a set of locomotive hauled Mark I stock. This autumn day I was pleased to see 45104 'The Royal Warwickshire Fusilier' bring the train into the half-light at Cheltenham station. Following a reversal at Gloucester, where the locomotive ran round its train, we arrived at Bristol. This gave me a little time to see what was about and on shed at Bath Road depot. The Met. Office had forecast a stunning autumn day and they were largely correct apart from some puffy cumulus clouds in the afternoon.

From Bristol I took 2C18, the 09:15 to Taunton hauled by 33026. In 2019, this service would be handled by a unit of some kind rather than a rake of Mark I stock and noisy diesel engine up front. After arrival at Taunton, I spent a short while at the station before moving slightly west to the fabled footbridge, known locally as the Forty Steps Bridge, which was always a popular location for spotters and photographers alike.

After spending some time on the bridge, I went to Silk Mills Crossing which was located just west of Fairwater Yard. At this time it was still a level crossing on a busy road that acted a little like a western bypass linking the A358 and the A38. Huge queues of vehicles could build up on the road with barriers controlled from the lovely type 12b box built relatively late in 1940. This problem has now been overcome by the building of a substantial bridge over the line.

Following an hour or so at Silk Mills, I rode back on my bike through Taunton to the eastern side of the town to where the A358 crossed the line in an area known locally as Obridge. I finally ended up down by the Bridgewater and Taunton canal. I spent a very enjoyable time watching the fishermen on the canal bank who were totally oblivious to the varied motive power passing them probably cursing the vibrations from the trains for frightening the fish!

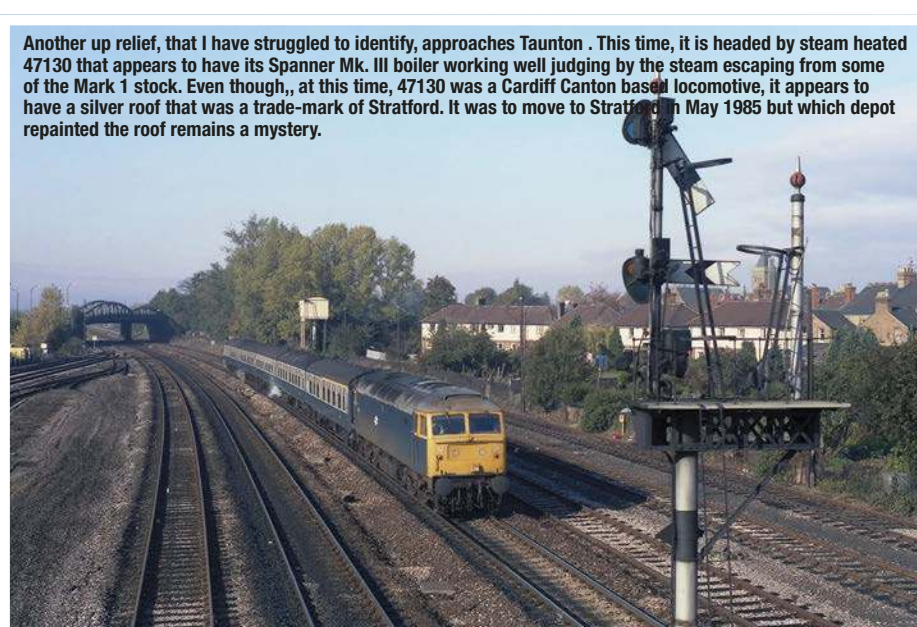
Finally, I headed back to the station for my journey home, with the light now fading into that typical soft autumnal light at about four o'clock in the afternoon. However, things did not go to plan. As 33117 was running round after arriving with 2C42, the 16:15 from Bristol, the loco failed, blocking the down slow line. This meant that the following 15:45 Paddington to Penzance HST was held just outside the station by Taunton East box. After a fairly long wait it was decided



(ABOVE) A HST set passes through Taunton at full line speed with the 09:05 Paddington to Plymouth working. This is the classic HST livery that we all remember from this era but one that, unfortunately, we took few pictures of as they were seen as the enemy; how things have changed! This picture is full of interest, from the grand signal gantry, the signal box, to the ground disc signals. However, also notice that there is track rationalisation taking place in preparation for the simplification of the track network and the introduction of the MAS programme which was still some 18 months away.



As the 09:05 Paddington to Plymouth HST passes under the Staplegrave Road bridge 47588 heads east with an unidentified up relief working. These were the type of workings that only British Rail could put on. Take a scratch set of Mark 1 stock and run it as a relief to mitigate an over-crowding or a failure issue. Could you imagine Cross Country or Great Western Railway doing this on today's railway? Autumn appears to be coming late in 1984 as it is the end of October and the trees are essentially still green.



Another up relief, that I have struggled to identify, approaches Taunton. This time, it is headed by steam heated 47130 that appears to have its Spanner Mk. III boiler working well judging by the steam escaping from some of the Mark 1 stock. Even though, at this time, 47130 was a Cardiff Canton based locomotive, it appears to have a silver roof that was a trade-mark of Stratford. It was to move to Stratford in May 1985 but which depot repainted the roof remains a mystery.

With a huge pile of track panels stacked up in the foreground, 50013 'Agincourt' rattles through Taunton working 1C27, the 09:40 London Paddington to Penzance. The removal of the track and associated signalling will have made the West Station signal box, seen behind the rear of the train, slightly less complicated to operate with a large number of the levers painted white and out of use.



Viewed across a recently ploughed field, 50023 'Howe' leads 1C35, the 10:35 Paddington to Paignton 'The Torbay Express' past Taunton's Fairwater yard as it picks up speed ready for the assault of Whiteball. The gantry towards the rear of the train has been somewhat rationalised with just two arms remaining, these being the Silk Mills home that is pulled off, and the home for the down slow where it joins the fast. The yard starters can also be seen with route describers just below them.



to reverse the HST a short distance for it to cross onto the down fast and stop it at the, then, rarely used island platform. Passengers were ushered to this platform and the HST eventually left about forty minutes late. Meanwhile, 33117 was restarted, ran round and I travelled behind it as far as Bridgewater on 2C81, the 17:40 to Bristol Temple Meads. The reason I alighted at this remote and dark and somewhat uninviting station in mid-Somerset was that I had some gen that 1C84, the 13:54 Penzance to Bristol Temple Meads (that stopped at Bridgewater but not Taunton) was headed by 50008 'Thunderer'. I fancied this for a bit of haulage so I took it to Bristol. After a short wait at Bristol I caught the 17:48 Plymouth to York HST as far as my hometown of Cheltenham. Following a dash home to my student flat and a shower I was probably in the Union Bar by 9 o'clock, not forgetting to put the clocks back before I went to bed!

Studying my field notebook from that October day in 1984, it is interesting to see how much I saw and noted, but did not photograph. As an impoverished student using 'proper' film I had to be very selective about what I took and making sure that every shot counted! It's a shame that I did not take any pictures of the DMUs and more of the HSTs. I notice that there is even an observation of an unofficially named 37247 'Cornish Railways' that did not make the cut!

In the preparation of this feature I must



(ABOVE) Yet another relief working, this time to Birmingham New Street and again composed of a uniform set of steam heated Mark 1 stock. The train is seen about to pass Silk Mills level crossing and box with 47105 leading. To the right is the remains of the bracket signal, now devoid of arms, that guarded Norton Fitzwarren Junction. This is the point where the Minehead line diverged from the mainline a short distance out of shot. 47105 was built at Loughborough's famous Brush factory and released into traffic in December 1963 as D1693. After a working life at depots all over the country there has been a happy ending for this loco as it is now preserved and, at the time of writing, can be seen running on the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire line.

45123 still wearing its 'The Lancashire Fusiliers' nameplates but devoid of the crest, at least on this side, races past Silk Mills with 1E91, the 08:53 Penzance to Newcastle service. The area in the foreground, where the fencing and scaffolding poles are, is where the present bridge is located. Are these the initial preparations for its construction? I suspect not as it was a further twenty three years until it was constructed and opened!



credit two websites that have been invaluable in supplementing my notes from the day; thebashingyears.co.uk and railgenarchive.co.uk both which carry an amazing amount of information on workings. I would also like to thank my long standing spotting companion, Andy Petrou, for proof reading my ramblings!



(ABOVE) 50022 'Anson' brings 1M83, the 10:24 Penzance to Liverpool round the curve to the east of Taunton station. Using my 135mm telephoto lens has brought a lot more detail into this view, which was taken from the inner relief road bridge. This detail includes the Quantock Hills in the far background as well as the station, the Taunton East Station Box, which was also a Type 11 box constructed in 1931, and its associated signalling. The crossovers and lines off to the left are where the goods avoiding line used to diverge from the mainline. These were in the process of being removed when this picture was taken. This station relief line permitted access to the Taunton concrete works that remained rail linked by a single spur up until its closure in 1995.



(LEFT) 47444 'University of Nottingham' leads yet another relief past Taunton East's home signals. I later identified this service to be 1V75, the 10:12 Crewe to Penzance. On this particular Saturday, at the end of October, I identified half a dozen relief workings all composed of Mark I stock and with an interesting variety of motive power up front. It is possible that so many relief trains ran because it was the end of the October half-term school holiday.



Seen from the Taunton inner relief road bridge to the east of the town, 50009 'Conqueror' and 50003 'Temeraire' double-head 1A53, the 09:32 Penzance to Paddington. During this time BR were experimenting with so-called jumbo trains for a while to improve capacity and timings: this was one of them. Having 5,400hp available should have helped the driver to keep the train to the 'enhanced' timings even with 13 coaches behind! Taunton East Station Box can be seen towards the back of the train. I love the cumulus flat-bottomed clouds with their superb cauliflower tops that dominate the skyscape.

50002 'Superb' with 1V76, the 09:36 Liverpool Lime Street to Penzance is seen slowing for its stop at Taunton. 50002 is one of the lucky members of the class that have made it into preservation. It was withdrawn in September 1991 following a power unit failure. At the time of writing, it resides at the South Devon Railway undergoing a restoration programme.



I regret that I paid little attention to HST numbers at this time. Once the 253 set numbers disappeared from the front panel, I did not bother to write down the '43' power car numbers. So, in this image, another unidentified Class 43 leaves Taunton going from the down slow (platform line) to the down fast, forming the 14:43 Paddington to Plymouth. It is passing the superb Great Western Type 11 Taunton West Station Box (built in 1931) that stood close to the end of the platforms at this end of the station.



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No. 08510 is seen hauling some empty coaching stock out of Aberdeen station to Ferryhill carriage sidings and passing under one of the long gone semaphore signal gantries. The date is 3rd September 1977.

Class 08s at large



The humble Class 08 shunting locomotive has almost disappeared from Britain's main line network, with the remaining examples largely being confined to freight terminals and maintenance depots and works. Gavin Morrison's photos give us a taste of the days when almost every rail journey would find one of them at work.



On a winter's day in West Yorkshire No. 08311 heads towards Healey Mills Yard with a trip working of loaded coal wagons. It is seen from the road bridge over where Horbury station once stood. The date is 16th February 1978.



In a most unusual sight No. 08498 is seen hauling a failed diesel multiple unit on the up main line approaching Hunslet Pepper Road in Leeds. The date is 18th October 1979.



No. 08898 hauls the stock of the overnight mail train from London Paddington out of Penzance station for servicing. The date is 12th April 1979.



No. 08295 has a light load as it passes Goose Hill Junction signal box just to the south of Normanton station. It is on the line heading for the then extensive sidings. The date is 23rd September 1983.



No. 08708 is seen shunting a rake of Freightliner wagons in the yard to the north of Ipswich station. Class 47/0 No. 47223 can just be seen waiting to take over the train. The date is 12th April 1984.



(ABOVE) No. 08754 is seen stabled inside Inverness station when it was employed on station pilot duties. The date is 30th May 1986.

(RIGHT) In the days when Holyhead had a busy Freightliner terminal, No. 08739 is shown preparing a train for departure. The date is 31st August 1989.

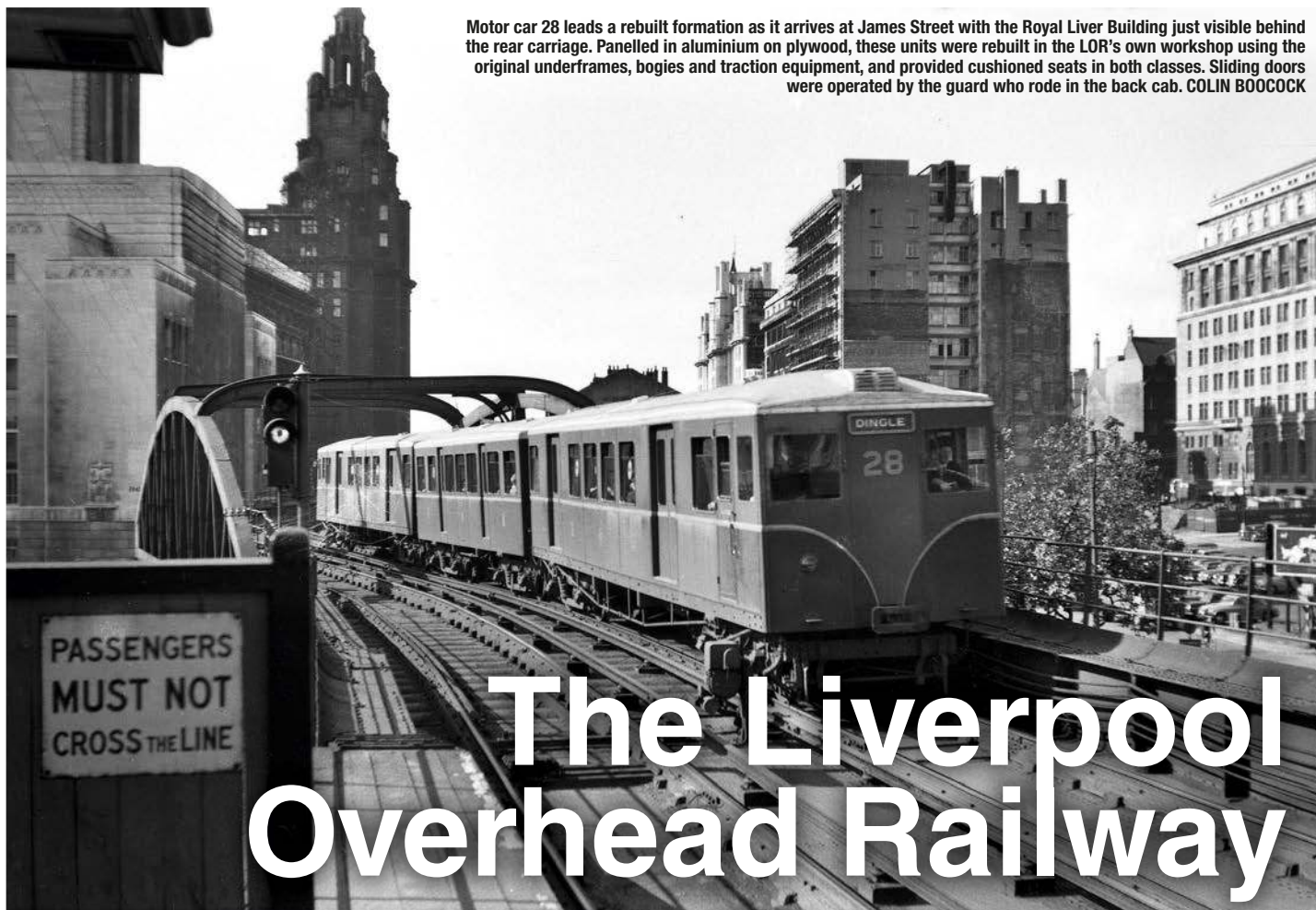


Five members of the class were modified with cut down cabs for working the Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley line in South Wales. One of them, No. 08991, is seen in immaculate condition having just been through works. It is stabled in a siding at Llanelli over a weekend. The date is 21st September 1985.



Looking very smart in EWS maroon and yellow, No. 08466 is seen hauling a rail tour at Splott Junction in Cardiff docks. Just visible at the rear of the train is 08651 which 'top and tailed' the special as it headed from Cardiff Tidal to various locations within the docks area. The train was the Monmouthshire Railway Society's 'The Splott Pilot' from Newport to Machen and back. During the day no fewer than six locomotives were used: 08466, 08651, 37420, 37519, 66091 and 66142. The date is 2nd October 1999.

Motor car 28 leads a rebuilt formation as it arrives at James Street with the Royal Liver Building just visible behind the rear carriage. Panelled in aluminium on plywood, these units were rebuilt in the LOR's own workshop using the original underframes, bogies and traction equipment, and provided cushioned seats in both classes. Sliding doors were operated by the guard who rode in the back cab. COLIN BOOCOCK



The Liverpool Overhead Railway

The Liverpool Overhead Railway ran for 63 years, from 1893 to 1956. Colin Boocock believes firmly that, had the LOR survived for two more decades, it could now be operating as a major tourist attraction.

When I first travelled on the Liverpool Overhead Railway in 1954, it was out of curiosity during a trip to visit BR's locomotive depots in the Liverpool area. I travelled north on the LOR from Pier Head station to its northern terminus at Seaforth & Litherland, and then back to Pier Head. I enjoyed the trip and vowed to come back the next year to cover the full length of the line. I had no idea then that I had missed the best part!

The idea of building a passenger railway to serve the multitude of docks along the east side of the River Mersey was not new. The docks were already linked by a complexity of railway tracks and sidings run by the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board and branches off the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway also served the docks, but these were for goods traffic. In 1878 the MD&HB had proposed an additional track with passing loops along the length of the docks area for passenger trains, but this had not got past the Board of Trade.

Ten years later, the Liverpool Overhead Railway Company proposed a double-track railway on overhead structures, high enough to be clear of the MD&HB tracks and local roads, many of which would run underneath. This was approved, and the standard gauge

overhead railway came into being, its first electric trains running on 6 March 1893 between high level stations at Herculaneum Dock in the south to Alexandra Dock in the north. Electric traction was planned after consideration of steam traction had been discouraged; the issue of sparks and ash from steam locomotives running on an elevated railway was seen as a fire hazard in the docks areas where valuable cargoes were being handled at ground level, even though the LOR structures were to be built with full width steel decking.

The LOR was 'first' in several fields. It was the world's first electric overhead railway. A conductor rail electric system was chosen with the live rail at 500-525V dc mid-way between the running rails. It was the first railway to use automatic signalling, which it did using semaphore signals from the start, the first to replace semaphore signals with colour light signalling (from 1921), and the first to use electric unit trains. (Note: Wikipedia states that they were the world's first electric multiple units, but they were not able to multiple outside each set so they were not strictly EMUs.) The LOR also claimed to be the second electric metro railway in the world, the first being the City & South London

Railway opened in 1890.

Its first regular passengers were docks workers travelling between Pier Head area stations and their various places of work along the docks strip. While the morning and evening peaks were busy, the between-peaks period saw the trains running with very light loads. So, in 1894, the LOR extended itself north to Seaforth Sands to tap into a different market, people who would use the railway for leisure, shopping and sightseeing. On 21st December 1896 a further extension southwards required a curved bridge from a repositioned Herculaneum Dock station leading the railway into the cliff face and a tunnel for half a mile to the new southern terminus at Dingle. By 1905 the northern end of the LOR had reached Seaforth & Litherland, terminating at an island platform shared with the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway's Liverpool to Southport line.

For most of its life the overhead railway offered a ten-minute interval service off-peak, increasing to a minimum interval between trains of three minutes at the high peaks. The electric traction system was changed in 1906, the live rail being placed outside the running rails, leaving the inner rail to act as the current return rail. In the 1920s

this latter was removed and return current used the running rails, a more conventional arrangement. This was all done so that the L&YR could run daily through trains from Dingle to Southport and to Aintree, a facility that stopped in 1908 (Aintree) and 1914 (Southport), though Aintree excursions still ran twice a year afterwards to take people to and from the Grand National.

The route of the LOR was mainly along the inland side of the docks area. It offered passengers excellent views of the docks and their associated facilities, roads, railways, sidings, cranes, warehouses, offices, small steam locomotive depots – every mile of the seven-miles long line was full of interest. Tourist posters in the early years of the twentieth century made much of the splendid views of the docks and river from the trains of the LOR.

The fixed overhead structure consisted of 567 spans mostly 50 feet long. The standard clearance underneath the fixed girders was 16 feet. Allegedly this wasn't always enough for conductors and passengers on the top decks of open-top buses and trams passing underneath who initially had a few accidents when standing up! There were hydraulic lifting bridges on which the railway crossed railways and roads into particular docks to give adequate clearance for special goods traffic. Until 1927, electricity was generated in the LOR's own power station at Bramley Moore Dock. That was closed when electric feeds were arranged with Liverpool Corporation through three substations equally spaced along the LOR route.

The first build of trains for the LOR was of fifteen two-car sets which came from Brown, Marshalls & Co of Saltley, Birmingham. Four more similar new sets but with shorter coaches (40ft instead of 48ft) followed in 1894. Other stock was purchased in 1906 to enable eight three-car sets to be made up. In the early twentieth century the traction motors were replaced to give 100 horse power each, or 400bhp per train. The two-car electric units were extended to three cars in 1916 to 1918 by the addition of intermediate trailer vehicles. All these cars had been well built and some were still in basically their original condition when the railway closed in 1956, by which time nineteen three-car sets were running. They had wooden seats and outward opening doors. From 1947 the LOR had made some strides in putting more modern bodies with cushioned seats and guard-operated sliding doors on the old carriage underframes. Seven units were eventually modified, all the work being undertaken in the LOR's own workshops at Seaforth Sands.

The original automatic signalling system, called I.A. Timmis's electric system, used semaphore signals. These were normally held in the 'off' (clear) position. When the conductor shoe on the leading car of a train passed over a bar by a signal, the signal arm moved to the 'on' (danger) position. It was returned to the 'off' position when the train had passed the starting signal at the next

station. In 1921 the semaphore signals were replaced by Westinghouse two-aspect colour light electric signals. With these it became possible to maintain a 100 seconds headway between trains.

The LOR's workshops were, for most of the life of the railway, sited near Seaforth Sands station. The upper floor of this was the carriage shed and coach body workshop. The lower floor contained stores, workshops for repairing components, including electric motors and control equipment, a smith's forge and a welding bay. This facility undertook all the regular maintenance and repair of the rolling stock, and housed a small selection of wagons for the infrastructure teams to use when the railway was closed (roughly from midnight to 4 a.m!). An original contractor's steam locomotive, an 1884-built Kitson 0-4-0T known as 'Lively Polly', was retained for this work by the railway from its opening through to 1947 when the LOR acquired a standard Ruston 0-4-0 diesel shunter to replace it. 'Lively Polly' went on to work the Birkenhead Monks Ferry branch until 1961. It was scrapped in August that year.

On 1st January 1948, all passenger-carrying railways (and most freight railways) in the UK were nationalised and formed British Railways. (Note: British Railways was formed out of the LMS, LNER, GWR, SR, East Kent Railway, Kent & East Sussex Railway, Mersey Railway and Cheshire Lines Committee.) The LOR was left out; was it really any more 'local' than the Mersey Railway? It appears that, because it was seen as purely a local railway, the LOR did not qualify to be taken under BR's wing. This probably sounded its death-knell.

When most passenger-carrying railways in the United Kingdom were nationalised at the start of 1948, the LOR remained an independent company. By 1956, an

engineering assessment of the condition of the overhead structure showed that there was considerable corrosion of the decking; this had arisen from the continued presence of steam shunting locomotives of both BR and the MD&HB at ground level underneath, these projecting condensate (i.e. steam) onto the underside of the decking. A cost of £2 million was estimated for repairs to enable the railway to continue. This was way beyond the resources available to the LOR company, even though the company was profitable; its profits were not enough to fund such a large capital investment. The railway made approaches to the MD&HB, to Liverpool Corporation and to British Railways. In the event no financial support could be arranged. The Liverpool Overhead Railway closed on 30th December 1956. One can only conjecture what might have happened had the LOR been nationalised in 1948 along with the other eight UK passenger-carrying railways. Might British Railways have invested enough to enable the overhead structure to continue in use? Probably not, in view of its lack of support at the time.

After closure, while there were still protests and efforts at financing going on, the structure remained for about a year. Then the whole system was demolished. Two carriages exist in preservation. One of the original motor vehicles, No 3, is on display in the Museum of Liverpool standing on a representation of the overhead structure. The other is No 7, one of the modernised trailer cars which was under tarpaulins at the Electric Railway Museum in Warwickshire which closed in 2017. This vehicle is now with the Suburban Electric Railway Association and is kept at Sellindge in Kent.

Regrettable though the closure was, had the corrosion taken another twenty years



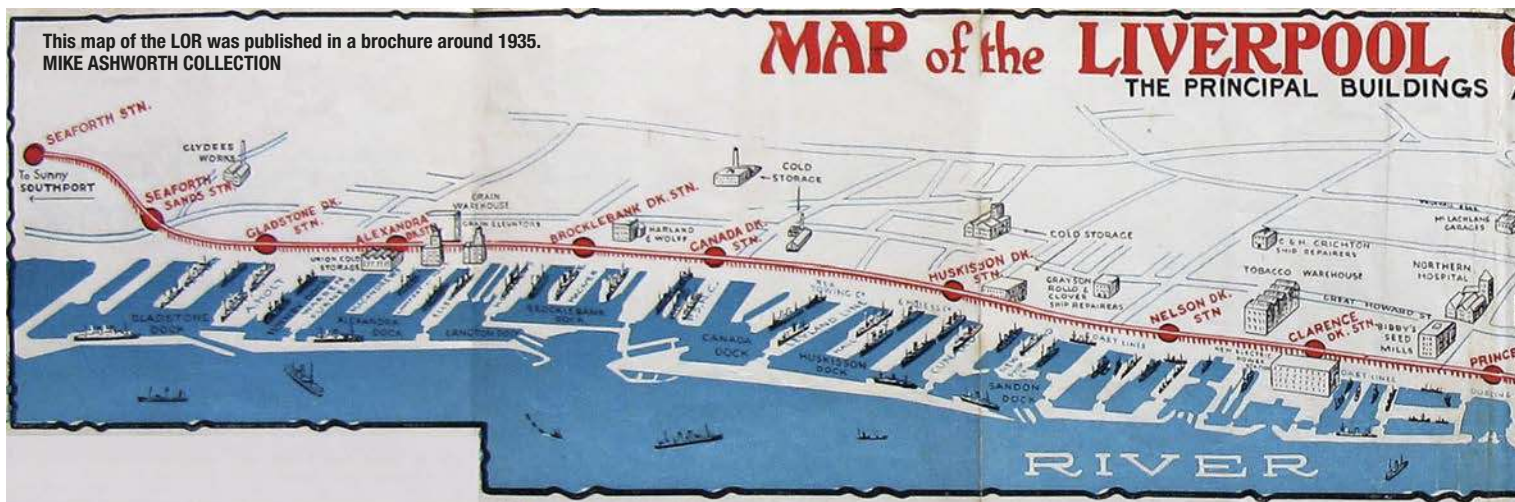
Sixty-two years old and going strong, one of the original electric units leaves James Street station heading south on the Liverpool Overhead Railway on 13th August 1954. The timber carriage bodies are panelled with teak slats, as is the interior together with its wooden seats for third class passengers. Access doors were outward-swinging slam doors, three doors on a third class carriage side, and two doors per side on the first class centre cars.

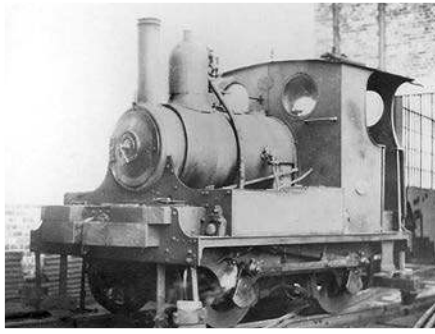
COLIN BOOCOCK

to emerge I suggest things might have been very different. By the 1970s and 1980s the UK was much more prosperous than in the 1950s. Repairs to the LOR structures would have been affordable. It is exciting to imagine the Liverpool Overhead Railway still running today as a major tourist attraction. But that is purely imagination, and of course it's not to be. Sad, really.

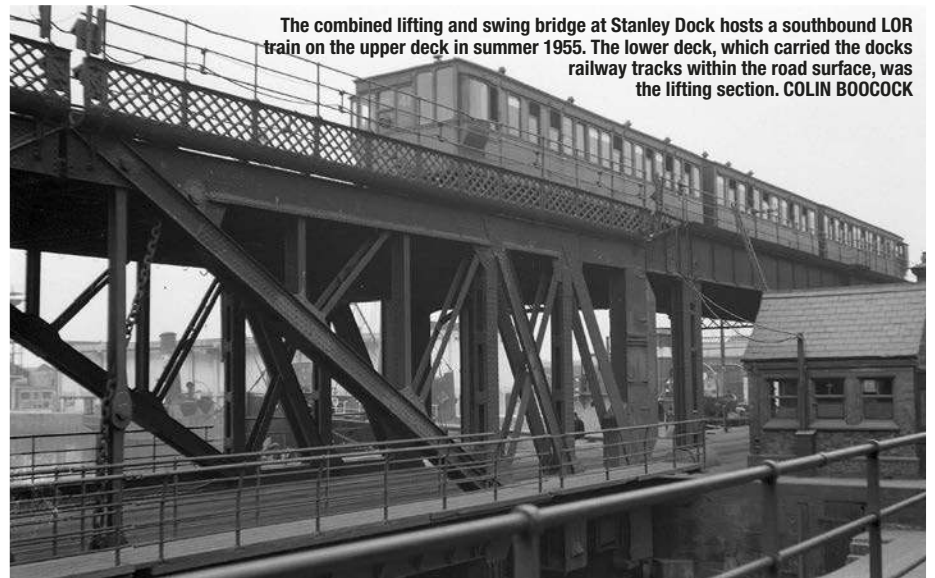
(BELOW) Dingle station was the only underground station on the LOR. One of the rebuilt units stands ready to leave for Seaforth Sands in 1955. D.J. NORTON

(BELOW) Seen from the steps that led up to Herculaneum Dock station in 1955, an LOR train heads across the curved bridge that led into the cliff face and the half-mile tunnel to the southern terminus at Dingle. The BR freight yard in the foreground includes a couple of new carriages built in the UK for export. Twenty-nine years later this area would be transformed into the Liverpool Garden Festival site. COLIN BOOCCOCK





(ABOVE) For around 45 years the LOR used this Kitson 0-4-0 well tank locomotive to move infrastructure trains and to de-ice the conductor rails. Nicknamed 'Lively Polly', presumably after a brand of dry soap ('Will wash clothes without rubbing'), it was built in 1884 and supplied to the West Lancashire Railway before being sold on to the LOR by 1893. The photograph shows it outside the workshops at Seaforth Sands with conductor rail cleaners attached ready for a de-icing patrol. It worked there until 1947, and later in Birkenhead until 1961 when it was scrapped. UNKNOWN



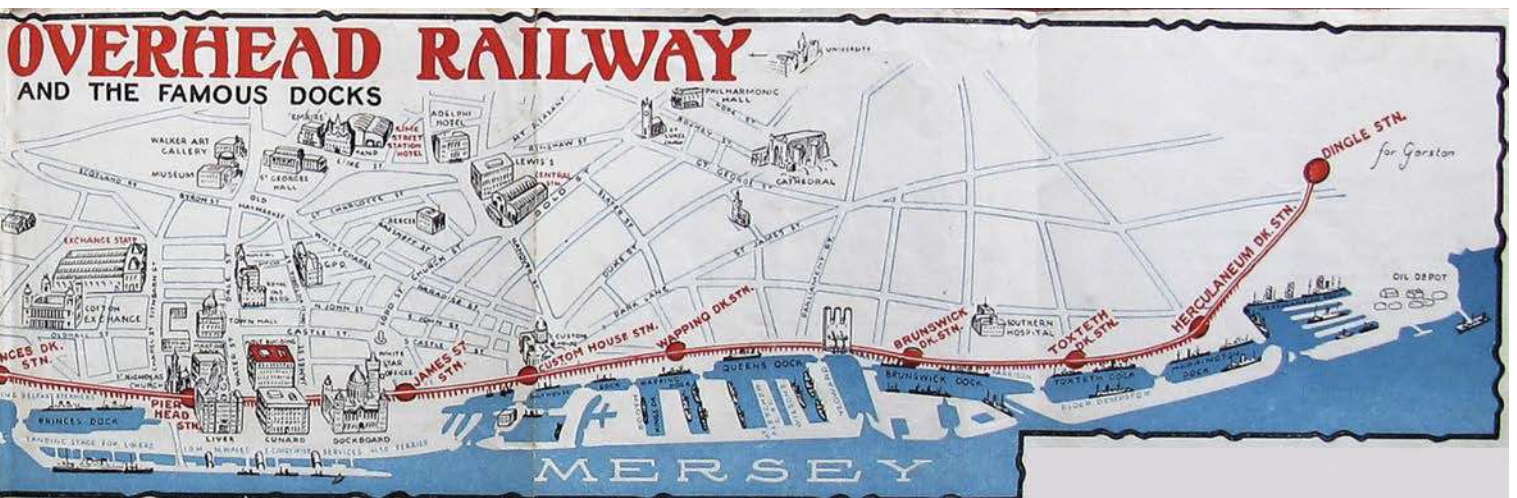
The combined lifting and swing bridge at Stanley Dock hosts a southbound LOR train on the upper deck in summer 1955. The lower deck, which carried the docks railway tracks within the road surface, was the lifting section. COLIN BOOCCOCK



(ABOVE) Inside the upper storey of the LOR workshops at Seaforth Sands is car 10 as part of a three-car unit nearing the end of its rebuild in summer 1955. Only eighteen months later the railway would close. Even though it was profitable, the company could not afford the cost of repairs to the overhead structure and decking. COLIN BOOCCOCK



(RIGHT) This LOR poster, probably from 1902 and issued in Ireland, boasts: 'Visitors to Liverpool should not fail to take a trip on the railway as it affords panoramic views for 6½ miles of the finest docks and shipping in the world.' The first class fare quoted was 3d, third class 2d, and that for any distance – an early example of one-price charging for affordable travel. This was indeed a forward-looking railway! UNKNOWN





The replacement of 'Lively Polly' was this Ruston standard 0-4-0 diesel mechanical of the manufacturer's type 48DS, seen in 1955 inside the carriage shed at Seaforth Sands. It had a 48bhp Ruston 4YC diesel engine, mechanical four-speed gearbox and chain drive to the wheels. Two locomotives of this type also worked for British Railways: DS1169 at Broad Clyst civil-engineering depot near Exeter, and ED10 at Beeston creosote works. COLIN BOOCOCK

For this photograph the author was standing on workshop territory at Seaforth Sands under the supervision of an LOR engineer. Car 13 is seen heading a unit bound for Seaforth & Litherland, taking the curve into the station at Seaforth Sands. The semaphore signal on the right controls egress from the main depot and workshops. A naval vessel bristling with equipment can be seen among the background dock cranes. COLIN BOOCOCK



One of the causes of corrosion of the decking and structures of the Liverpool Overhead Railway was the emissions from steam locomotives below that belonged to both British Railways and Mersey Docks & Harbour Board. A BR example, one-time from the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, is 0-4-OST 51253 seen trundling along under the LOR with three wagons in tow. The engine's smoke deflection plate is swung over the chimney to deflect the steam, but one can question its effectiveness. UNKNOWN

Letters

CLASS 31s ON THE GREAT CENTRAL

D5842 is seen on 1N83, the 11:16 a.m. Bournemouth to York, on 2nd June 1962 at an unknown location. TRANSPORT TREASURY: MIKE MITCHELL



The article 'The London Midland Region in Transition' in TRACTION 250 wasn't very clear about the history of diesel locomotives on the through train from York or Newcastle to Bournemouth, via the Great Central and Banbury. The first known use of a diesel locomotive was on 4th October 1961, when D5637 was captured by the official Brush photographer on the northbound train at Loughborough Central. Brush Type 2s took over regular working from steam some time just before end May 1962. A dmu working, running only to Banbury and back, had been substituted for the locomotive hauled trains between 30th October 1961 and 14th April 1962. The next known Brush Type 2 working was D5656 on 29th May 1962: D5656 was one of three 1600hp Brush locomotives then based at Darnall, the others being D5655 and D5657. These were the usual performers on the Bournemouth turn during summer 1962, but a 1365hp locomotive was sometimes provided instead such as D5817, the example in the article, on 11th June 1962. D5655, D5656 and D5657 had moved to Darnall near the end of 1961, mainly to work the 'Master Cutler' to and from Kings Cross. Darnall's first batch of English Electric Type 3s, D6742-54, should have been used, but were delivered many months late. From April 1962 Darnall had D0280 'Falcon' and the 2000hp Brush D5835 for the 'Master Cutler', so D5655, D5656 and D5657 were available for other duties, until they were returned to East Anglia at the end of the summer timetable.

D6742-54 were eventually delivered in summer 1962 and began work on the 'Master Cutler' and Bournemouth jobs from the start of the winter timetable on 10th September 1962. That is when through working from Sheffield Victoria to Banbury and back commenced on the Bournemouth turn; in the summer 1962 timetable the locomotive from Sheffield Victoria only worked to Leicester Central and back.

The 1600hp Brush locomotives were not just uprated versions of the 1365hp locomotives; they had a different cooling system from the 1365hp variant. The 1600hp power units were only exchanged between the locomotives fitted with that cooling system, these being D5545 and D5655-70. It would not have been possible to run D5817 at 1600hp, or any 1365hp locomotive, because the cooling system would have been inadequate, and uprating to 1600hp can be ruled out as an explanation for D5817's performance.

In the article there was a photo of an EE Type 3 which was recorded as D6702 but that's unlikely as D6702 was a Stratford loco. The EE Type 3s used on the Bournemouth job were Darnall locos from the D6742-D6754 and D6796-D6818 batches.

(Ed: Close examination of photo confirms it was actually D6802, which was allocated to Darnall on 4th January 1963 and then Tinsley from April 1964 to October 1971. This is backed up by the lack of multiple working blue star symbols above the buffer beam on the loco in the photograph. A photograph of D6802 at King's Cross in 1965 shows the locomotive had no blue stars, whilst several photos on the internet show D6702 with blue stars, including one after reallocation to Wath in 1967.)

MARK CHAPLIN, BY EMAIL

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FREIGHT MATTERS

Although not a railway modeller I enjoy the modelling section in TRACTION and issue 249's instalment was no exception, featuring the superb 'Blue is the Colour' layout. I also enjoyed Andy York's coverage of the British Oxygen Company (BOC) tanker wagons. Such tank wagons were often to be seen operating as block trains between Ditton and the Monmore Green BOC terminal in Wolverhampton, which opened in 1971. These were often powered by Class 40s during the early 1980s. A selection of images of the Wolverhampton BOC train being Class 40-hauled in the Black Country region can be found on David Rostance's Flickr stream. The electric-hauled southbound BOC train pictured at Carlisle could well be the empties from Polmadie to Ditton. Such traffic also operated from Ditton to various other destinations in either block train or wagonload consignments, which, in addition to purpose-built BOC terminals, such as Wembley and Wolverhampton, also included steelworks and some less obvious receiving locations, such as Ipswich, Morris Cowley and Mossend (PD Stirling). I believe the last BOC flows to run on rail were those from Ditton to Sheerness Steelworks (handled for a while between Willesden and destination by the short-lived post-Speedlink venture 'Tiger Freightways', operated by Tiger Rail) and Ipswich, the latter surviving briefly into the Transrail era and producing Class 56 haulage.

I have always had a soft spot for the West London Line (WLL) and have found it to be a fascinating cross-city axis, especially during the 1970s (see article in TRACTION 224), and I very much look forward to one day seeing Andy Gibbs's Kensington Olympia layout on the exhibition circuit. As Andy mentions, Class 25s were indeed frequent performers on cross-London transfer freights via the WLL, such as between Willesden Yard and the Southern Region yards at Hither Green and Norwood. They could also be seen working coal trips formed of uniformed rafts of 16-tonners from Willesden to Chelsea Basin Goods (closed in 1981 and now the site of the plush Chelsea Harbour development). Such coal workings to Chelsea Basin sometimes included a brake tender positioned behind the loco, thus adding a further element of modelling interest (a brake tender or two could sometimes be found behind the locomotives of Acton Yard to Wimbledon coal trains as well). Some cracking images featuring the WLL, including those of Class 25-hauled coal and mixed goods trains passing through "Kenny-O", can be found on the Rail-Online website.

Finally with regards to my Dudley line feature in TRACTION 249, a paragraph in the left hand column on page 8 needs some clarification after being partially edited. It should read as follows: 'This 7-mile section was closed and 'mothballed' in March 1993 pending its possible re-opening to heavy rail traffic or more likely, as now seems to be the case, as a light rail extension of the existing Midland Metro, which opened between Birmingham (Snow Hill) and Wolverhampton (St. George's) in May 1999 using, for the most part, the trackbed of the former GWR main line between these two points.'

DAVID J. HAYES, WEDNESBURY

Letters

DEUTSCHE BAHN CLASS 218 DECLINE



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Further to my article in TRACTION 237 there have been further developments in Bavaria that have reduced the amount of Class 218 operation. Since the 9th December 2018 timetable change DB Regio has lost the contract for München and Augsburg to Füssen services which has been taken over by Bayerische Regiobahn. This has meant the end of '218' use on these turns leaving just the München to Zürich EC and the two IC turns on the Oberstdorf branch with one or two duties on the München to Mühldorf service. The photo, taken on 8th December, shows 218.429 on the 14:06 Füssen to München at Buchloe.

IAN BUCK, BY EMAIL

CLASS 40 PERFORMANCE

I have been alerted by a friend to the article by Andrew James titled 'The London Midland in Transition' in TRACTION 248, where he analysed the climb from Tebay to Shap Summit and found that there had been a reduction in power after Scout Green. He quoted a text from an article I wrote for the Railway Performance Society's magazine 'Milepost' that I "attributed this to low coolant levels which tripped a device known as a Mowbray Float that shut down the engine via a solenoid".

I have stated in other articles a reason for the driver to reduce power often noted by enthusiasts travelling behind '40s' during that period over this section of line but not the one used by Andrew James in this instance. The cooling system of Class 40s with trains of 400+ tons was unable to keep coolant temperatures within working limits working over the steep upgrades of the northern section of the WCML (and other routes as well). This would be indicated to the driver by a general fault light on the driver's cab desk instrumentation, which would need the secondman to check fault indications on a panel in the engine room. The appropriate action would be to reduce power, reducing the load on the engine so the coolant temperature would fall, then wait for the fault light to extinguish before taking full power again. The driver had to decide how much to reduce power as no guidance was given, so his experience would determine his actions. Failure to act would lead to a loss of oil pressure as the lubrication oil would thin and the locomotive would be a failure. High water temperature was a regular occurrence, and some crews would have a friendly 'bet' as to the location in the journey where the fault light would first illuminate. Alan Varley, a prolific train timer from that period who travelled extensively on all forms of traction, has documented many runs when he noted the reduction in power taking place.

However, this may not be the only reason why Andrew James's calculations give an apparent reduction in power. When decelerating, diesel locomotives with electric transmission go through a process known as field reversion as the electrical transmission changes fields. To complete the process, the engine of a Class 40 could be heard seeming to noticeably reduce revs or even cut out for a few seconds. At this moment, the train would decelerate faster than previously, so any calculation made over a section of line where field reversion took place would give lower figures than those made previously or subsequently, and be unrepresentative of the locos capability. This may be an alternative explanation to the mysterious drop in power output highlighted in Andrew James's text. For a train timer to be aware of this would need continuous monitoring of the sound of the locomotive by being close to the front of the train; or detailed timings to mileposts or other railway structures to pinpoint where the speed drop took place that was out of proportion to the previous deceleration rate.

I was rather surprised when I realised that I was being quoted in an article making a historical survey about locomotive performance from 55 years ago and the implication that I would have the knowledge to explain what was taking place. I then realised after reading the article that I was only 4 years old at the time! My historical insight of what was happening has been gained through conversations with drivers and secondmen who worked the trains at that time and most of whom have now retired or even passed away.

In 1963 (the time of the journey with D326) as a small child I would see Class 40s on the Manchester to Glasgow sleeper or Newcastle to Liverpool trains. I remember being slightly in fear of what seemed to be enormous, noisy and snarling locomotives. They impressed me more than any steam locomotive.

STEVE GRIFFIN, BY EMAIL



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