

TWIN 50s TO GLASGOW • EASTLEIGH • CREWE IN 1980s

TRACTION

A CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC DIESELS & ELECTRICS

ISSUE 258
JUL/AUG 2020

HAYMARKET DEPOT

- **HAPPY DAYS ON THE NLL**
- **1990s DUDLEY LINE**



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MODELLING

- **Model Railway: Scorbton**
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TRACTION
issue 259 will
be on sale
Friday 31st
July



Welcome to TRACTION, which you will notice has fewer pages than normal. As this issue is being prepared we are in the middle of the difficulties caused by the Covid-19 virus. Because of this we have decided to reduce the number of pages. However, the good news is that we have managed to keep almost all the planned content of TRACTION 258.

We start with an article about the short period in the early 1970s when pairs of Class 50s powered the principal West Coast Main Line expresses north of Crewe to Glasgow. This allowed a significant acceleration of services before the new electric services started. David Clough and Jon Littlewood discuss the problems that BR faced on this demanding route.

Eastleigh was, and still is, a superb location to watch both passenger and freight trains. Back in the 1970s and 1980s there was of course more variety than today. A selection of John Dedman's photographs take us back in time to the days before the 'Voyagers' and Class 66s.

Regular readers of TRACTION will have been following the series of articles by Mick Humphrys about his days on the footplate along the southern end of the West Coast Main Line. In this issue we begin a two-part article about the years when he drove electric multiple units along the North London Line. Little has been written about this subject so we are particularly pleased that Mick has written about his time driving these less glamorous trains.

David Hayes concludes his series of articles about closed freight lines in the West Midlands. This time he recalls the end of operations on the Wednesbury and Dudley line in the 1990s.

Ken Horan worked on the footplate in the Sheffield area in the 1960s and took photos of the EM1 electric locos at Sheffield Victoria in the closing months of the passenger services over the Woodhead line. Moving north to Edinburgh Gavin Morrison paid many visits to the depot at Haymarket when it was still responsible for maintaining a wide variety of locomotives including the 'Deltics' and Class 47/7s and he has chosen just a few images to give us a taste of what it was like in the 1970s and 1980s.

Most British enthusiasts will have memories of that most exciting of railway centres, Crewe. Growing up in this Cheshire town Michael

Hitchen followed developments and gives us a taste of what it was like to live there in the BR Blue years.

In TRACTION MODELLING we feature a superb 4mm scale layout by the Kendal Model Railway Club. 'Scorbiton' is inspired by the railways in Shropshire and is notable for both the high standard of the scenic treatment as well as its realistic portrayal of railway operations in the mid- 1980s.

Stephen



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Publisher: Steve Cole

E: stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk

Editor: Stephen Rabone

E: steveabone@hotmail.com

ADVERTISING AND PRODUCTION

Advertising Account Manager:

Bev Machin T: 01778 392055

E: bevm@warnersgroup.co.uk

Advertising Account Manager:

Hollie Deboo T: 01778 395078

E: hollie.deboo@warnersgroup.co.uk

Ad Production:

Allison Mould T 01778 395002

E: allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk

Design: Amie Carter

Ad Design: Amie Carter

Printed by: Warners Midlands plc

MARKETING

Marketing Manager: Carly Dadge

T: 01778 392440

E: carlyd@warnersgroup.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION

News Trade, Warners Distribution:

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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F: 01778 421706

E: subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH

BACK ISSUES

Tel: 01778 391180

E: subsaccecetteam@warnersgroup.co.uk

West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH

CONTRIBUTIONS TO TRACTION

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55018 and 47268 are seen outside Haymarket depot on 3rd June 1978.
GAVIN MORRISON



E-mail: steveabone@hotmail.com

Editorial postal address:

120 Churchill Road,
Middlesbrough TS6 9NS



Without an allocation of its own, Glasgow Polmadie depot could only return south the incoming traction that had arrived from Crewe. The up 'Royal Scot', 1M20, had its booked pair on this day in 1973, with 425 leading. DAVE COBBE/RAIL PHOTOPRINTS

Twin Class 50s to Glasgow

In the first of a two-part feature looking at double-headed Class 50 operation north of Crewe, David Clough and Jon Littlewood explain the background to the four year spell from May 1970 when pairs of Class 50s were diagrammed for the principal daytime Anglo-Scottish services.

Whether to electrify the West Coast Main Line (WCML) between Euston and Glasgow proved to be a controversial issue spanning over a decade. The route was chosen over the East Coast as part of the 1955 modernisation plan, with the scheme covering the lines from Euston to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Liverpool and Manchester.

In their infinite wisdom, the professional railway officers within the British Transport Commission ignored the counsel of the private sector Commission members to electrify the whole route and sanctioned only the lines between Manchester and Crewe, followed by Liverpool to Crewe. When the time came to authorise wiring south of Crewe, times had changed: government money was tight, British Railways was turning in unacceptable losses and political and public support had gone.

In 1960, the Minister of Transport refused to sanction West Coast electrification between Euston and Crewe until there had been a fresh assessment of the project.

The choice between diesel and electric traction was finely balanced but the Minister gave the go-ahead in January 1961. Services to Liverpool and Manchester started in April 1966 and the whole scheme was completed the following year.

Prior to this, BR and the Ministry of Transport had been debating what to do about the northern half of the WCML beyond the limit of the overhead wires at Weaver Junction, 16 miles north of Crewe and where the railway to Liverpool diverged from the main route north. The choice of diesel or electric motive power was, again, finely balanced but a national economic emergency, which led to the (for the time) unprecedented devaluation of Sterling, made the decision: there was no money for electrification.

The Class 50s arrive

In 1967, BR gained authority for the minimum possible number of new Type 4 diesels to permit the elimination of steam traction, which was eventually concentrated in North West England and was finally withdrawn in August 1968. By

then, construction of the 50 new English Electric Type 4s (the later Class 50s) was well under way but these offered nothing better in terms of power than the Brush Type 4s, (the later Class 47s) that were already operating the principal expresses north of Crewe.

Timetabling Anglo Scottish express passenger services at the target of an average speed of 75mph was impossible for several reasons. First, a 2,700hp diesel could not haul the booked timing load of 455 tons over the route at anything even close to that average. Secondly, the track had not been upgraded for decades and was blighted by speed restrictions south of Preston. Finally, there was a blanket 75mph speed ceiling across the whole of the Scottish Region, due to signal spacing and associated train braking issues.

The 227 miles between Weaver Junction and Glasgow Central at the turn of the decade was a railway that had seen no significant investment since nationalisation in 1948. Compared to, say, the line out of Paddington, it was anything but a speedway, especially in South

The old WCML, portrayed here by semaphore signals, witnesses 404 coasts past Springs Branch towards Wigan on a service from Euston that will divide at Preston into portions for Blackpool and Carlisle. TRIANGLE PUBLISHING (ALF YATES)



With electrification work underway by late 1971, 430 and 427 pass Newton le Willows Merseyside, with 1S47, the 08:00 Euston to Glasgow Central. DAVID CLOUGH





Class 50s gather at Carlisle on 23rd February 1974. 50028 and 405 wait to depart for Glasgow with 1S47, the 08:00 from Euston to Glasgow, whilst 50024 waits to take the empty stock of 1P16, the 09:28 from Crewe, out to Kingmoor depot for servicing. DAVID CLOUGH



On 6th April 1974 50038 and 50008 on the 13:55 Glasgow to Euston depart Preston on the most taxing leg of the trip, where full power will be required for over 50% of the journey. DAVID CLOUGH

Lancashire, where piecemeal construction at the dawn of the railway age had left a legacy of some poorly aligned junctions.

The need for many connecting sidings and station yards meant there were well over 100 manual boxes between Weaver Junction and Carlisle (a distance of 125 miles), whilst the average spacing in South Lancashire was less than one mile apart. A knock-on effect was enforced short gaps between distant and home signals, which restricted speeds due to braking distances.

Tardy reaction by a signalman when the boxes were close together meant getting a clear road for a fast passenger train was something of a lottery, aside from conflicting moves and density of traffic. Published logs bear witness to the frequency of signalling delays between Warrington and Preston.

The focus of attention on the WCML is always on the northern banks but, in truth, Warrington to Preston was a more difficult proposition because of the regularity of out of course checks, frequent speed restrictions and relatively short but tricky gradients that are as steep as the southbound ascent of Shap in places.

The case for modernisation, aside from electrification, was clear-cut in operational terms. Super elevating the track at places such as Winwick and Golborne Junctions would raise permitted speeds by at least 10mph. 100mph was a practical proposition where 90mph or even just 75mph was the best at the time.

When electrification of the southern half of the WCML was authorised, the

Sunday diversions over the Settle and Carlisle route left the WCML free for engineering work. 427 and 438 pass Lostock Hall Junction near Preston with 1S59, a Euston to Glasgow service on 22nd July 1973. RAIL PHOTOPRINTS – COLLECTION

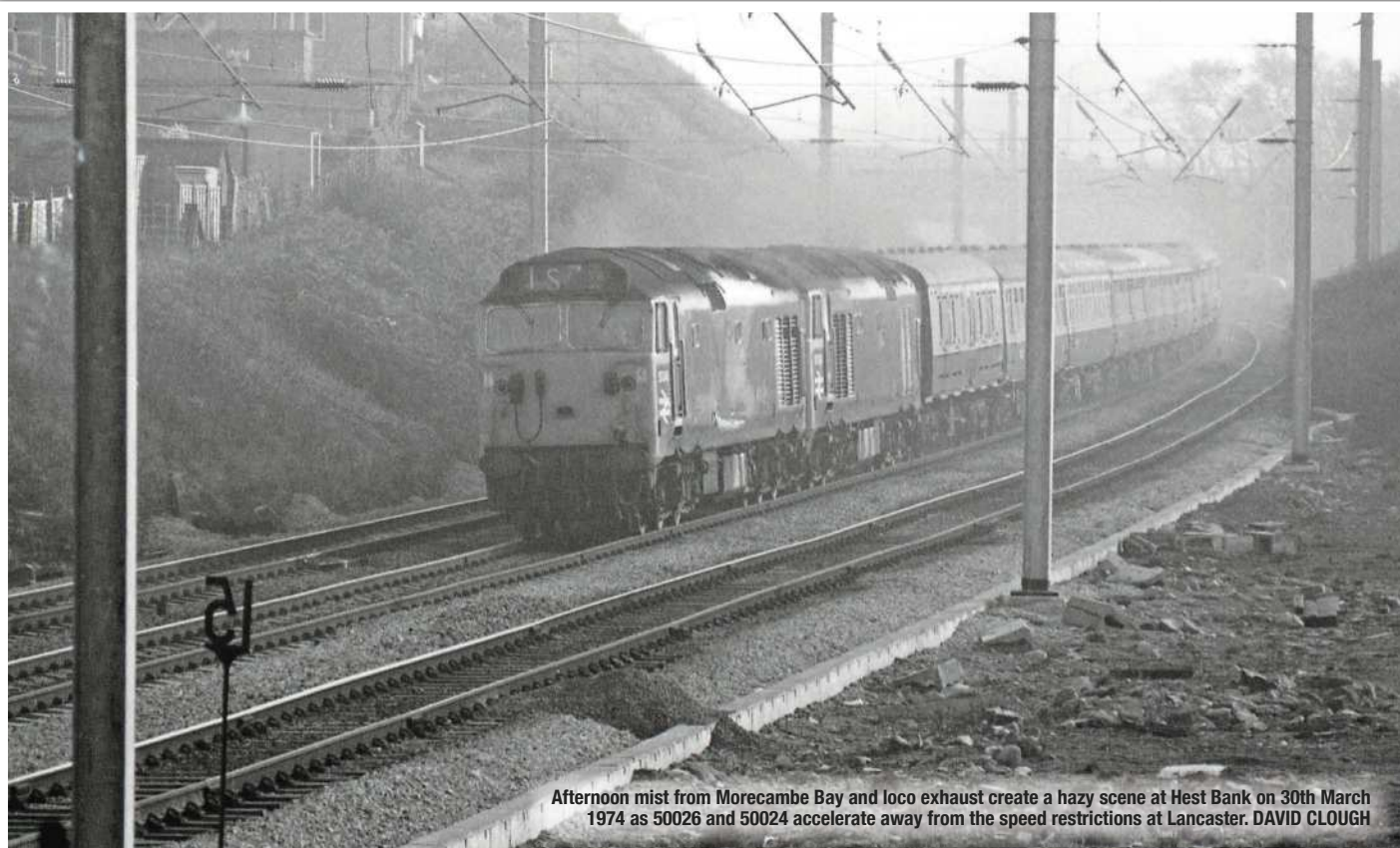


London Midland Region changed its Type 4 allocation plans. Up until then, the Class 44 'Peaks' had largely been found on the route, with plans to deploy Class 40s on the Midland Lines. This changed so that the more powerful 'Peaks' went instead to the Midland and the '40s' to the LMR's Western Lines, where eventual electrification would see them displaced by powerful electric traction.

Whilst the new policy was sensible at the time, when some in BR hoped for complete electrification to Glasgow, BR's chairman told the Ministry of Transport that the

financial advantage lay with diesel traction for the northern part of the route. At the start of 1970, the recent arrival of the Class 50s had permitted the displacement of Class 40s from diagrams on virtually every passenger train north of Crewe, backed up by Class 47s for air-braked freight. The '40s' now powered other freights and deputised for the lack of a more powerful Type 4.

Even the timetable had seen only limited change at the start of 1970. A sleeper service ran from Liverpool and Manchester to Glasgow and there were daytime trains between Euston, Birmingham and



Afternoon mist from Morecambe Bay and loco exhaust create a hazy scene at Hest Bank on 30th March 1974 as 50026 and 50024 accelerate away from the speed restrictions at Lancaster. DAVID CLOUGH

Perth. The splitting of trains at Preston to provide portions for Blackpool, Barrow/Workington, Windermere and Carlisle was sensible and continued until full electrification in May 1974. The May 1970 timetable, however, saw curtailment of the Windermere coaches and through daytime journeys to Perth, as well as the overnight working between the North West and Scotland.

Timetable recast

Although route upgrading – track and signal modernisation – was authorised in 1969, electrification to Glasgow was not waved through until March 1970. BR had already planned a speed-up of its Anglo Scottish operations and these commenced on 4th May 1970. From that date, the timetable was recast, with the provision of double-headed Class 50s for the five return daytime London to Glasgow workings, as well as the morning trains from Birmingham and Liverpool/Manchester to Glasgow/Edinburgh and the balancing ones in the late afternoon, which shed and regained the Edinburgh portion at Carstairs.

These seven trains were covered by eight diagrams. Whilst those from Birmingham and the North West were self-contained out-and-back jobs, the first locomotives that arrived from London into Glasgow and Glasgow into Crewe were turned round for an afternoon service. Crewe Diesel Depot was the motive power hub and Class 50 home depot. Glasgow

Polmadie could only return south what had arrived from Crewe because it had no Type 4 allocation of its own.

The May 1970 timetable certainly ushered in a superior journey time, with savings typically of 45 to 60 minutes between London and Glasgow, the down 'Royal Scot' now being booked in 5hr 54min, inclusive of calls at Crewe and Carlisle. Some point-to-point timings north of the Border were a little odd because they required average speeds in excess of the 75mph line limit. The 16min Carlisle to Penrith start-to-pass allowance was also too tight and was later eased by half a minute.

The 1970 schedules represented the best that was achievable under prevailing track and signalling conditions. In fact, the issue of short signal block sections and high-speed trains forced the introduction of special signalling arrangements for the accelerated timings workings, as they were known. This involved having a double block section (two signal boxes) notified of the approach of a train, in order to reduce the risk of signal checks caused by sloppy clearing of the road.

Of course, eight turns for pairs of '50s' absorbed 16 of the 35 units that were diagrammed each day for service, 70% of the class total. At times of poor availability, Crewe could not always spare two machines and a solo '50' had to cope.

There is no doubt that the installation of modern signalling in place of the old semaphores would have allowed faster

schedules north of Carlisle. The 1969 track improvements would also have raised line speeds and eased some speed restrictions, such as 60mph at Shap summit. In 1970, once past Weaver Junction, there were only four short sections cleared for 100mph, at Moore (south of Warrington), Milnthorpe (south of Oxenholme), Plumpton to Southwaite (north of Penrith) and finally north of Carlisle as far as Gretna Junction.

Authorisation of electrification between Weaver Junction and Glasgow in March 1970 meant that the schedules had to be eased by, typically, 35 minutes from May 1971 to permit the civil engineering work to be carried out. From July 1973, completion of the work south of Preston enabled some traction changing to be done at this point but all the trains that had been rostered for twin '50' power in May 1970 continued to be so booked right up to May 1974, when the full 'Electric Scots' timetable was inaugurated.

Changing to electric traction at Preston from July 1973 released one or two '50s' for transfer to the Western Region. From April 1974, however, a trickle of Class 50s began to move to the Western ahead of the mass transfer, which took place over the weekend of 4th/5th May. During the last week of the Winter 1973 timetable, fewer and fewer of the services had their booked pair, especially those that migrated to diesel at Preston. Punctuality was not an issue because, apart from on Saturday 4th May, all the civil engineering work was complete and the liberal recovery



From July 1973 some trains changed between electric and diesel power at Preston rather than Crewe. On 6th April 1974 50044 and 50046 have just replaced 86211 heading the 12:05 Euston to Glasgow and lay down an exhaust trail departing Preston. DAVID CLOUGH



During the last weeks of diesel operation on the WCML, 50030 and 50029 double head a Euston to Glasgow service past Elvanfoot in the Upper Clyde Valley in April 1974. DAVID ANDERSON/RAIL PHOTOPRINTS



Part of modernisation involved taking Carnforth's WCML platforms out of use to permit track realignment for higher speed. On 30th March 1974 50009 sweeps through the former platforms with 1M35, the 13:55 Glasgow-Euston that was booked for a pair of '50s'. DAVID CLOUGH

time meant a single loco had no difficulty maintaining the schedules.

During July and August 1970, locos 409 and 413 were instrumented and each made one return trip between Crewe and Glasgow as one of a booked pair. Analysis of the data collected identified several points of interest, which will be considered in part 2 of this feature. Estimates showed full power to be applied in bursts of only two to three minutes, even climbing Shap and Beattock, though only one of the four climbs during the two return runs was unchecked.

Unsurprisingly, the blanket 75mph limit in Scotland meant the sections in that Region returned the lowest time on full load of 21% and 29% between Carlisle and Glasgow and return. The highest figure was 53% between Preston and Crewe, which reflects the long climb away from Preston and the 100mph running against the grade from Weaver Junction to Crewe. Overall, the northbound journey required 26% on full power, compared to 33% southbound. These load factors show how much in hand two '50s' had whilst working over the railway as it was in 1970. It is to be regretted that such a combination never got the chance to operate against schedules based on the route as it became in 1974.



InterCity liveried 47812 is speeding through the station with 1006, the 06:18 Manchester Piccadilly to Poole inter-regional express on 9th April 1992. Today this is usually a Cross Country four car Class 220 'Voyager', although they do run more frequently than in the past.

(BELOW) On 5th September 1984 47125 is coming off the Romsey line at East Junction with two loaded HTV coal hoppers and Esso 45 ton LPG TTV tanks. Out of sight behind the LPG tanks were TTV bitumen tanks and SFV and JGV steel coil wagons. The tanks were destined for Fawley and the steel wagons for Hamworthy.





The major railway centre of Eastleigh lies on the Waterloo to Southampton, Bournemouth and Weymouth main line where secondary routes from Salisbury via Romsey and Chandlers Ford and from Fareham and Portsmouth join the South Western main line. As well as being a major passenger station, Eastleigh has extensive freight yards and a major locomotive and rolling stock works. John Dedman presents a selection of his images of this busy junction taken during the 1980s and 1990s.

'Dutch' liveried 73119 'Kentish Mercury' is shunting Network SouthEast Mark 2 coaches at the entrance to the depot sidings. The rear coach of the set is in Regional Railways livery. In the background can be seen two snowploughs.



33012 has passed Eastleigh on the down through line with eleven GUVs in BR plain blue livery. It is 1B05, the 07:58 Waterloo to Southampton Western Docks parcels. The headcode is 96, headcode 95 was used for trains to the Eastern Docks.



When visiting Eastleigh it has always been, and still is today, worth checking the loco stabling sidings next to platform 3 or from the Bishopstoke Road bridge. This is locally known as 'Death Bridge' because of the very narrow kerb when looking north from the bridge. On 4th June 1987 there were two blue Class 08 shunters, 47363 'Billingham Enterprise' in its Thornaby livery, blue 47207 with an Eastfield scottie dog emblem and ex works 73117. In Platform 3 are Hampshire units on local passenger workings and in the background is a long line of parcels and newspaper vans in the sidings.



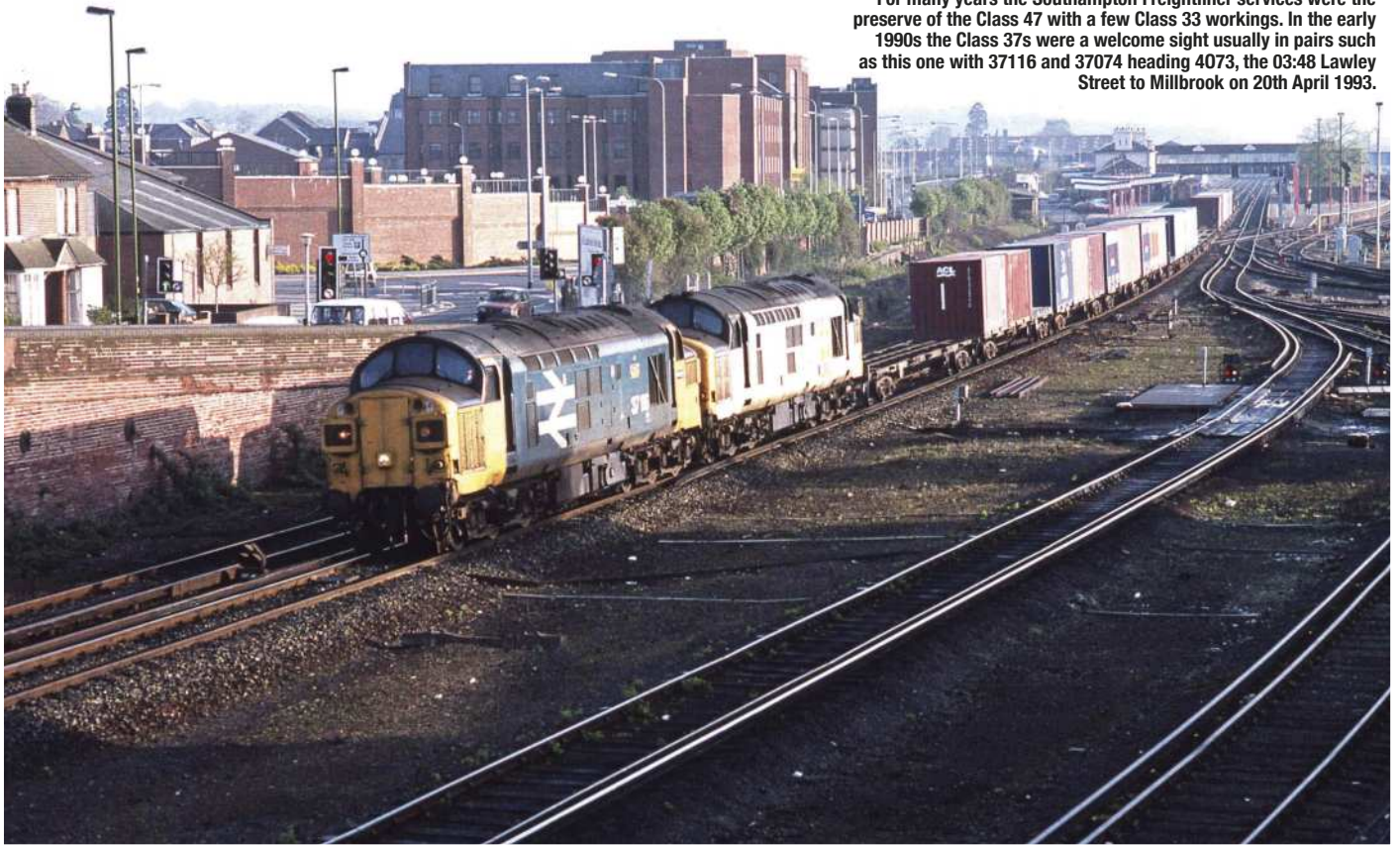


On 29th March 1985 33111 is passing platform 3 with an up unidentified freight conveying a BDA bogie bolster and six Seacow bogie ballast wagons. This loco has been preserved and is now running on the Swanage Railway still in the blue livery.



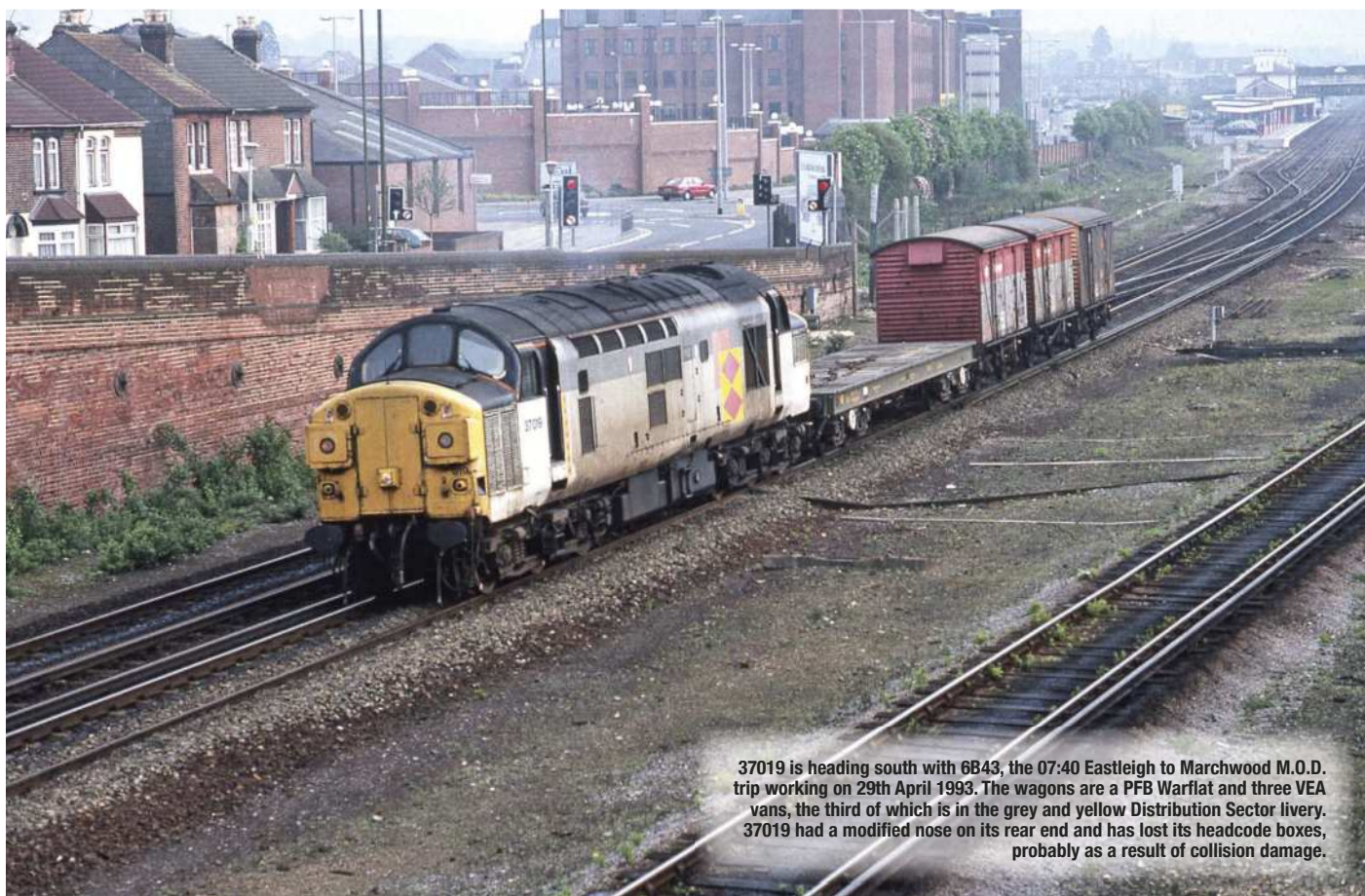
Class 56s were regular visitors to the area on the air braked stone trains from the Westbury area quarries. A well weathered 56058 is taking the Romsey line with 6V59, the 09:55 Ardingly to Westbury ARC PGA stone empties on 29th March 1985.

For many years the Southampton Freightliner services were the preserve of the Class 47 with a few Class 33 workings. In the early 1990s the Class 37s were a welcome sight usually in pairs such as this one with 37116 and 37074 heading 4073, the 03:48 Lawley Street to Millbrook on 20th April 1993.



During 1985 the Severn Tunnel junction Speedlink service was booked for a Class 45 which was often substituted by a Class 47; on 8 March it was 56058 that turned up. It is shown here with the afternoon 6V83 16:25 departure from the yard to Severn Tunnel Junction with a good load including BDA bogie bolsters, one SPA and HEA coal wagons whilst, behind them, are loaded double deck car wagons. In the background are numerous stored and withdrawn electric units.





Railfreight sectorisation brought regular Class 37 workings to Eastleigh for the first time. 37667 in Petroleum livery is departing with a very lengthy 6B51 which is the 09:04 from the Eastleigh yard to Fawley. The train is made up of 100 ton crude oil tanks followed by TTA bitumen tanks and TTA gas oil tanks. The date is 29th April 1993.



Happy Days on the 'High Level' Part 1

As Mick Humphrys mentioned in his article 'Sleeper Stories' (TRACTION 224) on March 16th 1987 he was 'promoted' into link 5 at Stonebridge Park, the DC link, with the majority of the work being on the North London Line.

A short history

The line, originally jointly owned by the London & North Western railway and the North London Railway, ran from Broad Street (Broad Street opening on the 1st November 1865) to Chalk Farm, Bow and Kew. A service to Watford Junction commenced on the 1st September 1866 and to Richmond with an electric train service from the 1st October 1916. With delays due to the Great War, the line was fully electrified to Watford Junction using the 650 volt 4th rail DC system by the 10th July 1922.

Various electric multiple units operated on the line but by my era the service was provided by LMR 501 3 car 630 volts DC units, 57 sets of these EMUs were originally built in British Railways own workshops at Eastleigh between 1955 and 1956, originally working on the 4th rail system they were converted to 3rd rail only in the early 1970s. Each unit consisted of Motor Open Brake Second fitted with four 185hp traction motors numbered M61133 to M61189, a Trailer Second numbered M70133 to M70189, and a Driving Trailer Open Brake Second numbered M75133 to

M75189. The units were formed with each vehicle having the last two digits in the numbered sequence forming a matching set.

The North London line was known to us as the 'High Level' with the Watford Junction to Euston line known as the 'Low Level'. The 'Low Level', also including the branch line to Croxley Green, was again served by Class 501 units. These were maintained and serviced at a depot at Croxley, an unusual feature of this depot was an 'Overhead Trolley Jumper'. This system employed a jumper cable connected to a trolley which ran along an overhead rail running the length of the shed. This jumper was inserted into the socket on the unit and provided a power supply enabling the unit to be moved inside the shed and out onto the conductor rail which, for obvious reasons, started at the exit end of the shed roads. Drivers working these services were both Broad Street and Watford Junction men with the majority of the work on the 'High Level' or 'Low Level' as appropriate.

At other end of the line North Woolwich station opened on 14th June 1847 as the

southern terminus for Eastern Counties and Thames Junction line from Stratford; this service was later extended beyond Stratford Palace Gates. In 1963 DMUs replaced steam and the service was cut back to Stratford with peak-hour trains to Tottenham Hale. The route was then extended in 1979, becoming part of the North London Line with the service from North Woolwich joining the line at Dalston Junction and continuing onto Camden Road.

Due to the 3rd rail electrification being then in place only up to Dalston Junction, this service required five DMUs drawn from the Stratford pool of twelve Class 105 two-car units, two BRCW Class 104 two-car units, one BRCW Class 104 three-car unit and four Derby Class 116 units. Class 101 Cravens were also used on this service. These DMUs also provided the traction for the Romford to Upminster, Wickford to Southminster and Camden to Tottenham Hale services. Stratford drivers drawn from links 3, 4 and 5 providing the manpower on the North London Line.

Broad Street was for many years threatened with closure as property

developers were very keen to lay their hands on the area where Broadgate now stands today so, during late 1983 with the closure of Broad Street as a train crew depot imminent, Stonebridge Park men started to learn both the 'High Level' and 'Low Level' routes as well as the Class 501 units ready to provide cover for the work. Broad Street Train crew depot closed in September 1984 with drivers being made redundant; this entitled them to a 14a redundancy driver move. The driver promotion, transfer & redundancy arrangements (P, T, & R) consisted of, in their simplest form, three types of transfer which in the order of priority were '14a' redundant move, '8b' promotion to higher grade move and '8c' transfer in the grade move. Therefore a 14a gave drivers a top priority move to any depot on the system and in some cases jumping, by right, to the front of the queue. This, as a consequence, made Broad Street an attractive destination during the time closure was mooted as drivers gambled on obtaining this obviously valuable 14a move.

With the work now being initially shared between two depots, Watford and Stonebridge Park, work continued on the final stage of the extension and full 3rd rail electrification of the line. This enabled a direct service from its termini at Richmond and North Woolwich to be run. Completion of this enabled Stratford men to get in on the act and after their period of route learning they claimed their share of the North London work.

A driver training programme was also put in place to train drivers on the former Southern Region Class 416/3 two-car units which were to replace the Class 501s. Stonebridge Park and Watford men learnt the Class 416s at Richmond, with their practical train handling being carried out between Richmond and Broad Street. Stratford drivers, however, were required to travel to London Bridge for their training with the practical handling element being carried out between London Bridge and Tattenham Corner. The Class 416 units, by this time allocated to Selhurst Depot, were built at Eastleigh Works in 1953 using under frames from withdrawn SR class 2NOL units. The rebuilt units were initially classified 2NOP but later absorbed into the 2EPB classification. They had SR-designed bodies, similar to those of the earlier SR-design 4SUB units and Bullied locomotive-hauled coaching stock. Originally numbered 5651-5684, they were refurbished in 1983 and re-numbered 6301-6334, being formed of a Motor Semi Open Brake Second (DMBS) with two 250 hp English Electric EE507 traction motors and a Driving Trailer Semi Open Second (DTS). Units 6313-28 were allocated to the North London Line.

The last Richmond to Broad Street Class 501 service was on the 12th May 1985 and the 'High Level' line was formally opened in its now completed state the following day, with Class 416 set 6327



501183 is seen at Broad Street forming a service for Willesden Junction on 26th January 1985 -RAILPHOTOPRINTS - GORDON EDGAR

(BELOW) 501164 forming a Richmond to Broad Street service is seen at Camden Road on 1st May 1985 RAILPHOTOPRINTS - GORDON EDGAR



Units 6318 and 501164 are at London Broad Street station on 1st May 1985 forming Richmond services. At this time the 2EPBs were working during the peak hours. From 13th May 1985, the service to Richmond was diverted away from Broad Street, leaving only the peak hour Watford Junction services serving the station. The former North London Railway Broad Street station was closed on 30th June 1986 and the 2EPBs then took over the whole of the London Midland Region's North London Line services between Richmond and North Woolwich. The B4 route indicator shows that the '501' is working a Richmond to Broad Street service. RAILPHOTOPRINTS - GORDON EDGAR



6322 arrives at Stratford Low Level whilst working the 14:55 North Woolwich to Richmond service on 27th August 1986. COLOURRAIL - C. TRETHEWEY

doing the honours of the first run. Around this time the new satellite (to Stonebridge Park depot) booking on point at Willesden Junction opened; situated on the 'High Level' platforms 4 & 5, this consisted of a mess room, a locker room and an office manned by a time/roster clerk and Area Operational Coordinator (AOC). The AOC was drawn from the signalling grades and worked closely with the signallers on the route, responsible for all operating requirements and stock movements etc. He did, however, usually leave all train crew matters to AOC. Willesden 'High Level' was also now the home depot for approx 30 guards, many formerly based at Broad Street; although not, at this time, any drivers. The Stonebridge Park link 5 drivers booked on and off at Willesden but all their administration was still very much at Stonebridge Park.

The full electrification of the line brought about a noticeable improvement in the reliability and punctuality of the service coupled with the flexibility and willingness of the drivers of Stonebridge and Stratford. This was compensated, of course, by suitable and appropriate financial remuneration. This resulted in the line being awarded with 'The Mitchell Cup' presented, I believe, during the 1980s by British Rail to the most improved line or service.

The end of the Class 501s

The '501' units no longer needed on the 'High Level' continued to enjoy service on the 'Low Level' until the summer of 1985 when they were withdrawn. They were in fact withdrawn twice as, having already been sold for scrap and all withdrawn in May, delays with the arrival of newer Class 313 units saw them hastily pressed back into a final swan song of service until November. They were rehired from the scrap merchant that had purchased them; now that sounds like a deal! However, four sets did escape the cutter's torch and were converted for de-icing and sandite purposes, although they lost their middle trailers and ran as two car units. The one I remember allocated to the North London Lines during my time was formed of Driving Motor Brake M61148 and Driving Trailer M75189. Now renumbered ADB 977385 and ADB 977386 respectively, this set was also the last to receive a works overhaul at Croyley Shed before that too was closed and demolished; more on the de-icer unit later.

The 'Low Level' service was, from late summer of 1985, formed of the Class 313 units. These 3 car dual-voltage electrical multiple units (EMU) were fitted with sliding doors and were built by British Rail Limited at York Works between February 1976 and April 1977 and were

formed of a Driving Motor Saloon Battery (DMSB), a Rectifier Trailer (RT) and a Driver Motor Saloon Air (DMSA). They were the first second generation EMUs to be constructed for British Rail and the first with both a pantograph for 25 kV AC overhead lines and shoe gear for 750 V DC 3rd rail supply which in time saw them very useful on the 'High Level', replacing the '416s' in September 1989. They were one of the first units in Britain to have multi-function, tight lock coupling, allowing coupling and the connection of control electric and air supplies to be carried out from the cab. The fitment of driver controlled sliding doors allowed, from July 1989, Driver Only Operation (DOO) on the Watford Junction to Euston 'Low Level' services. This was further facilitated by infrastructure improvements including the additions of mirrors and CCTV screens enabling the driver to view the entire train when at a platform. The maintenance of these units was carried out at Bletchley, which for drivers living at Milton Keynes often provided a mutually convenient end of shift job!

Route Learning via 'The Centre of the Universe'

On 17th March 1987, I duly started route learning the DC lines, my first days



In early 1985, 501152 and 501180 are seen inside Croyley Depot ready to depart with the 'First & Final' 501 railtour on 11th May 1985. Note the rail for the trolley system above and to the right of the unit. The railtour began at Broad Street and visited Euston, Watford Junction, Croyley Green, North Woolwich and Richmond. Leaving Richmond the tour went via Clapham Junction to Bromley North via Woolwich Arsenal and Slade Green, and then on to Holborn Viaduct. From there the tour ran to Horsham via Sutton and returned to Richmond via Three Bridges and East Croydon. From Richmond the railtour returned to Broad Street. PERCY DRUMMOND

consisting of trips on the 'High Level' where I soon realised that it lacked quite a lot of the glory of the main line, comprising 27 stops in twenty two and a half miles. Taking around 1hr and 6 minutes in each direction, this work was going to be different from what I had done up to then, presenting a new challenge and in some aspects a different driving technique.

I was soon quite fascinated by the contrasting parts of North London you witnessed from the driving cab window, starting in the very affluent suburb of Richmond, then soon reaching historic Kew running alongside the famous gardens and over the majestic River Thames. Passing through Acton with its rows of Victorian terraces, Willesden Junction High Level beckoned arrival. Willesden, with its premier shed code of 1A, was referred to by a close friend of mine, the late Bryan Grey, as the 'Centre of the Universe'. In railway terms he had a point as, within a few miles, every region of British Railways could be reached: the Southern via Mitre Bridge and Kensington; the Western via Acton Wells; the Eastern via Camden Road and the Kings Cross Incline and the Midland via Acton Canal Wharf and Cricklewood.

After leaving Willesden, the line passed through Kensal Rise and then bohemian Hampstead. Next was Camden, with the line running parallel with rows of Victorian terraces and their gardens in varying state of attention. After this the more built up and slightly run down areas of Dalston and Hackney came into view. Reaching the then railway metropolis that Stratford was, you were now really in the East End. After Stratford came West Ham, then the docklands area which was then very run down and totally derelict. The once proud docks were in a state of decay, the warehouses and unloading cranes standing idle, frozen in time.

After passing through Connaught Road Tunnel (also known as Albert Dock tunnel or Silvertown Tunnel) and arriving at Custom House, you knew where you were by the very pungent sweet, slickly smell of the glue factory which was located nearby. Arrival at North Woolwich and noting the very grand Great Eastern Railway station building served only to emphasise the rundown 'shadow of its former self' nature of the whole area. From the 1980s a single line was used from Custom House to North Woolwich, where the main station building was closed (later converted into a museum) and replaced by a bland modern station building with only one platform remaining in use.

The 'DC' Rule Book

Commencing on Monday 30th March, I attended a four week rules and traction course on both the Class 313, 416 units and the remaining 501 two car sandite/de-icing unit. The first week of this course was classroom based with instructor,

learning the 'Working Instructions for DC Electrified Line between Euston-Watford Junction-Croxley Green and Broad Street-Richmond' or, as this mouthful was known to us, 'The DC Rule Book'. Being still fitted with an early LMS type automatic signalling system and with instructions relating to the London Underground 4th rail system, there was quite a lot to learn.

The signalling system between Watford Junction and Camden consisted of automatic, semi-automatic and repeating signals, with a number of controller signals at strategic locations. The auto and semi signals were fitted with a yellow 'calling on light' below the main aspect and, when illuminated, the signal could be passed at danger after the driver had waited a period of one minute. Should the calling on light fail to illuminate, the driver could, after waiting a further 3 minutes, on his own authority, pass the signal at danger and then proceed cautiously to the next signal or as far as the line was clear; this could on occasions result in a train behind a train. Each stop signal was also fitted with 'trip cock' apparatus, a compulsory requirement on London Transport lines. This consisted of a lineside treadle that activated a device fitted to all the traction using LT lines. Should the train pass a signal at danger it vented the brake pipe, causing an emergency brake application.

We also covered the 3rd rail DC isolation procedures, the different train protection section of the rule book, Harlesden Long Bridge flood warning system, along with numerous other instructions in the DC Rule book. (Ed: On electrified lines that had conductor rails, indicators were installed at some places likely to flood. Flood indicators were provided on the approach to Harlesden Long Bridge. If flood water reached the top of the running rails, the circular indicators were illuminated, each displaying the word 'FLOOD'. The protecting signals were automatically placed or maintained at danger.) It amounted to quite a long week, although our instructor Alf Bryant did his best to impart the knowledge to us despite our best efforts to distract him by asking him to recite tales of his days in the RAF!

The rest of the course was spent putting the classroom theory into practice with my instructor Pete Jarman. This was train handling on Class 313s on the 'Low Level' and Class 416s on the 'High Level' in addition to managing one run out on the Class 501 unit from Willesden Traction Maintenance Depot (TMD) to Camden Road and return.

Auto Stop at Kew

Driving the Class 416s was my first experience of multiple units and indeed their braking system. As their class definition (2EPB) states they were fitted with both a Westinghouse electro pneumatic brake (EPB) and automatic brake system. On the EPB system, when

the driver's brake handle is applied, it operates a series of electrical switches which in turn operate air valves. These allow the unit's main air supply (charged and maintained by a compressor on the motor coach between 80 and 100psi) to directly feed all the brake cylinders on each vehicle and therefore apply the clasp brake blocks on each wheel.

To provide an automatic brake application in the event of passenger communication operation (Pass Com) or Driver's Safety Device (DSD or to give its popular name 'dead man's handle') operating or even a train division, the Class 416 was fitted with a train brake pipe which was required to be charged between 66 and 74psi for brake release and for power to be obtainable.

In the event of the aforementioned systems activating the brake pipe would be vented resulting in a full service brake application and loss of all traction power. This 'auto' brake system could also be applied by the driver in normal train working, indeed it was a requirement for a least one application of the auto brake per journey as, in event of the EP brake system failing (being an electrical system it could fail due to a blown fuse etc.), the auto brake system was then the only one left and therefore competence of use had to be maintained.

Operation was achieved, of course, not by DSD or Pass Com application, but by movement of the driver's brake handle past the electro-pneumatic brake positions and into what was called 'lap'. From this position, further anti-clockwise movement of the brake valve brought about a reduction in the train's brake pipe pressure. This reduction in pressure was detected by a triple valve (similar to a distributor) on each vehicle which then allowed air from brake supply reservoir (also called auxiliary reservoir) to feed all the brake cylinders on each vehicle and therefore apply the clasp brake blocks on each wheel.

Careful and skilful operation of this type of braking was necessary by the driver as:

1. The brake pipe could be reduced and therefore the brakes applied gradually BUT could not be partly released, only completely released then re-applied.
2. Repeated successive applications could deplete the brake supply reservoirs resulting in no brake!

The normal place on the 'High Level' to carry out one's 'Auto Stop' was Kew, as with a nice long platform to accommodate the District Line stock, which also used the line between Gunnersbury and Richmond, there was a bit more room, allowing a slight margin of error.

Train Wire '13'

The Class 313s were a little simpler, having an electrical operated air brake system manufactured by Westinghouse called the 'Westcode Brake', plus a dynamic brake

system. The driver's brake handle, from off, had 3 positions of brake or 'steps 1, 2 and 3' and selection of these by the driver electrically operated electro-pneumatic valves on a brake application unit fitted to each vehicle.

This 3 part unit consisted of a:

1. Three Step Relay Valve; to adjust the amount of air to the brake cylinders depending on the position of the brake handle.
2. Variable Brake Valve; to adjust the level of air pressure in brake cylinders dependant on the actual load of the train e.g. the heavier the train the more brake cylinder pressure.
3. Restricted Application Valve; to adjust/blend in air brake with the dynamic brake.

The dynamic brake fitted was somewhat similar to the rheostatic brake fitted to electric locomotives in that, when power was shut off, the resulting kinetic energy stored in the rotating train wheels and traction motors was converted into electrical energy. This electric current was then fed into train mounted resistors which slowed down the electric current

flow, thereby resulting in slowing down the traction motors, wheels and, of course, the train. The kinetic energy having been converted into electrical energy and fed through resistors resulted in heat being generated.

This heat, when the '313s' were first built, was used to heat the train as the air flow from the fans cooling the resistors was ducted into the saloon compartments. This system with 'heat for free' was not a success as the warm air had an unpleasant smell and the dynamic brake itself was inherently unreliable so was soon disconnected. In the event of a dynamic brake failure, the '313' automatically switched over to a normal full air brake system and, in many cases, the dynamic brake was isolated by fitting staff due to its unreliability.

The automatic function of this brake was achieved by the need for an electric circuit to be made before the brake application unit allowed brake release. Put simply, the negative return of this electric circuit ran the length of the train. It was called 'Train Wire 13' and was linked to the DSD, passenger communication system, sliding

door interlocks, and train fault systems. Should operation of any of these occur the circuit would be broken with the brakes then automatically and fully applying.

Other sections of the course included dealing with faults and failures, train preparation and seeing the signalling system in action. Then, on 6th May 1987 I met Watford based traction inspector Peter Wince at Willesden Junction, with Peter observing me as I worked Class 416 unit 6318 from Willesden to Richmond and return, doing my required 'Auto Stop' in both directions at Kew, then down to the 'Low Level' and taking 313015 on the 12:30 service from Willesden Low Level to Watford Junction. After some Q&A and completion of paper work I was duly passed out on the traction by Peter.

As often seems the case when on a training course with an instructor to hand, all went without a hitch; this I would reflect on during my first week out on my own some four weeks later when my route learning was complete!

313002 leaves London Euston with a Watford Junction service on 5th August 1989. COLOURRAIL - D. PYE





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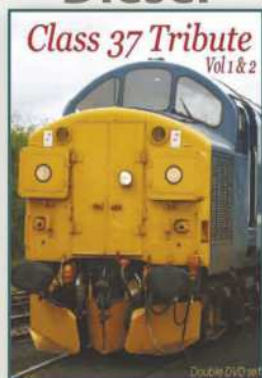
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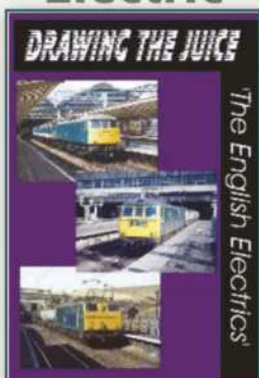
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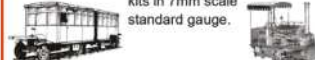
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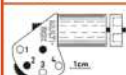
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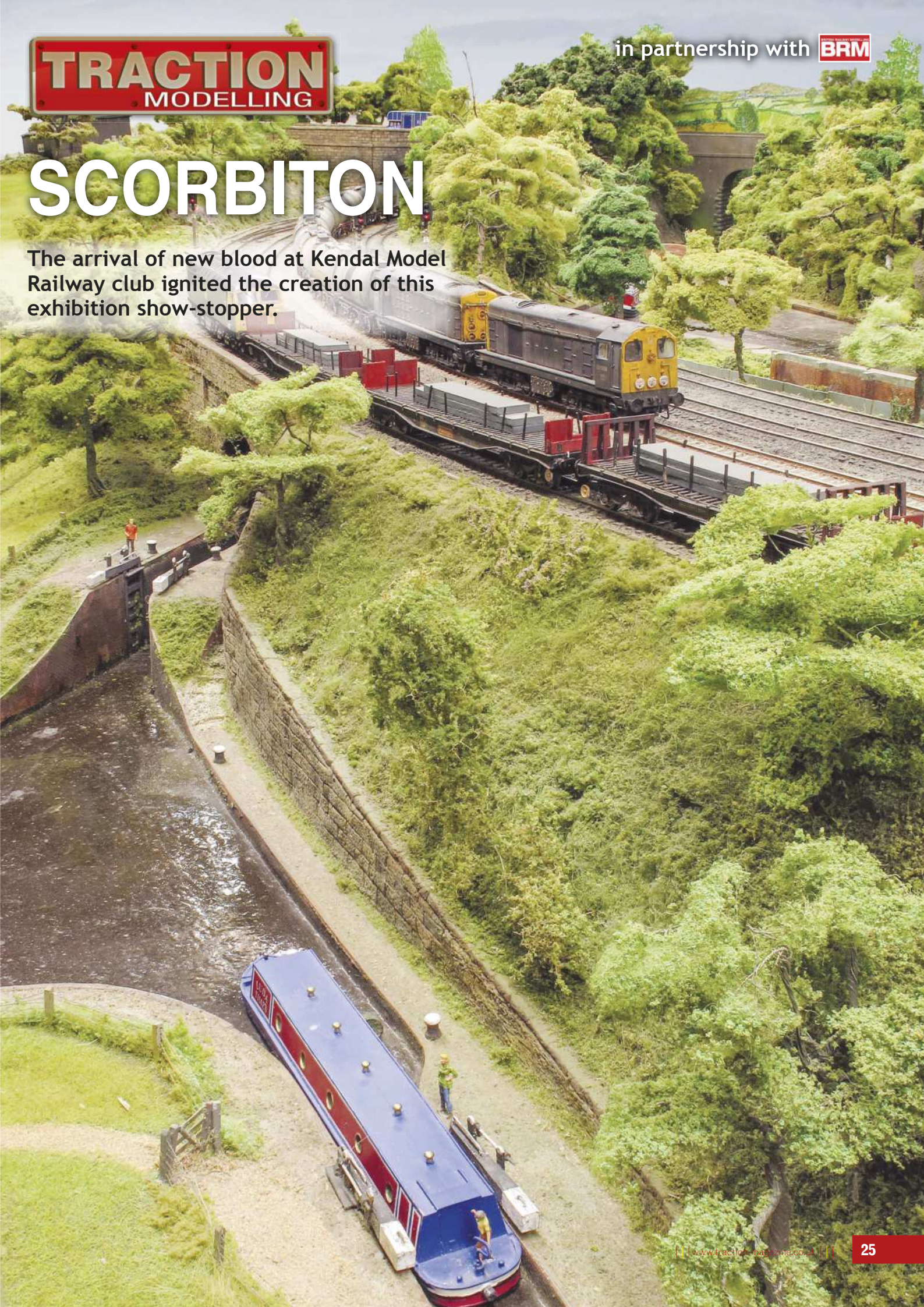
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Photography by Andy York

Set in the Shropshire/Welsh Marches area, 'Scorbiton' centres around viaducts crossing the River Severn, with the town of 'Scorbiton' rising uphill to the right, and a canal system approaching on the left through a more pastoral landscape. Aiming at plenty of viewing area, the scenery extends around both ends of the layout, with fiddle yard to the rear. The prominent town scene is inspired by buildings photographed in Whitchurch, Shrewsbury and Malpas.

Open-framed baseboards of 6mm plywood and softwood framing, with chicken wire and plaster bandage infill, facilitate the variety of levels. The Peco track-work sits on a 1/2 in chipboard track-bed.

The layout is wired for conventional DC control, with route-setting switches controlling point motors and track feeds automatically via a diode matrix and system of relays. This aids the supply of a frequent and varied selection of trains to entertain onlookers.

Construction of the station building was from a basic card box with Plastikard overlays. The roof slates were laser-cut from card, which saved a lot of time. The canopy brackets and valance, windows and doors were also laser-cut. The brickwork was coloured using the pencil system described in Ken Ball's book *Modelling Buildings The Easy Way* (No. 1). The colours were fixed using fixative spray, then weathered using Tamiya Weathering Master mediums.

White-metal chimney pots and plastic gutters and downspouts have been employed, although vulnerable pipework was made from brass rod. Posters appropriate for the period, such as Red Star Parcels, were copies of originals and produced by a printer we know, as were the 'Scorbiton' sign boards. Enamel paints were also used, all suitably weathered.

The station structure is complemented by an overall north-light roof over the platforms. The idea is to give the observer the impression that trains come from a different direction than they actually do. Both are removable as the roof straddles a baseboard joint and has to be installed before the building.

The garden to the side of the station is redundant and uncared for since the stationmaster left. The telephone box with occupant, post box and concrete bollards are all proprietary, as are the people. Street light standards are 'home brewed' from laser-cut clear acrylic, card and brass tube. The car driver remonstrating with the oblivious pedestrian is typical of the playful cameos dotted around the layout.

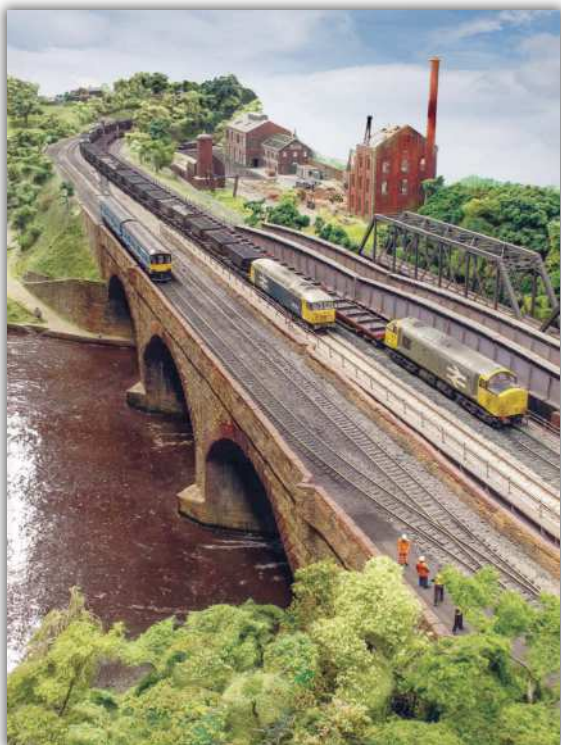
The white hotel building is the 'Frog and Nightgown'. The light-coloured extension has been grafted onto a much older building that started life on another layout over 30 years ago. The latter had a roof that had to be discarded and had a gable wall missing. Construction of the extension is Plastikard with laser-cut card roofs as used on the station building. While fictitious, the gable-end detail is based on a feature from a Kendal pub, including its colour. The real thing has smooth rendering and this has been represented on the model by using an appropriately-coloured emulsion! Windows are from the Dornoplas range with the odd laser-cut one thrown in. The sign, although faded, has come from the original 30-year-old model. The extension is deliberately prominent as, in reality, the landlord would want to use its location to advertise 'The Frog and Nightgown' to the 'passing world'!

Rolling Stock

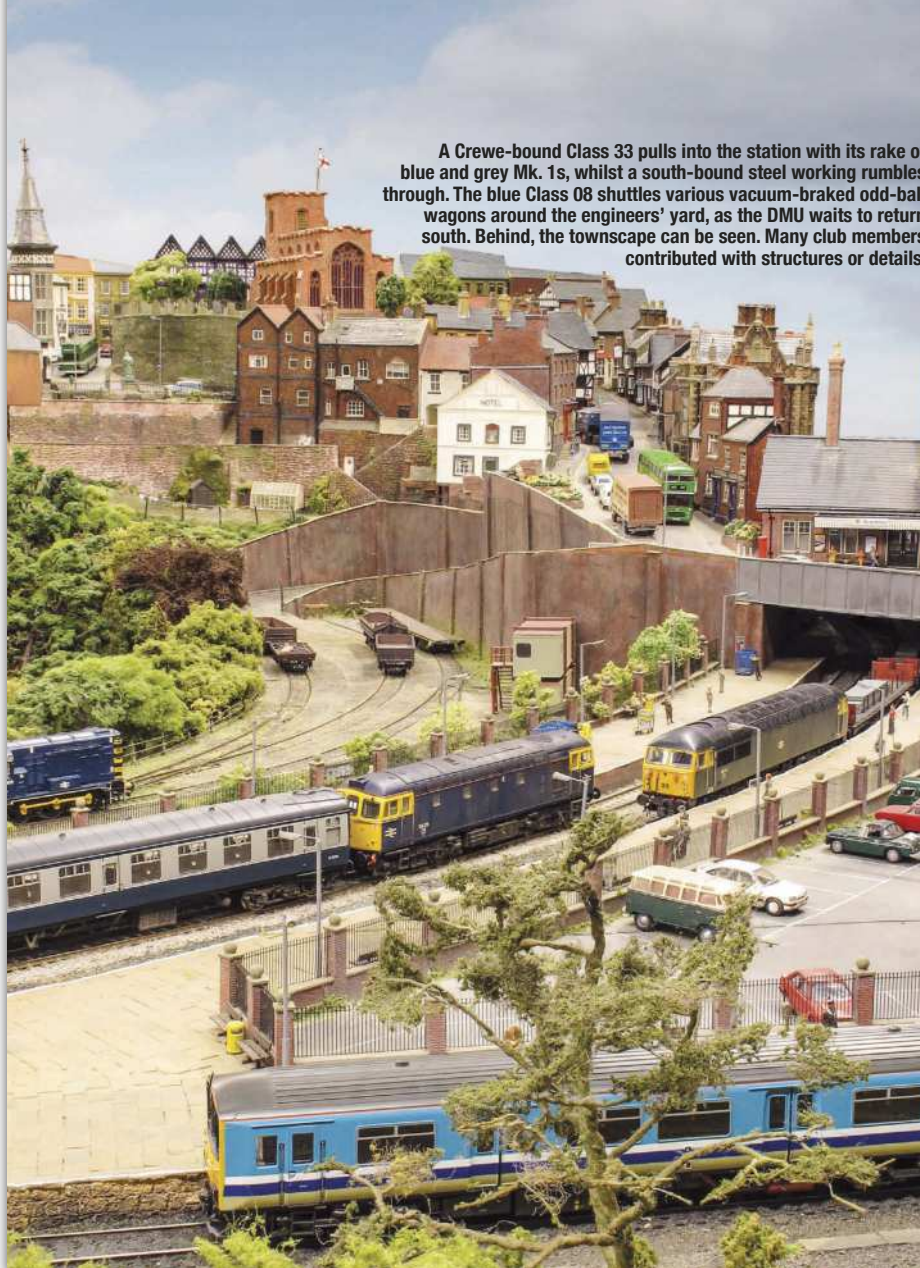
The stock is provided by several Club members, with an emphasis on freight workings, which were a staple on the type of route depicted. Enthusiastic building and detailing of stock means there is now more than enough to fill the fiddle yard, even having resorted to adding four extra roads to the outside loops to give more capacity.



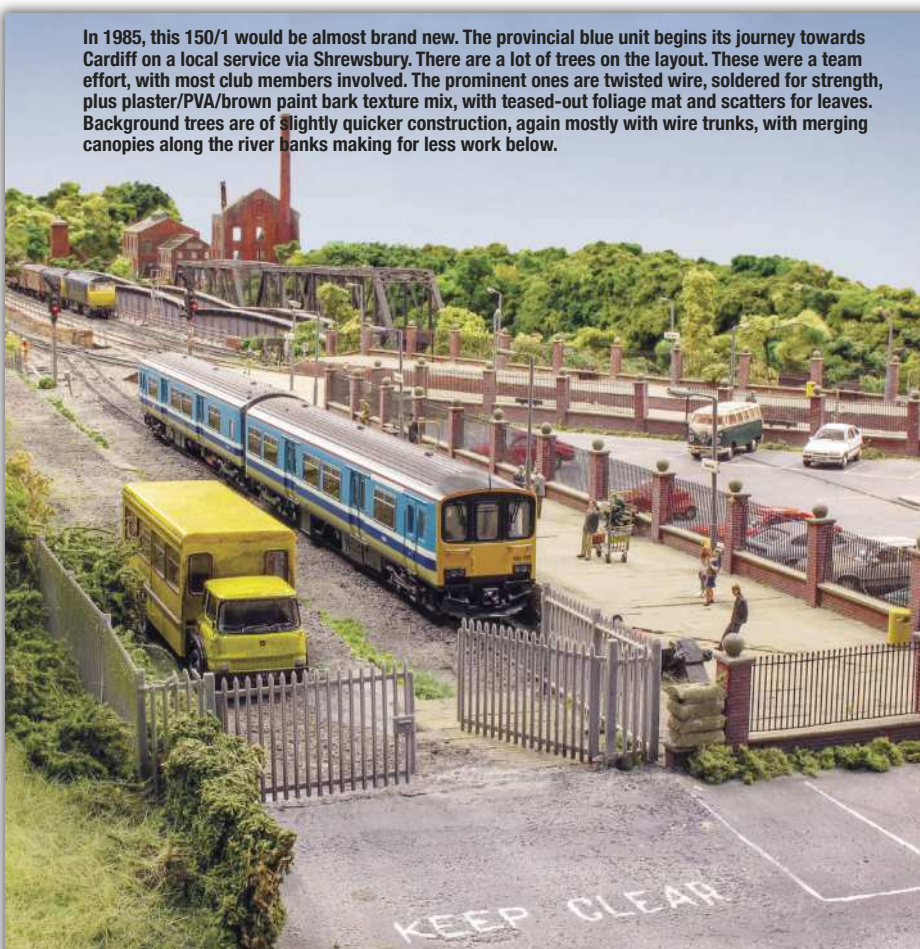
(ABOVE) Commuter services on the Welsh Marches brought the BRCWCo. Type 3s unusually far north, as they were the mainstay of power for passenger workings between Cardiff and Crewe during the mid-1980s. Non-ETH fitted locomotives, such as 25s and 47/0s could also occasionally be seen when a Class 33 was unavailable. These services are well represented with the excellent Heljan 'Cromptons' and Bachmann Mk. 1s.



(ABOVE) Commuters on the Class 150 DMU are treated to some heavy freight action with a large logo blue 'Grid' on a merry-go-round working passing a Class 37/5 on a rake of Cambrian kit-built BDA wagons. A lot of wagons for the layout were kit-built before the advent of many of the recent RTR wagon types.



A Crewe-bound Class 33 pulls into the station with its rake of blue and grey Mk. 1s, whilst a south-bound steel working rumbles through. The blue Class 08 shuttles various vacuum-braked odd-ball wagons around the engineers' yard, as the DMU waits to return south. Behind, the townscape can be seen. Many club members contributed with structures or details.



In 1985, this 150/1 would be almost brand new. The provincial blue unit begins its journey towards Cardiff on a local service via Shrewsbury. There are a lot of trees on the layout. These were a team effort, with most club members involved. The prominent ones are twisted wire, soldered for strength, plus plaster/PVA/brown paint bark texture mix, with teased-out foliage mat and scatters for leaves. Background trees are of slightly quicker construction, again mostly with wire trunks, with merging canopies along the river banks making for less work below.

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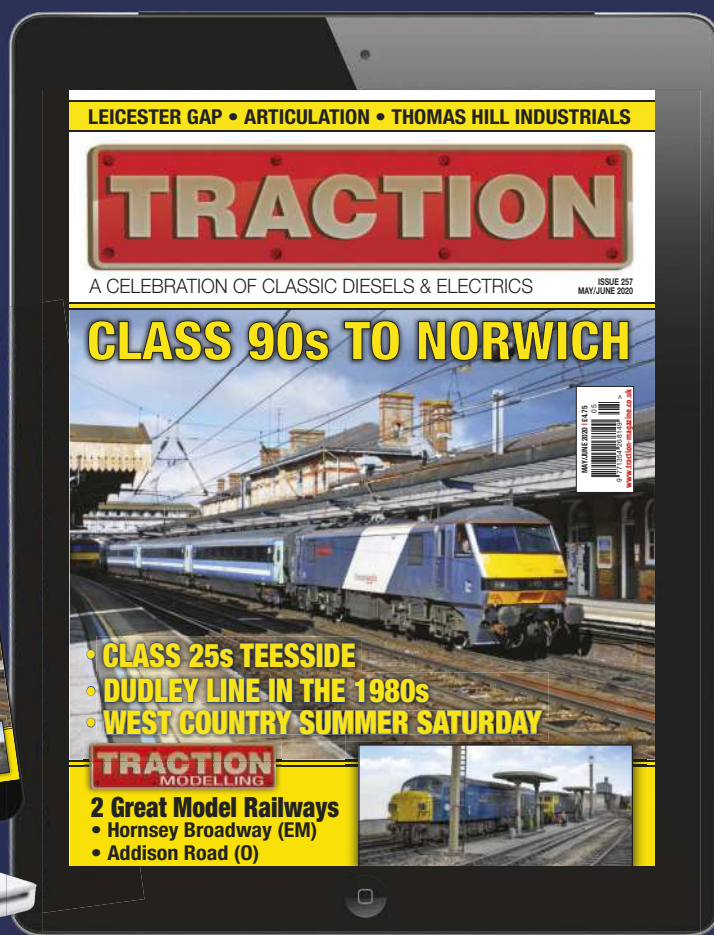
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The class of 58 was introduced to the Eastern Region from 1958. The MAN L12V18/21S power units – built in-house under licence – resulted in the class achieving a remarkably low availability of just 51%. It could be argued that the engine failures were because of the language and metric measurement barriers of the German design, which weren't constructed to the required tolerances, by a workforce more familiar with the construction of steam locomotives. Oil leaks and insufficient cooling ensued and so numerous were their problems, that just two years later, many of the class were stored in New England Yard, Peterborough, pending a solution. The national press was quick to make a story from new locomotives breaking.

The Scottish Region drew the short straw, receiving the Class in 1960, keeping the locomotives closer to the constructor's home and its workforce occupied through regular repair and maintenance, beyond the routine intervals expected. Two years later, through strain from repairs under warranty and reduced orders, The North British

Locomotive Company, with its 2658-strong workforce was liquidated.

Meanwhile, for BR, a solution to the engine problems was sought and from 1963, D6123 was fitted with a more powerful Paxman power unit. The modification would be rolled out to 19 other class members, which became Class 29 under TOPs. None survived to receive TOPs numbering, the last of the Class 29s, based at Eastfield, were withdrawn from service on December 31, 1971.

None of the Class 21 or 29 locomotives survived the cutter's torch, so Dapol's models have been created from drawings and archive photographs, with tooling modifications to accommodate the class as built and as rebuilt from 1963. An impressive eight variants are offered in this first batch – four in Class 21 guise in BR green, of which two with small yellow warning panels, and four in Class 29 guise, of which, two in BR blue and two in two-tone green, all with variations to their yellow warning panels.

Tooling variations between this and its Class 21 siblings see the repositioning of windscreen wipers from window tops to the bottom, the addition of headcode panels, the welding up of front doors and changes to the locations of running lights. The change of side windows to vents and additional side ventilation in a bid to reduce engine room temperatures has also been considered.

The etched roof and side grilles and separately-fitted handrails look great, though I feel the glazing is a touch prismatic. The subtle bodyside fold is noticeable when viewed from the correct angle.

Bogies are well captured and I'm particularly fond of the leaf and coil spring detail. The side frames offer sufficient heft, too. The large angular sandboxes can't be missed, yet the small air pipes running to brake cylinders haven't been overlooked.

For the first time on an RTR model, configuring the lighting without referring to the instructions isn't a mystery. To the underside of the battery box, four discreet switches are clearly labelled for cab lights, head or rear tail lights for the Class 21 or route indicator boxes, in the case of the Class 29. The independent control of the lights offers DC users greater operational flexibility, though factory-fitted DCC models have lighting arranged so that either 'light engine' or 'push/pull' mode can be chosen.

Perhaps not as mainstream for modellers as other Type 2 forms of motive power, such as the Class 24s or 25s, Dapol's model fills another void in the line-up of BR pilot-scheme locomotives. A great deal of positivity surrounds this first batch of models and small glazing niggles aside, I can offer nothing but praise. A recommended model that ironically, will no doubt outlast the career lengths of their prototypes.

Manufacturer: Dapol
CATALOGUE REFS:

4D-014-002 Class 29 BR blue D6129
RRP: £151.95 (DCC ready), £181.95 (DCC-fitted), £293.93 (DCC sound-fitted)

Gauge/scale:

16.5mm gauge, 1:76 scale, OO

Era: 5-6

Company/Operator: BR

Weight: 363g

Body: Plastic

Chassis: Die-cast metal

Wheel Profile: RP25

Couplings: Sprung screw-link

Accessories: Air and vacuum pipes, dummy draw hooks, dummy screw-link couplings, multiple-working jumper cables



First CAD images of Heljan Mk. 2/Mk. 2A coaches

Development work on Heljan's all-new Mk. 2/Mk. 2A coaches for O gauge has proceeded rapidly over the last few weeks and first CAD images of its coaches have been shown.

Models will cover Brake Second Open (BSO), Brake First Corridor (BFK) and Tourist Second Open (TSO) variants in a wide range of authentic liveries, covering all the major colour schemes carried by these popular BR passenger coaches.

The models have been designed to replicate either vacuum-braked Mk. 2 or air-braked Mk. 2A vehicles, giving customers the option to tailor their models to suit their needs by fitting the appropriate underframe parts and sliding or folding gangway end doors.

Highly-detailed interiors will also be a major feature of these models, with authentic early Mk. 2 seating, partitions and luggage racks on view. To showcase this, the models have been designed to accept an easy-fit interior lighting bar. Access to the interior for installing lighting and passengers couldn't be easier, as the roof will be held in place by magnets.

The models will ride on the new B4 bogie, which will make its debut under a new batch of Mk. 1 coaches later this year. Both types are ideal companions for many of its O gauge BR diesel locomotives, from Class 25s, 31s and 33s, to 37s, 40s, 47s, 50s, 52s and 55s.



Bachmann Europe issues update on Covid-19 impact

In an update to members of the model press, Bachmann Europe Plc has explained how it is adapting to changes arising from the Covid-19 outbreak. Its factories are returning to production and its next shipment will include its Branchline Class 117 and 121 DMUs in OO gauge and Thompson coaches for its Graham Farish N gauge range.

Bachmann Europe's Richard Proudman explains "Due to the nationwide lockdown, no Bachmann shipments have left China since January and we are therefore looking forward to this shipment arriving hopefully in early June. Whether the authorities allow us to carry on a basic function in the UK between now and June remains to be

seen. With the enforced lockdown in China, factory closures extended by many weeks after their New Year. It seems reasonable to assume a delay of around 90 days that will be extremely difficult to regain – this will unfortunately mean our products arrive later than we had planned but the health and safety of our colleagues and the wider community will always be the number one priority."

Bachmann Europe has said it is following official guidelines and in doing so continues to offer a service that supports its retailers, consumers and Collectors Club members. It has said that the majority of its employees are working from home – its Collectors Club and Consumer Services channels



remain open and its Service Department is operational – albeit with reduced opening hours and is only currently handling consumer enquiries for spare parts.

For the small number of personnel in Barwell; social distancing, enhanced cleanliness regimes and new practices have been in place for many weeks.

Despite the disruption, the Summer edition of British Railway Announcements has been completed and was published with the Summer 2020 Bachmann Times magazine at the start of May.

Revolution KUA nuclear flask wagon breaks cover

Revolution Trains has received decorated samples of its forthcoming pair of N gauge KUA nuclear flask wagons.

The MoD has two of these goliaths – MODA95770 and MODA95771 – and they are used primarily for carrying spent fuel from Royal Navy nuclear submarines from HM Dockyard's at Devonport and Rosyth to Sellafield for disposal.

Revolution is selling the pair in a twin set so that customers can purchase the complete fleet.

Built in the late-1990s, each weighs 150T when loaded and has a main well on pairs of articulated outer chassis across four bogies. The KUAs have also been used, on occasion, to convey spent fuel from the Dounreay Nuclear Research Establishment in the far north of Scotland and, when loaded, are accompanied by escort coaches carrying military personnel for security.

Revolution Models' twin-packs will be available at the early-bird price of £139.95 until the end of May, after which, the price will revert to the standard RRP of £159.95. The livery samples are now approved, subject to minor amendments, and the models are in production. Delivery is expected in late summer 2020.



**For all the latest modelling news head
to www.world-of-railways.co.uk**



TUESDAY 26TH JANUARY 1988: Running an hour late, Network SouthEast liveried 50034 approaches Wednesbury at 13:25 with 9V01, the 12:15 TO Bescot to Gloucester departmental service. The short mixed consist includes 08621 (on transfer between Eastfield and Landore), a former Covered Carriage Truck van, a bogie TEA tank and a brake van. **ANDY WILLIAMS.**

The Wednesbury and the Dudley line in the 1980s and 1990s: Part 2

Images as credited.
Captions by David J. Hayes

David J. Hayes concludes his analysis of the Wednesbury and Dudley Line freight scene from more than 25 years ago

Departmental and engineers' trips

A Dudley line train that appeared on many a Black Country railway photographers 'to do' list during the late 1980s was a weekly Tuesday only departmental working from Gloucester to Bescot (9M01), which often produced a Class 50. The afternoon return service to Gloucester (9V01) was noteworthy as it was sometimes used for conveying Class 08 shunting engines after works attention, transferring between depots or en-route for disposal, thus rekindling memories of movements via the Dudley line previously conducted using the traditional wagonload network during the 1970s.

Another weekly departmental duty worthy of a quick mention was a movement

of concrete sleepers between the Dowmac concrete works at Quedgeley (in Gloucestershire) and Northampton using vacuum-braked wooden-bodied tube wagons.

There were also the 'ad-hoc' engineers' trips to and from Wednesbury engineers' tip catering for the disposal of spoil and spent ballast. Loaded wagons usually arrived at the start of the week, the empties being collected later in readiness for weekend engineering duties. Pairs of Class 20s were frequent performers on such workings by the 1990s, later followed by Class 31s, sometimes working in pairs.

Although the Dudley line through Wednesbury by this time was closed at weekends, it was not unknown for

arrangements to be put into place for loaded spoil/spent ballast trains to arrive at Wednesbury on a Sunday, thus requiring Wednesbury No. 1 signal box to be manned.

Short-term flows

There were several notable short-term traffic flows using the Dudley line during the early 1990s, such as pipes to Great Bridge, stone to Wednesbury and iron-ore and scrap metal to South Wales. The pipe traffic originated from Hartlepool, but reached Great Bridge on a service from Leith where the pipes had been given a protective coating.

Several trial flows of stone ran from Whitwell Quarry, near Worksop, to

Wednesbury where they are thought to have been unloaded at the engineers' tip. The regular service from Whitwell, however, ran to the former stone terminal at Witton near Birmingham, which had previously been served by vacuum-braked stone trains from Cauldon Low quarry.

The closure of Scotland's Ravenscraig Steelworks in summer 1992 brought a twice-daily short term movement of stockpiled iron-ore from the closed steel plant to the Dudley line. These workings ran through to Llanwern Steelworks and were powered by pairs of Metals Sector Class 37s. They ran via the Sutton Park line and Walsall, and may well rank as being the longest distance iron-ore hauls to have run in Britain.

Another Class 37 hauled Metals duty to be seen was a block train of scrap from the Birmingham area to Cardiff Tidal destined for Allied Steel & Wire (ASW). Formed of POA 'Black Adder' wagons, this working was a 'taster' of what scrap metal flows to ASW (and elsewhere) would be like in the near future; i.e. dedicated block trains grossing 1,000-tonnes or more.

Mention should be made of the surprise running of several block oil trains in January and February 1991 to the oil-fired standby power station at Ocker Hill, which was reached via a surviving stub of the former Princes End line (closed April 1981). Such workings to Ocker Hill during the late 1970s and early 1980s originated from Bromford Bridge. However, those deliveries made in early 1991 are believed to have originated from Fawley and are thought to have been the first oil trains to have visited the power plant since the miners' strike of 1984/85. They are also believed to have been the last such workings to Ocker Hill, which closed in 1996.

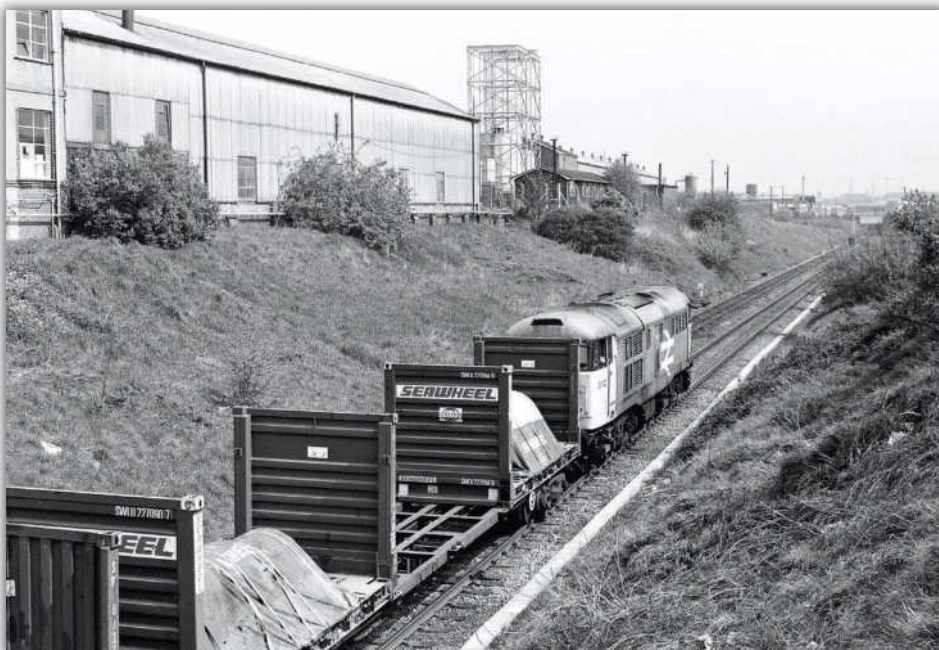
Banking duties

By the early 1990s, the requirement for the banking of trains using the Dudley line was greatly diminished compared to the 1970s. However, the duty itself, coded 0T55, was far more interesting. Most of the services requiring banking assistance were operated by Trainload Metals, so a Metals sub-sector Class 37 would do the honours. This involved banking a morning Scunthorpe to Wolverhampton steel service up Soho bank, followed by a light engine run to Stourbridge Junction (via Galton Junction) to assist the morning 6M40 Cardiff Tidal to Wednesbury ASW train to Brierley Hill.

The loco also assisted a Toton to Round Oak working (steel imported through Boston Docks) from Great Bridge before taking up Metals trips in the region. This also included tripping Petroleum sector traffic (gas oil ex-Fawley) from Bescot to Soho District Electric Depot (DED) before then working an early evening 6T55 trip from Langley Green (scrap metal ex-Coopers Metals at Handsworth) to Washwood Heath Yard. It called en-route



TUESDAY 10TH MAY 1988: The morning 6T52 RfD trip from Lawley Street FLT to the Round Oak Rail Terminal (opened in 1986) begins its climb from Great Bridge to Dudley, at 11:45, behind 47099, assisted in the rear by 31102. 'Seawheel' intermodal sets, laden with steel coil that had been imported through Ipswich Docks, were the core traffic found on this duty. The service also called at Washwood Heath Yard (then a Metals sector hub) to attach miscellaneous metals related traffic for Round Oak. The trip would often run as a Class 4 (4T52) when only the intermodal traffic was available for movement. BOTH IMAGES ANDY WILLIAMS.



at Bescot to detach empty gas oil tanks ex-Soho DED (for Speedlink movement to Fawley) and at Wednesbury to attach additional scrap loads (ex-Norton at Bilston) and steel empties (ex-Great Bridge/Wednesbury). The Class 37 then went on to perform an overnight banking stint on the Lickey incline!

During one such overnight banking turn on the Lickey, the allocated loco, 37197, was derailed during the small hours of Saturday 17th November 1990 whilst assisting 6M81, the nocturnal Speedlink departure from Gloucester to Bescot. 6M81 had stalled whilst ascending the incline and then rolled back, the '37', along with several Tiger Rail TTA type clay slurry tank wagons, derailed on catch points.

It was not unknown for the same Class

37 to be allocated to this West Midlands banking diagram for quite some time. When necessary it was usually swapped with the Class 37 locomotive off 6M40 mentioned earlier, which would then take up the banking duty role, the loco off the banking turn returning 'home' with the 6V43 corresponding ASW empties from Wednesbury/Brierley Hill to Cardiff Tidal, which could sometimes include loaded scrap metal for Cardiff (ASW) and Sheerness.

Excursions and diversions

During the steam era, the Dudley line was often traversed by excursions bringing families for a day out at Dudley Zoo & Castle. Its subsequent demotion to that of

a freight-only byway in the mid-1960s later saw it appearing on the itinerary of many a railtour special. The Bescot Open Day event of October 1992 saw a series of local specials negotiate two freight branches served by the Dudley line: those to Bilston and Pensnett.

The Dudley line axis also had the chance to occasionally prove itself as a useful diversionary route, either for planned engineering works or in emergency situations. The latter scenario sometimes saw the local trip from Bescot to Langley Green routed this way, thus requiring a run-round at Stourbridge Junction.

One of the last known planned diversions routed via Dudley took place during the last week of July 1992 when various freights normally associated with the Welsh Marches line were diverted this way due to engineering occupations at Dinmore, Leominster and Onibury. Included amongst these were pairs of Class 37s with the empty Albion (Gulf) to Waterston oil trains and another '37' pairing powering the Burngullow to Irvine 'Silver Bullets' clay slurry.

Miscellaneous movements have included locomotive convoys run in connection with galas staged at the Severn Valley Railway and elsewhere, and rolling stock moves either for attention or disposal, the latter including Class 306 units for scrap at Cashmore's, Great Bridge.

Dudley line statistics

The volume of freight using the Dudley line by the early 1990s was but a pale shadow compared to the 1970s. For example, the weekly total to be seen at Wednesbury as of summer 1976 (based on Working Time Table and Trip Notice information) equated to more than 300 trains of which around 90 were booked via the Princes End line (the lion's share of those via Princes End would have been generated by Spring Vale Steelworks, as detailed in TRACTION 213 & 214).

Table 1 details Dudley line traffic levels through Wednesbury as of summer 1990, but excludes engineers' movements to and from the local spoil tip. As can be seen, the Metals division was the dominant player at this time, with more than 60 such trains scheduled each week coming under the aegis of this business sector, one of which was the recently gained movement of imports from Boston Docks.

This was also a time where the advent of rail freight sectorisation introduced in the late 1980s had actually swelled the number of Dudley line freights at Wednesbury to around 117 per week, equating to between 22 and 24 such workings each weekday. However, as we shall soon see, these figures had been significantly reduced by March 1993 when the number of freights booked through Dudley and Wednesbury each weekday were struggling to reach double figures.

TABLE 1 Dudley Line Activity At Wednesbury: Summer 1990 - (excludes engineers' trips)

Train	Service/Movement Details	Sector	Time (*Approx)
6T42	06:30 SSuX (Class 47) Bescot to Brierley Hill Speedlink trip; may also convey traffic for Pensnett	RfD	Calls 06:40-07:10 SSuX
6T44	05:10 SSuX (Class 37) Washwood Heath to Wednesbury; via Birmingham New Street & Bescot, calls Langley Green to detach empty scrap wagons for loading at Handsworth (Coopers Metals)	Met	Arr. 07:20 SSuX
0T44	07:40 SSuX (Class 37) Wednesbury to Washwood Heath	Met	Dep. 07:40 SSuX
6G27	05:51 SSuX (Class 37) Toton to Brierley Hill/Round Oak; conveys steel imported through Boston Docks	Met	Pass 07:55 SSuX
6M40	01:15 MSSuX/02:40 MO (Class 37) Cardiff Tidal to Wednesbury; calls at Brierley Hill and Round Oak	Met	Arr. 08:12 SSuX
6M72	07:00 MO ex-Gloucester/ 22:25 FSSuX (Class 47) St. Blazey to Cliffe Vale Speedlink; calls at Bescot	RfD	Pass 08:46 SSuX
0T55	08:35 SSuX (Class 37) Round Oak to Bescot; after assisting 6M40 from Stourbridge Junction to Brierley Hill and 6G27 from Great Bridge to Round Oak	Met	Pass 08:50 SSuX*
6T50	07:25 SSuX (Class 47) Birmingham Lawley Street FLT to Round Oak; conveys steel (imported through Ipswich) on 'Seawheel' intermodal wagons for Round Oak. Calls Washwood Heath to attach Metals traffic. Runs as 4T50 when only 'Seawheel' intermodal wagons	RfD	Calls 09:05-09:25 SSuX
6V43	09:50 SSuX (Class 37) Wednesbury to Cardiff Tidal; calls Round Oak and Brierley Hill (balance of 6M40)	Met	Dep. 09:50 SSuX
0T50	10:05 (Class 47) SSuX Round Oak to Bescot	RfD	Pass 10:20 SSuX*
6T42	10:00 SSuX (Class 47) Brierley Hill to Bescot Speedlink trip; may also convey traffic ex-Pensnett	RfD	Calls 10:30-11:00 SSuX
6T42	12:15 SSuX (Class 47) Bescot to Brierley Hill Speedlink trip; may also convey traffic for Pensnett	RfD	Pass 12:25 SSuX*
6T44	12:30 SSuX (Class 37) Washwood Heath to Brierley Hill	Met	Pass 13:15 SSuX*
8M01	07:22 SSuX (Class 37) Radyr to Bescot	Dep	Pass 13:36 SSuX
6E73	12:30 SSuX (Class 37) Brierley Hill to Boston; calls at Round Oak (balance of 6G27 ex-Toton)	Met	Pass 13:51 SSuX
6M51	10:05 SSuX (Class 37) Scunthorpe to Brierley Hill	Met	Calls 14:22-15:05 SSuX
8V01	14:52 SSuX (Class 37) Bescot to Gloucester (balance of 8M01)	Dep	Pass 14:58 SSuX
6T44	14:35 SSuX (Class 37) Brierley Hill to Washwood Heath; calls at Round Oak	Met	Pass 15:25 SSuX*
0T50	14:50 SSuX (Class 47) Washwood Heath to Round Oak;	RfD	Pass 15:30 SSuX*
6T42	15:15 SSuX (Class 47) Brierley Hill to Bescot Speedlink trip; may also convey traffic ex-Pensnett	RfD	Calls 16:00-16:50 SSuX
4T50	16:00 SSuX (Class 47) Round Oak to Birmingham Lawley St FLT; empty 'Seawheel' intermodal wagons	RfD	Pass 16:20 SSuX*
6V64	09:45 MSSuX (Class 37) Tees to Margam 'Metals-link'; calls at Brierley Hill	Met	Pass 16:35 MSSuX
6E29	16:30 SSuX (Class 37) Brierley Hill to Scunthorpe (balance of 6M51)	Met	Calls 16:58-17:28 SSuX
6T55	16:15 SSuX (Class 37) Langley Green to Washwood Heath; conveys scrap metal, loaded at Handsworth (Coopers Metals), empty gas oil tanks ex-Soho DED. Calls Bescot to detach empty gas oil tanks for Fawley. Calls Wednesbury to collect scrap metal loaded at Bilston (Nortons) and empty steel wagons	Met	Calls 17:10-17:55 SSuX
6M12	12:30 WSSuX (Class 37) Cardiff Tidal to Wednesbury; calls at Brierley Hill	Met	Arr. 18:45 WSSuX
6V70	17:02 SSuX (Class 47) Cliffe Vale to Exeter Riverside Speedlink; calls at Bescot (balance of 6M72)	RfD	Pass 19:03 SSuX
6M29	14:00 SSuX (Class 47) Taunton to Warrington Speedlink; calls at Bescot	RfD	Pass 19:04 SSuX
6V69	19:33 WSSuX (Class 37) Wednesbury to Cardiff Tidal; calls at Brierley Hill (balance of 6M12)	Met	Dep. 19:33 WSSuX

TABLE STATISTICS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Total
Movements including light engines	27	28	26	28	28	13

Dudley line finale

Having already suffered heavy traffic losses due to the abandonment of the Speedlink wagonload network in July 1991 followed by the loss of scrap metal from Bilston (Norton's) in May 1992 and the closures of the steel yards at Great Bridge and Wednesbury in November 1992, the volume of freight traffic using the Dudley line through Wednesbury was further eroded in January 1993 with the cessation of the regular imported steel service from Boston Docks to Round Oak. This traffic flow was acquired by Trainload Metals in 1990 following negotiations with shipping agent Read & Sutcliffe, its demise hammering home yet another nail in the Dudley line's coffin; the traffic returned to rail in the late 1990s under EWS.

The eventual closure of the line itself as a through route took place with effect from Monday 22nd March 1993, when the section between Bescot/Walsall (Pleck Junction) and Round Oak was officially 'mothballed' pending possible future re-use. The last full day of normal line operation was on Friday 19th.

Shown in Table 2 are those freight movements that actually ran via Dudley during the final week of through line operation. Engineers' trains to and from the tip at Wednesbury are excluded as these usually ran from the Bescot/Walsall direction.



TUESDAY 12TH JULY 1988: A splendid mixed motley consist makes for Bescot, at 10:35, behind 50018 heading 9M01, the 07:05 TO departmental from Gloucester, seen here at Horseley Heath, between Dudley Port and Great Bridge. ANDY WILLIAMS.

Noteworthy last day trains

Trains falling into this category on the last day of operation (Friday 19th March 1993) included the 6E58 Cardiff to Wakefield Cobra AWS service, which was also used for a while in the early post-Speedlink era as a means of conveying Dover train ferry traffic to the Cobra railhead. The train's routing via the Dudley line was

a bit of a mystery as it didn't call in the Black Country region for traffic purposes, although it was sometimes known to stop at Wednesbury for a crew change rather than at Walsall. 6E58 was the last train to use the by then little used section of line between Bescot Curve Junction and Pleck Junction, which later became a run-round facility for Freightliner Heavy Haul coal trains (see later). The last loaded 6M72 St. Blazey to Cliffe Vale china clay train to use the Dudley line was hauled through Wednesbury at 07:03 by 47304 whilst en route to Bescot. As detailed in TRACTION 231 & 232, the trunk movement of china clay to the Potteries had been a historically long-standing Dudley line traffic flow.

The honour of powering the last freight train through Dudley fell to 47238 working the return 6T50 RfD trip from Brierley Hill to Bescot, which passed through Wednesbury at 16:43. The train consist was a long raft of empty BDA and SPA steel carrying wagons for return to Cardiff and Scunthorpe (Metals sector traffic). Future tripping movements to and from Bescot and the terminals at Brierley Hill, Pensnett and Round Oak would have to travel via the Soho Road and the Stourbridge Extension lines with a run-round at Stourbridge Junction.

Following several abortive attempts earlier in the day, the last departure from Wednesbury engineers' tip, the 8T84 empties to Bescot, was powered by Construction Sector liveried 31155, which eventually got the train away from Wednesbury Exchange Sidings at 17:00 (it followed 6T50). Subsequent disposals of spoil and spent ballast were dealt with at Honeybourne for a while.

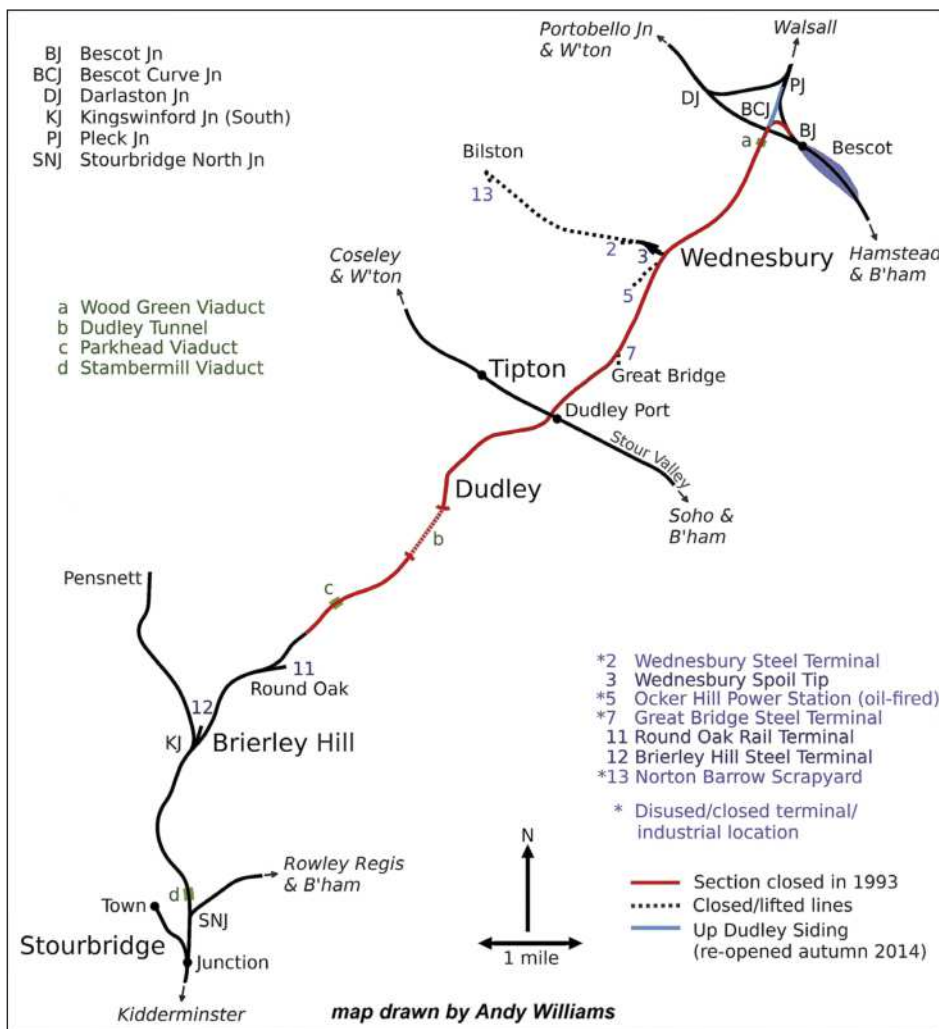
The final movement of the day fell to 56053, which passed through Wednesbury at 17:11 whilst running light engine (0211) from Round Oak to Bescot after working a 6Z11 steel special from Llanwern to Round Oak via Dudley and Bescot. 6Z11

**Table 2: Final Week of Revenue Services via Dudley
Monday 15th to Friday 19th March 1993**

Train	Sect	Service Details	Total	Additional Notes
6E58	Met	Cardiff Tidal to Wakefield (Cobra)	3	May also convey RfD Dover train ferry traffic for Wakefield (Cobra)
6M1	Met	Margam to Bescot	4	Conveys traffic for Round Oak
6T46	Met	Bescot to Round Oak	5	Includes traffic off 6M11 ex-Margam
6T46	Met	Bescot (?) to Round Oak	1	Intermodal type wagons laden with steel
6T46	Met	Round Oak to Bescot	1	Empties for movement via Bescot
6V05	Met	Bescot to Llanwern	1	Balance of 6M11 ex-Margam
6Z11	Met	Llanwern to Round Oak	1	Special via Dudley and Bescot (run-round)
6Z67	Met	South Wales to Round Oak	1	Special via Dudley and Bescot (run-round)
6V69	Met	Bescot to Cardiff Tidal	2	Balance of 6M12; calls at Brierley Hill
6T44	Met	Bescot to R.Oak/B.Hill	2	Any available traffic for R.Oak/B.Hill
6M7	RfD	St. Blazey to Cliffe Vale	4	Loaded china clay
6V70	RfD	Cliffe Vale to St. Blazey	4	Empty china clay
6T50	RfD	Bescot to Brierley Hill/Pensnett	5	Dover train ferry traffic (loads); may also convey Metals sector traffic (loads)
6T50	RfD	Brierley Hill/Pensnett to Bescot	5	Dover train ferry traffic (empties); may also convey Metals sector traffic (empties)

Revenue Trains (Including Empties) 39

NOTES: The South Wales Metals services working into and/or out of Bescot may have also conveyed traffic for Wolverhampton Steel Terminal or collected additional traffic at Bescot for Brierley Hill and/or Round Oak. The 6M12 Metals service from Cardiff Tidal to Bescot had been noted throughout the final week of operation running light engine (0M12) into Bescot, having presumably detached its ASW traffic at Brierley Hill. It is believed that 6M12 at this time was also used for conveying vanloads of tinplate traffic from South Wales destined for Worcester Metal Box (detached en route), the Metal Box empties being collected by the corresponding 6V69 service.



had initially passed through Wednesbury at 14:28 and again at 15:25 after running-round at Bescot. This was one of several convoluted routings forced upon last day activities due to operating difficulties brought about by a combination of infrastructure failings and long-standing acts of vandalism, the latter being an all too familiar problem especially in the Round Oak area where there had been repeated instances of cable theft.

Cable train surprise

On Thursday 1st July 1993, more than three months after its official March 'mothballing', a short cable laying train 'top & tailed' by 31155 and 31422 traversed the northern section of Dudley line from the Bescot/Walsall direction as far as the site of Dudley Port Low Level station. After completing its task, the ensemble then returned wrong line. Special care had to be taken when negotiating the level crossings at Great Bridge (Eagle Lane) and Wednesbury (Potters Lane) where the crossing barriers and associated flashing lights and audible warning sirens were now inoperable following the closure of the signal boxes at these two locations.

Up Dudley Siding

An equally remarkable occurrence took place some twenty years later when the section of line from Pleck Junction to Bescot Curve Junction (in the shadows of the M6) was lifted and relaid as a run round

FRIDAY 16TH MARCH 1990: A pair of Cargowagon flats laden with sawn timber from Luxembourg (imported using the Dover train-ferry) form the core traffic this day on 6T42, the 10:00 SSuX RfD Speedlink trip from Bescot to Wednesbury, which is seen rumbling over Potters Lane crossing behind 47293 and passing Wednesbury No.1 'box, before entering the Exchange Sidings. The timber traffic was sometimes forwarded from Wednesbury by the resident Class 08 pilot to Great Bridge for unloading. Bringing up the rear of the formation is a PXA bogie box wagon, which will be loaded at Wednesbury with concrete tunnel lining segments used in connection with Channel Tunnel construction works.

PAUL DORNEY.



TUESDAY 1ST MAY 1990: A train synonymous with the Dudley line for 20 years was that used for the conveyance of china clay between the West Country and the Potteries. 47245 passes the site of Wednesbury Town station (closed July 1964), at 08:49, with 6M72, the 22:15 FSSuX Speedlink from St. Blazey to Cliffe Vale, formed of 11 PBA 'Tigers' and a VGA van (possibly containing bagged clay). The train was effectively a block working, but conveyed clay sourced in wagonload quantities from various clay dries in Devon and Cornwall. Additional PBA wagonload clay traffic from Dorset was often added at Bescot. **DAVID J. HAYES.**



SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST 1992: The Bescot Open Day event of August 1992 saw several mini railtour specials operate over the Dudley line (they also traversed the Bilston and Pensnett branches). 60083, displaying 'The Pensnett Knocker' headboard, passes Blowers Green on the approach to Dudley Tunnel. The special was tailed by 31128 and 31217 with the latter carrying 'The Bilston Knob' headboard. **PAUL DORNEY.**



facility for Freightliner Heavy Haul (FHH) coal turns en route to and from Rugeley Power Station. It was designated as the Up Dudley Siding (UDS). Coal trains began using UDS in autumn 2014; such workings had previously used the Up and the Up & Down goods loops at Bescot (some FHH run rounds continued to take place at Bescot for a while after the UDS became active).

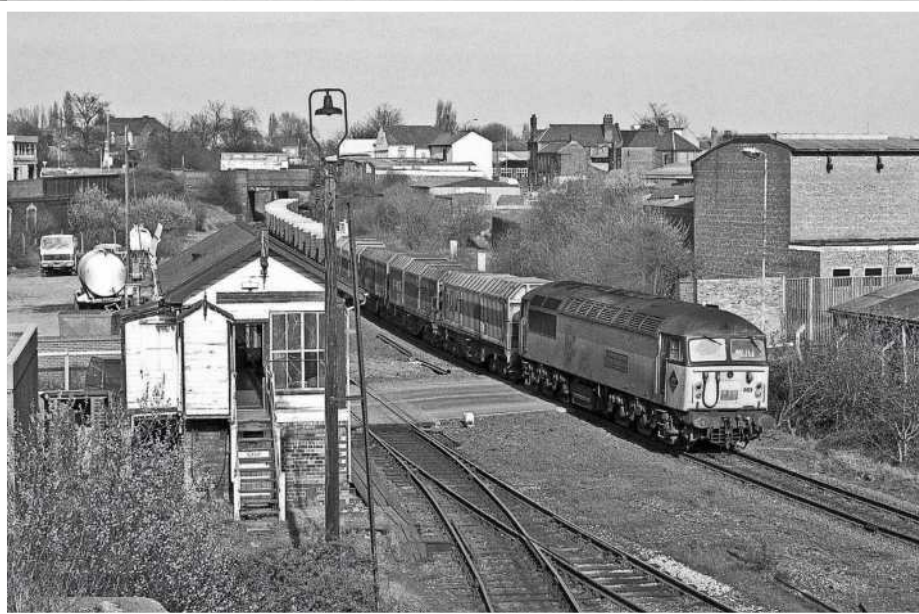
At its peak, the UDS is thought to have been used on average by four loaded coal trains most weekdays with some activity on Saturdays. Rugeley at this time was exclusively served by FHH and burning imported coal that had arrived through Avonmouth, Hull, Immingham and Portbury. However, it was only those coal-hauls originating from Hull and Immingham (routed over the Sutton Park line) that tended to use the UDS, as those from Avonmouth and Portbury travelled by way of South Wales, the Welsh Marches line, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

All the empties from Rugeley were booked to use the UDS and traverse the Sutton Park line. Such workings ran to Barnetby, Barrow Hill, Leeds, Stoke



(LEFT) SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST 1992: The Bescot Open Day event of August 1992 saw several mini railtour specials operate over the Dudley line (they also traversed the Bilston and Pensnett branches). 60083, displaying 'The Pensnett Knocker' headboard, passes Blowers Green on the approach to Dudley Tunnel. The special was tailed by 31128 and 31217 with the latter carrying 'The Bilston Knob' headboard. **PAUL DORNEY.**

FRIDAY 19TH MARCH 1993: The last Up (southbound) freight to use the Dudley line through Wednesbury on the final day of normal operation was a 6211 steel special from Llanwern to Round Oak, which was formed mainly of intermodal type wagons, laden with coils, and four telescopic-hooded coil carriers. Because of operating difficulties, the service had to run into Bescot first in order to run-round. 56053 passes Wednesbury for the second time, at 15:25, after running-round its train at Bescot. PAUL DORNEY.



Gifford and York where they were staged in readiness for re-loading. As can be gleaned, the number of empty trains using UDS outnumbered the loaded ones. Unfortunately, this activity came to an end after about 18 months. Regular coal trains to Rugeley ceased in February 2016, with one last delivery (from Portbury) taking place in late April. The power station itself closed in June 2016.

The UDS facility has also seen some usage by track machines to an engineers' compound situated north of Pleck Junction on the Down side of the line, and has featured on at least a couple of rail-tour itineraries.

Acknowledgements:

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THURSDAY 1ST JULY 1993: The cable laying train that traversed the northern section of the closed Dudley line axis post-closure, at the beginning of July 1993, was 'top & tailed' by 31155 and 31422. The train is seen at the site of Dudley Port Low Level station (closed July 1964), with a Class 304 electric unit departing from the Stour Valley line's 'high level' station with a local service from Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton. PAUL DORNEY.

On June 3rd 1978, Class 27/2 No. 27204 is in the company of the breakdown crane and an LNER Gresley van used as a tool van at the east end of the depot. Beyond the locomotive another former LNER vehicle can be seen, this time a Thompson designed parcels van.



Haymarket depot

Opened in 1900 by the North British Railway, Haymarket shed continued as a steam depot until 1963 when it was converted to maintain diesel locomotives and, after the closure of Leith Central depot, diesel multiple units. In steam and early diesel days it was coded 64B and then later 'HA'.

Gavin Morrison's photos show the depot during the 1970s and 1980s.



A couple of 'Deltics' Nos. 55008 and 55022 are outside the depot on the morning of Easter Saturday 18th April 1981. According to the 'Napier Chronicles' website, 55008 on this day worked 1V93 09:50 Edinburgh - Plymouth, as far as York and returned with 1S27 07:22 Plymouth - Edinburgh, from York. 55022 took the 1E61 08:50 Aberdeen - King's Cross, forwards from Edinburgh.



(ABOVE) At the end of the depot closest to Haymarket station there was often a line of locomotives awaiting a visit to works or needing repair at the depot. On 31st December 1973 the line up is made up of Nos. 26017, 5309 and 7578.

(RIGHT) Two 'Deltics' in different liveries are seen at Haymarket on the morning of Easter Monday 20th April 1981. According to the 'Napier Chronicles' website 55002 (on the left) had come north on 1N00 01:00 King's Cross - Newcastle (running via Sleaford and Lincoln), before working 1S08 07:05 Newcastle - Edinburgh. The locomotive was then sent to Haymarket TMD to have new brake blocks fitted before going north at the head of 1A51 17:00 Edinburgh - Aberdeen where, after a visit to Ferryhill MPD, it then worked 1E48 21:25 Aberdeen - King's Cross, 'The Night Aberdonian' throughout to London. The blue liveried 55004 was about to work an additional 1E61 10:09 Dundee - King's Cross, south from Edinburgh and after a visit to Finsbury Park TMD returned north that evening with 1S77 23:55 King's Cross - Edinburgh.

(BELOW) An ex-works Class 46, No. 46040 is seen in the company of a Class 26, Class 47/01 No. 47267 and 'Deltic' No. 55018. The date is June 3rd 1978.







Inverness based Class 26s were no strangers to Haymarket and No. 26029 is seen on the depot on 3rd June 1978.



The first two Scottish Class 47/7s to receive the large logo livery Nos. 47711 and 47712 are seen together on the depot on July 25th 1981.



On February 26th 1987, 47716 is on the depot now in the ScotRail livery.



55018 'Ballymoss' stands outside the depot in the company of 47268. Later that day the 'Deltic' would work 1E29 the 17:10 Edinburgh to Newcastle.

E26053 is clearly providing steam heating for its rake of five Mark 1 coaches as it waits departure for Manchester. The platform signs would still be in the dark blue colours of the former Eastern Region. Note the high timber screen, and its support gantries, on this northern side of the station provided, presumably, to give some protection from the weather.



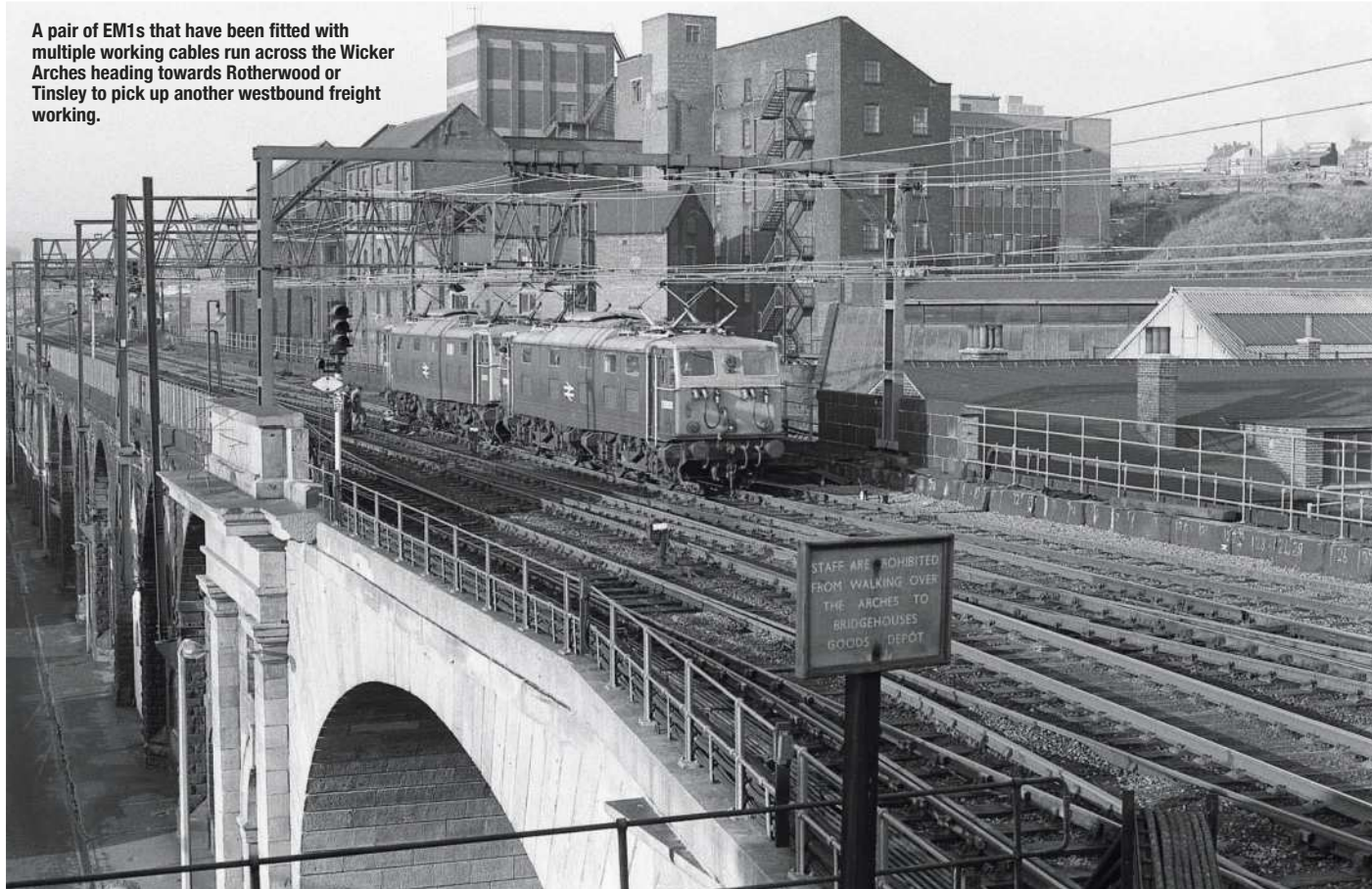
EM1s at Sheffield Victoria

Ken Horan, who worked as a second man based in the Sheffield area, photographed the 1,500 V DC EM1 type locomotives in the final years of passenger train operations over the Woodhead line in late 1960s. Through passenger services between Manchester Piccadilly and Sheffield Victoria ceased on 5th January 1970 with trains being diverted via the Hope Valley Line to Sheffield Midland station. Woodhead Line freight services continued to run until the line closed in 1981.



E26055 is seen arriving from Manchester and is crossing the Wicker Arches. The EM1 is still in lined green with small yellow warning panels. 26055 was named 'Prometheus' but by this date the plates had been removed.

A pair of EM1s that have been fitted with multiple working cables run across the Wicker Arches heading towards Rotherwood or Tinsley to pick up another westbound freight working.



E26053 pulls out of platform 5 at Sheffield Victoria with a train for Manchester Piccadilly. Dominating the background is the Effingham Street gas works. The locomotive has lost its namplate 'Perseus' as can be seen by the missing paint above the double arrow symbol.

A favorite lineside location was Casey Lane Bridge, just south of Basford Hall Junction signal box. 86 209 hurries south with a typical WCML working, the 16:12 Manchester Piccadilly to Euston on 21st June 1978. At the time I would have already seen all the AC electric locos and even the rarer diesel workings would be familiar Class 25s, 40s or LMR 47 locos, but it was an interesting place to watch intense train movements.



Remembering Crewe in the days of BR Blue

Michael Hitchen was fortunate to grow up in Crewe in the 1970s and now, looking back, considers that it was an excellent time to be interested in Railways, and a fortunate location to live in. Everything was in BR Blue and it seemed such things would go on forever.

Today as a rail centre, Crewe bears little relation to the 1970s and early 1980s, a time of loco hauled trains with multiple unit workings much less common. The station was a mecca for enthusiasts, even on a weekday evening the platform ends would be populated by numerous individuals. These numbers would swell on a summer weekends to hundreds and, on the occasion of a works open day, the platform ends, especially overlooking the diesel depot. Sometimes the presence of the British Transport Police would be needed with such large crowds.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, daily workings were monopolised by AC electric of all seven classes, with the most numerous being the ubiquitous Class 86, along with Class 87s sharing the working of most class 1 diagrams, but both types could be seen on freightliner workings, often in multiple. Of the earlier AC classes, 81 and 85 could cover most other secondary duties with the less numerous 82, 83 and 84 types relegated to freight and parcels, and

the occasional special passenger working. The constant procession of AC electrics was far from dull as the mix of types could still produce interesting combinations.

The town's southern approach lines at Basford Hall were a favourite place to observe West Coast Main Line (WCML) action, with passenger workings at speed and the freight trains just leaving or arriving at the southern extremities of Basford Hall Yard moving at a more sedate pace.

In British Rail days traction under the wire would usually be powered by electric locos, with only a few regular exceptions such as the evening British Oxygen Company block working to Ditton (near Runcorn) which was always Class 40 hauled and the MGR workings from the nearby North Staffordshire coalfield. These used Class 47s, as the link from the WCML at Madeley up to the pit heads was not electrified.

North of Crewe is the WCML four track section towards Winsford and eventually

on to Liverpool and Glasgow; this was a high-speed racetrack with trains already at speed by the northern outskirts of the town, though the line was not easy to observe. Many of the bridges precluded good views, so it would be a bike ride out to the former Minshall Vernon station to see this stretch, once seeing the APT at speed which was a sight to be remembered!

The other electrified line north from Crewe is the WCML Manchester branch; subsidence issues resulting in permanent speed restrictions between Crewe and Sandbach meant most Inter City trains ran via Stoke. The one exception was the 'Manchester Pullman', with its coaches in their reverse blue/grey livery, which had to run this way to allow the Wilmslow stop.

Away from the wires

Away from the overhead wires the lines to Chester, Stoke and Shrewsbury all had a particular interest; the Chester line had local DMU workings, even though



Parcels, mail and newspaper traffic was substantial in this era. In this view from the early 1980s, 40150 of Carlisle depot crosses the North Junction with a typical mix of parcels stock. The working is seen from the staff car park, where it was possible to stand close to the Chester Independent lines and loco release road with no fencing! Today the Crewe Signalling Centre stands near here.



Stabled in the Holding Sidings are Class 25s Nos. 25262/093/302/186/315, seen from the cab of 40182. The '40' is on the washer road with the fuel tanks beyond. The diesel depot was actually to the left. The holding sidings had two electrified roads next to the running lines and both types of traction were a common sight.

Pictured from the landing dock at the end of Tommys Lane, a scene that typifies Crewe at this time, 87005 'City of London' crosses the North Junction with a southbound WCML Express. The train consists mainly of Mark Three coaches, including a matching Buffet, and exemplifies the top-link of Inter-City travel in the early 1980s.



all the intermediate stations had closed. These were usually two car class 101 Metro-Cammell or Class 103 Park Royal units whilst the other regular passenger diagrams were the Holyhead boat trains, originating at Euston. They changed traction at Crewe, to either Class 40 or latterly Class 47. This was an activity which could be observed close up several times a day.

Freightliner still operated to Holyhead at this time and were one of the few freight workings that could be viewed from the station, but only at the north end as the trains ran down the 'Chester Independents' disappearing out of view under Nantwich Road overbridge. If you were fortunate you could catch sight of the trip working for Beeston coal depot which was usually a Class 24 or 25 with a couple of 16T coal wagons and a brake van. Even back then, this was a sight from another time.

Crewe had 21 individual trip workings in 1981. These were made up of local Class 08 duties which included the electric traction depot and Crewe Works shunts, Class 25s on the DCE (Department of Civil Engineering) and ballast workings as well as the Sandbach 'Murgaroyds' chemical workings. There were also the Class 47 coal workings from Silverdale.

The Stoke line had limited passenger working operated by the three car Class 120 Swindon 'Cross Country' or class 104 BRCW DMUs to Derby and Lincoln. There were also some working to the North Wales coast and the unadvertised DMU workings for the Ordnance Factory at Radway Green and the service from the Potteries to Crewe works. This was introduced with the closure of the North Staffordshire Railway Works in Stoke, so workers could continue employment; this service used the little known station in Crewe (Wistaston Green platform) alongside the electric depot. Though the Stoke and Derby line at the Crewe end had the least to interest the enthusiast it was our route for trips to the fascinating East Midland Division, with its intense freight working, and huge depot at Toton.

Finally, there was the Shrewsbury or Salop line, which I was most familiar with, attending schools alongside this line. Arguably this was one of the most interesting for local enthusiasts, who had long since seen all the AC electrics and local Class 304 EMUs. The line had a number of interesting workings. The Severn Tunnel Junction to Carlisle mixed vacuum braked freight could produce a 'Peak' or even occasionally a Class 52 'Western'. The daily DCE ballast workings to Bayston Hill were invariably Class 40 hauled. Other freight working including air braked company UKF block trains from Ince & Elton near Ellesmere Port conveying fertiliser.

When the HST power cars were being constructed at BREL Crewe, the line to

Seen from the south end of Platform Four, about to do a test run, brand new HST power car SC43095, for set 254 020, stands on the Up Through line. In the background a Swindon Cross Country DMU departs for Derby. Ahead a tanker train passes over the South Junction, an unusual sight in the station.



Enthusiasts enjoy haulage by 25302 as it works across the North Junction with a Llandudno to Nottingham summer only working. These were the only scheduled loco hauled passenger services down the Stoke and Derby line and could be doubled headed.



At a time when a works visit could present 100 locomotives, Bescot Depot's ETH fitted 47537 awaits repair in Crewe works on 20th June 1982. BREL Crewe was the main overhaul location for this class and a trip round would often yield a '47' from a distant depot not likely to be seen locally otherwise.



Shrewsbury was used to test the Class 43s, often still in primer. Initially they ran with a single former Mark 2 brake coach and a Class 25 loco trailing but later the working would take place without the '25'. In the 1970s this was also the chosen route for ex-works diesels requiring testing, using a train of Mark 1 coaches still in BR maroon livery and covered in a layer of dirt. The sight of 50 047 'Swiftsure' returning from BREL Doncaster to the WR on this line was a real shock. They were once a familiar sight locally but by 1980 the class was an unknown sight.

Passenger workings on this line were limited to the Cardiff services, local DMU working to Shrewsbury, the nocturnal Cardiff to York 'Mails', which include some passenger coaches, and the Saturday only holiday diagrams. These were due into Crewe at 15:12, 16:23, 16:57 and 18:48, so late afternoons were often spent on Rope Lane Bridge, waiting to see if a 'Peak' would appear.

This line had briefly used the interesting looking Class 123 Swindon 'Inter-City' DMUs on working to Cardiff, before reverting to Class 120s augmented by single car DMUs, which in the passenger form were not normally seen at Crewe. This diagram was upgraded to loco hauled in 1977, with boiler fitted Class 25s being allocated to Crewe Diesel Depot for use with Mark 1 stock, usually a five-coach rake, with the brake in the centre.

Anyone who remembers Crewe in the era, will be familiar with the Cardiff train loco release procedure, which required the stock being pulled out across the South Junction by a Class 08 shunter, allowing the loco to move out of the bay platform. This would also enable a trip past the holding siding and a glimpse of the southern end of the diesel depot. No doubt this would be frowned on today, and even back then occasionally large number of enthusiasts with no more than a platform ticket would be turfed off by BTP officers! Possibly the biggest shock back then was in January 1981, when 33031 arrived for crew training. The Class 33 was totally unknown this far north, and though they would handle all the Cardiff via the Marches Line passenger diagrams, they always appeared out of place.

Living locally, it was possible to view railway operations from varying locations, exploring different vistas to see as much as possible, though the railway estate was so vast many parts were not visible to non-railway staff. The LNWR had built the Locomotive 'Works' and much of the town around it so it was prominent in the town; but activity inside was near on impossible to observe.

The works and depots

Luckily there were organised tours each Sunday afternoon, generally run for visiting groups, but you could tag along for 20p



In August 1982, 86 241 'Glenfiddich' arrives into platform two with a northbound express, as 33020 awaits departure for Cardiff, a trip through the Welsh Marches which will take nearly 3 hours. A Class 33/0 was a common sight at Crewe but the sub classes 33/1 or 33/2 were an unusual occurrence.



In the 1970s the amount of mail and parcels handled at the station cannot be underestimated. It was possible to observe all this activity close-up with three or four Class 08s allocated to shunting and trip workings for this traffic. Here 08 220 waits to move GUVs out of bay previously numbered 3b on 28th December 1985; soon this traffic would be lost to overcrowded roads.

and this became a weekly trip, especially in good weather. Going every week was probably a bit too often but each visit would produce a few locomotives arriving for repair or overhaul, and the progress of new builds could be enjoyed. The railway works itself could contain easily 80 main line locomotives, itself a concept hard to understand today.

I recall from the open day of 1975, held on the 20th September, the surprising sight of Class 27s and Class 76s along with the more usual types. On this occasion there were four Crewe Diesel Depot Class 08s for moving stock and trip workings, three Class 20s, two Class 25 (a type usually repaired at Derby) two Class 27s (27006 and 27025) as well as thirty seven Class 40s. There were also an amazing forty Class 47s

and two Class 50s (50002 and 50014). There were twelve AC electrics and two Class 76s (76044 and 76056). There was a total of 104 locomotives, with a number of HST power cars being completed or constructed as well!

The three depots were, and still are, difficult to view from any public place; Crewe Diesel (CD), Crewe Electric (CE) and Crewe Carriage Sheds (CP) all had visibility issues for the enthusiast. The carriage sheds between the Stoke line and the WCML, were only visible from passing trains. Even then it was only the building, with any stabled multiple units often hidden inside. Crewe Diesel Depot was obscured by the loco holding sidings at the south end of the station, and the electric depot was only glimpsed from passing



Seen at Willaston, between Crewe and Nantwich, 33026 hauls the 16:02 Crewe to Cardiff in May 1986. Cardiff train motive power would soon be changing to ETH fitted Class 37s and these services would be extended to West Wales and to Holyhead or Manchester.

trains on the Chester line. On the opposite side of the line there was no view of the locomotives present in the works.

Fortunately, a tour of the diesel depot could be enjoyed through family or friends' contacts. These were always a treat, though it was the usual selection of Classes 08, 24 and 25, visiting Class 40s or 47s of which there was large local allocation. Once the home for the entire Class 50 fleet, the final few had moved away by the mid 1970s. The depot held the railway's last allocation of Class 24s which dwindled away in the early 1980s. An exciting development was in the late 1970s, when Class 56s began to appear on the depot, for MGR coal workings around the Potteries area. They would travel to Crewe for minor attention and fuel, though the locos remained allocated to Toton Depot.

I have to admit that the continuous arrival and departure of stopping trains formed of four car Class 304 EMUs to Liverpool Lime Street and Altrincham were almost always ignored. Only the very occasional appearance of a Class 310, or the surprise appearance of the Scottish Region Class 303s attracted any attention. DMUs at Crewe were limited to Chester or Derby allocated types, more exotic classes

from Liverpool and Manchester depots were rarely to be seen as generally buses replaced trains if the wires were turned off.

Of course, the one type of EMU that would cause a stir was the APT, which had been a regular sight in both frame-only POP test train form and later in Class 370 production form. Sometimes APT power cars were seen with Class 43 HST power cars in departmental test formations. Eventually the units went into scheduled service, giving a hint of the future but sadly the programme did not receive the support to make it succeed and it would be much later that its successors would speed along the same route.

The reader who may be familiar with the location in more recent times, when the diesel depot had an allocation of Class 31s and Crewe to Cardiff working were in the hands of Class 37s, may find it hard to imagine a time when locomotive types were far more localised. Even as close as Stoke, Class 20, 44s, 31s and 37s would be far more commonplace than at Crewe. Though there were a large number of interesting workings, the appearance of a diesel locomotive from these classes would be a rare occurrence.

Even the types dealt with by the works,

such as Class 20s and 37s, and later Class 45s, would be an exciting observation. Class 31s or 37s did appear on Cardiff passenger working, but only on a handful of occasions, Class 20s could work into Crewe from the Stoke line, probably originating from the Derby area but I only remember a couple of sightings. Class 45s or 46s could appear on specials or empty stock workings from Derby Litchurch Lane Carriage works. The only daytime diagram that could be relied on to produce a Class 31 was the 'Peterborough Parcels', due on the station around 16:10. A quick dash from school was needed to the station car park, where you could look across the north end of the station hoping to catch the loco drawing light engine after leaving the parcel stock to be shunted into the south end bays that were dedicated to parcels and mail loading.

It's often said that you only miss things once they have gone which, thinking about it, is a bit obvious. I enjoyed being an enthusiast at the time and I was fortunate to have an interested older brother and we enjoyed numerous trips to far off interesting locations but, as the years have passed, I remember most fondly my time growing up in a town whose name is a byword for railways!



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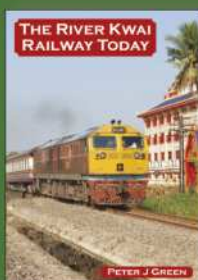
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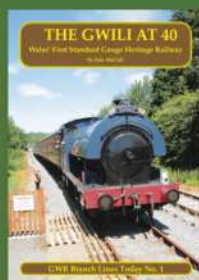


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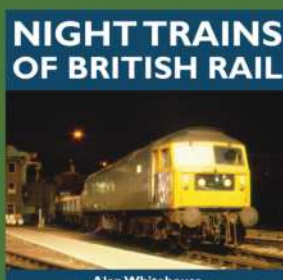
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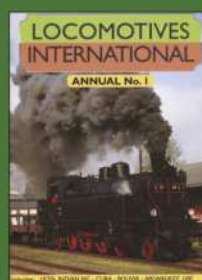
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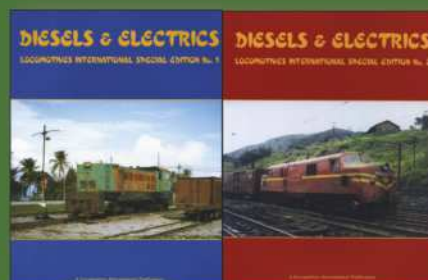
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