

steamsounds from the lineside 2006

1. It was the end of summer 1967 when steam finished in the West Riding and although there may have been a railtour or two in the following year, that saw the end of steam in Bradford.

It has always been one of my regrets that I was unable for various reasons (I couldn't afford a decent recorder!) to get any recordings of steam hauled trains on the steep climbs towards Leeds & Halifax before steam finished.

Back in the summer of 2000 I had thought that the chance was going to come my way when someone went to a lot of trouble to try to arrange unassisted steam haulage out of Bradford Interchange when the West Country Pacific *Taw Valley* was involved in working a private charter in connection with publicity for a newly released Harry Potter book. Or was it a film? Whatever the reason, despite the train being topped and tailed with a diesel everywhere it went, mysteriously no diesel was to be attached leaving Bradford. Indeed, why it actually visited Bradford was a bit of a mystery in itself.

Anyway, all this came to naught when the Bullied Pacific proved itself incapable of keeping the train on the move up the gradient and ended up being pushed by a diesel.

On 28th January 2006 the attempt was to be made again, this time with ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45407 as motive power, hauling a charter train for Past-Time Rail.

The lines around Bradford were my stamping ground in 'real' steam days and I wouldn't care to count the number of times that I travelled behind steam up that steep hill out of Bradford Exchange behind Black 5s and Fairburn tanks, both towards Leeds as well as the route that this train was going to take, towards Halifax with its continuous gradient of 1 in 50.

The load was 8 coaches which perhaps doesn't sound excessive until you consider that the start is very difficult with the gradient beginning some way down the platform, the engine and first coaches actually being on the 1 in 50.

In steam days, if my memory serves, the maximum load for an unassisted Black 5 out of Bradford Exchange was 7 coaches and anything more than that would have a banker at least as far as Bowling Jc. at the top of the gradient. In addition, the start out of Exchange was a little easier with the gradient starting beyond the platform end and, usually, the loco that had brought in the empty stock would give the train a push to the end of the platform too.

So, how would 45407 cope with its load and the gradient?

We found a recording spot at the back of an industrial estate between Mill Lane Jc. and Ripley Street bridge which seemed suitable although it was quite near a go-cart track which chose half past 12 as the time to start operations, just 7 minutes before the train was due to depart!

As the recording begins a Leeds bound DMU can be heard rounding the curve at St. Dunstons as 45407 whistles, ready to start now that the road is clear.

The initial start out of the platform is good but as more and more of the train comes onto the 1 in 50 gradient speed falls alarmingly and I was beginning to think that the loco was in danger of stalling.

I should have had more faith in one of Stannier's Black 5s and the excellent judgment and enginmanship of driver Bob Morrison as, once clear of the junctions, 45407 begins to accelerate a little and, with the locomotive later reported to be in full forward gear with the regulator in the roof, continues to accelerate as it passes on the gradient towards Bowling Jc.

If you are wondering what the internal combustion engine noises heard as the last coach passes, it's the sound of the generator coach at the back of the train being started up.

As the sound of the Black 5 fades away a DMU rattles down the gradient into Bradford.

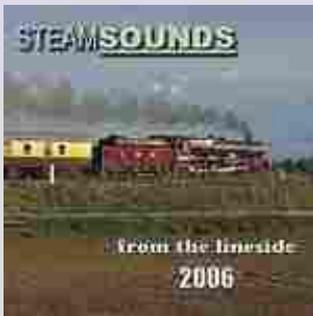
What an excellent recording, one that I have been waiting a long time to make and the first steam hauled passenger train to leave this side of Bradford for 39 years!

2. We followed the train getting recordings on Copy Pit, on the climb to Sough Tunnel and a final one at Milner Royd Jc. as the train returned to Bradford but none of them were a patch on our first recording.

To finish off the day we called in at Bradford Interchange again to have a look at 45407. It wasn't quite the same as the last Black 5 I saw there which was 45428 in Bradford Exchange in September 1967 (and had a footplate ride up to Low Moor shed!) but it was nice to see it there just the same.

As it could be a one off opportunity we decided to have a try at recording 45407 leaving, running tender first with just its support coach.

As the recording begins a DMU is heard arriving before 45407 gets the road.



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The Black 5 makes a gentle start out of the station but, despite an interruption from the police, can just be heard accelerating past Mill Lane Jc.

At my age, I hope I won't have to wait another 39 years before I have the opportunity again! Will I still be recording steam when I'm 93? God willing, you never know!

3. On 18th February 2006 the LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* was booked to work a train from Derby to Bristol and back. At least, that was the original plan.

A few days before the train was due to run, Network Rail discovered that there was a possible problem with clearances on the down line at Yate. This meant that, for the outward run, steam haulage was curtailed with the loco being detached at Gloucester while the train continued to Bristol diesel hauled. 6201 reached Bristol via Severn Tunnel Jc. The return from Bristol was steam hauled throughout. A further problem on the day was caused by the late running of the empty stock to its first pick up point, apparently caused by frozen points. Well, it was a bit cold!

During the outward journey I tried for a recording near St. Andrews Jc. on the steep climb from Landore St. Jc. to Camp Hill.

I had recorded here once before quite successfully and, although in the middle of a built up area the location alongside a canal had been fairly quiet. This time things were a little more difficult.

The first problem was the sound of water flowing through one of the lock gates so I moved from the spot I had used on the previous occasion. The spot I choose instead had the drawback that it was close to a go-cart track but all was quiet. At least it would have been had the train been on time!

Shortly before the train was due the go-carts started up and the noise forced me to move again. I found yet another spot on the canal bank away from the go-carts and the water; it was next to a car park but it was too late to move again as I could hear 6201 beginning the climb so, fingers crossed!

I was lucky as it was only after 6201 had passed going well on the gradient with 12 coaches behind the tender that someone decided to start their car and drive off.

4. Of course, the recording of 6201 that I really wanted was of it climbing the Lickey Incline on its way back from Bristol.

Once again I went to a spot about half way up the bank between Pikes Pool Lane Bridge and Burcot Bridge. Recording conditions were almost perfect and I was able to find an eminently suitable position right at the top of the hill south east of the line and about 200 yards back. There was virtually no wind and only a little road noise to be heard. So far, so good!

With a 12 coach train there was no way that the loco was going to be permitted to climb the bank unassisted and a Class 66 diesel had been attached to the rear of the train at Gloucester.

I was fortunate in having a friend travelling (and recording) on board so was able to get regular updates on progress by mobile 'phone - this modern technology can be very useful at times.

The departure from Gloucester had been about 20 minutes late and I got a further text message passing Cheltenham which suggested that we shouldn't expect the train to reach Bromsgrove until about 6.30 PM, 15 minutes late.

Since I changed from recording on tape to using mini-disk I have gotten into the habit of trying to start recording well before I expect the train to arrive and, at just after 10 minutes past six I was thinking that I could give it another 10 minutes before starting the recorder when I thought, 'What the heck, there's about 70 minutes left on the disk!', so I started the recorder, checked that everything was Ok and settled down at the top of the hill to watch the light fading in the sky over the Malvern Hills away in the west and await events.

Almost immediately I head the sound of a train approaching from beyond Bromsgrove. At first I assumed that it was a freight train but as the sound grew in volume I suddenly realised that the roar was coming from Lizzie running just about on time with a driver who was determined to at least start the climb with as much speed as possible!

And what a sound. I can honestly say I have never heard anything like it!

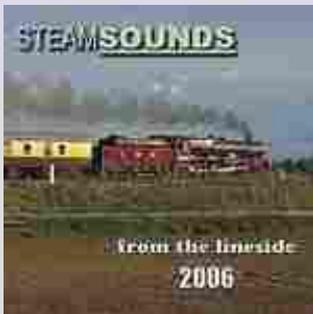
Once through Bromsgrove and onto the 1 in 37 $\frac{3}{4}$ gradient speed begins to fall quickly and the horn of a DMU can be heard sounding a warning to lineside observers, some of whom had set up floodlights near the track at Vigo - surely not a sensible thing to do.

As 6201 passes speed is still falling, though not as rapidly and by the time the train got to Blackwell I am told that the speed was around 30 mph.

Obviously, to produce a performance like that, the Class 66 diesel must have been doing its fair share of the work but, fortunately, is hardly audible in the recording and, aside from its horn, neither is the descending Class 170 DMU!

Those on the train felt that the diesel only started to work really hard on the last third of the climb while a lineside observer just above Pikes Pool Lane Bridge thought that it was going flat out when it passed him.

But who cares, whatever the diesel was doing, it in no way detracts from this recording.



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Princess Elizabeth was already one of my favourite locos having given me some impressive sound recordings, particularly on Shap in 2004, but the sight and sound of it climbing the Lickey has to be the most impressive experiences I have had at the lineside in over 25 years of sound recording!

5. 25th March 2006 was a good day to be out on the lineside as there were three steam charters running that day. One, hauled by 60009, we recorded as it left a water stop at Barrow Hill, a second was running behind 6024 but that was away in South Wales and too far for us but the one that we really wanted a recording of was planned to run from Tyseley to Bristol and back with LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 5690 *Leander* as the return was via the Lickey Incline.

Partly due to the need for a reversal at Washwood Heath and to provide a banker on the Lickey this train was also intended to employ one of the Tyseley Halls which should have worked the train out of Tyseley in the morning and then run light engine to Bromsgrove in the afternoon to bank the train up the Lickey ending the day by working the train back to Tyseley from Washwood Heath.

As we have seen all too often, railtour plans are forced to change, often at short notice and this train was no exception.

The first change was caused, presumably by the same problem that 6201 encountered, when it was discovered that there were clearance problems on the route to Bristol and the train was re-routed to run to Cardiff. We only discovered what the other change was when the train arrived on the Lickey.

Conditions for our recording at Barrow Hill had been pretty good. It was fairly mild, the wind wasn't too bad and there was plenty of sun but, by the time we arrived at Pikes Pool Lane bridge, it was very windy and was raining quite heavily.

In view of the conditions, the position I had recorded 6201 from previously wasn't a possibility as it was far too exposed so we moved down to a spot below the crest of the hill, nearer the line and settled down to listen to the bird song while awaiting events.

A little after the time that the train had been due through Bromsgrove, what appeared to be steam could be seen rising in the distance, just about in the right place to be at Stoke Works Jc. but it wasn't moving. Was it the train or was it coming from something else?

After a procession of trains had passed going up the incline, the column of steam began to move but there only appeared to be a single column.

All became clear once the train was onto the gradient - there was no banker. Apparently, although the Hall had worked the train to Washwood Heath that morning, there had been some kind of problem which had prevented it from leaving Tyseley to go to Worcester that afternoon but it was felt that, as *Leander* only had 6 coaches behind the tender, there would be little risk in allowing the ascent to be unassisted and, as you can hear in this recording, this proved correct. With the engine being worked as hard as this there was no risk of stalling on the climb.

While I would not claim to be a great fan of Jubilees, I will admit to enjoying the sound of one being thrashed and this one was - thoroughly!

6. On 27th May 2006 *Leander* was out on the main line again, working a train from Tyseley to York and Scarborough. Our first recording was made by the bank of the River Derwent just to the east of Malton.

The quite strong wind was carrying the sound towards us and we were able to hear the loco clearly as the train passed through the station about half a mile away. Everything sounds promising for a really good recording but, once through the station, the driver eases the regulator and the loco is being worked less hard as it passes only to be opened up again once it has passed!

7. Our next recording was made to the west of York during the return journey from Scarborough.

I had already noticed that there was a temporary speed restriction on one of the tracks out of York which meant that if the Jubilee was routed on that line, our usual recording location at Dringhouses wouldn't be much good. However, if it was on the other westbound line.....

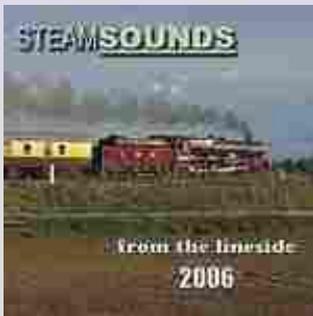
To be sure of getting something we went to a spot quite near to the site of Chaloners Whin Jc. where the original line to London through Selby diverged. This was just beyond the end of the 20 mph speed restriction so, whichever line the train was routed on, we should be all right!

The problem with this location is that with four tracks, there is always the possibility of another train passing at the same time as the Jubilee and spoiling the recording but we were lucky in this respect.

Of course, the train turned up about 10 minutes late on fast line, the one without the restriction, so our usual spot could have been Ok. Not that I'm complaining you understand as 5690 sounds fine accelerating hard with its 8 coach train.

As the sound of the Jubilee fades away another train passes, a HST heading for York. Good timing or what?

8. On 3rd June 2006 the LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* worked a train northbound over the Settle -



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Carlisle line and a good weather forecast persuaded me to go out and try for a recording at Settle.

The location I chose for my recording was just to the north of the town but 300 feet above the line which would be about a third of a mile distant.

I had recorded here once before in 1988 and felt that this spot had potential for a really good recording. The reason why I hadn't been back to see if I could realise that potential was mainly due to the weather!

The hillside here faces west and is very exposed with virtually no shelter whatsoever, so in all but the calmest conditions, recording here isn't really a possibility.

The weather forecast was correct for once and although there was a westerly breeze blowing, it wasn't too strong and it was very pleasant sitting in the sun until 6201 appeared running about 20 minutes late.

With 13 coaches behind the tender the loco makes a fine sound and can be heard accelerating a little on the easier gradient through Settle station before passing, working hard and going well on the 1 in 100 gradient.

The sound carried back quite well at times so I was able to continue recording until the train was well above Stainforth and, after I had stopped recording, I could still just hear the loco from as far away as Helwith Bridge.

9. On 17th June 2006 the LMS Coronation Pacific 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* was booked to work a train from Crewe to Carlisle and back over Shap. Once again we went to Shap Wells to try for a recording.

The hot, sunny and calm weather in the morning deteriorated into hot, sunny but breezy weather by the time smoke appeared rising above Greenholme in the distance but we were able to hear 6233 as soon as it appeared running about 45 minutes late.

A load of 13 coaches doesn't sound to be proving to be a problem as 6233 passes on the 1 in 75 gradient and is soon heard reaching the summit.

10. For the return we found a spot between Harrison's Sidings and Shap village and, as the recording starts it sounds as though we have disturbed a Curlew.

If anything the wind had become much stronger but after 6233 has passed it carried the sound back to us quite nicely.

11. On 19th August 2006 the ex SR N15 King Arthur 4-6-0 30777 *Sir Lamiel* was out on the main line working a charter train in the north from York to the unfamiliar destination of Redmire on the Wensleydale Railway and our first recording was made at York.

I had already had one go at getting a recording of a train departing from York heading up the East Coast Main Line from the bank of the River Ouse and had my recording interrupted by various river craft including of all things, a rowing boat full of young ladies being taught to row. This time we went to the other bank!

As you can hear, *Sir Lamiel* with 10 coaches behind the tender isn't being worked hard despite the load being increased by the weight of a Class 47 diesel attached at the rear of the train, there to top and tail the train as the route included quite a few reversals.

As 30777 heads north the safety valves lift and a Class 91 propelled GNER train passes heading into York station.

12. After the tour had visited Redmire on the Wensleydale Railway, 30777 rejoined the ECML at Castle Hills Jc. just north of Northallerton station.

While waiting for the signal out onto the main line to clear the safety valves lift briefly before everything is ready and *Sir Lamiel* can head north to Darlington for its next reversal.

13. After the train had travelled to Darlington it reversed there before being diesel hauled to Eaglescliffe where it reversed once again for the steam hauled run back to York.

The train almost beat us to our next recording spot as the place we had chosen proved to be much farther from the road than we had anticipated!

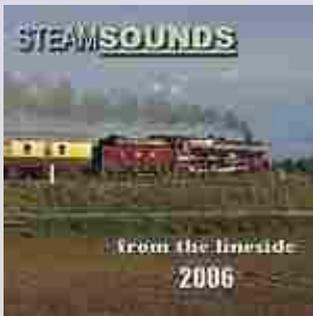
As you can hear, it was worth the effort.

The recording was made just south of Yarm on the climb towards Picton and 30777 sounds to be going well as it passes on the 1 in 170 gradient.

14. However you describe Saturday 2nd September 2006, weatherwise 'fine' it was not. In other respects 'fine' it certainly was!

It was a shame really as I had been looking forward to recording this locomotive in this location for some time. Not just for over a year from when this train was first proposed, but since February 1967!

I was slightly unfortunate in that I was born a little too late to have a chance to see much 'real' (pre-1968 steam) although I'd like to think that I've made up for it since, so I only ever had one pre-preservation run with steam over Shap. That was in February 1967 on the Border Countryman railtour which ran from Leeds via Manchester, over Shap to Carlisle then to Beattock and back before returning to Leeds via Newcastle and the East Coast Main Line.



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The loco that hauled the train from Leeds to Carlisle and back was one of the last Jubilees, Holbeck's 45562 *Alberta*. This loco was requested for the tour for the simple reason that it was cleaner than the other remaining Holbeck Jubilee, 45593 *Kolhapur* despite the fact that those of us in the know knew that *Kolhapur* was by far the better loco of the two! *Alberta* steamed very badly all that day and even with a fairly light train, was down to walking pace at Shap Summit. The tour was considerably enlivened during the short run to Beattock and back from Carlisle when we had an absolutely filthy 43106 which produced speeds approaching 80 at times!

The run back from Carlisle via Newcastle was no better and I seem to remember that we very late back into Leeds at the end of the day.

While it would have been nice to have had a better run, I was pleased to have at least 'done' Shap in steam days.

Since then I have been steam hauled over Shap on quite a few occasions and more recently, have been to the lineside quite a few times so when in 2005 Vintage Trains advertised a tour with *Leander* I was quite keen to get out for a recording of what I hoped would be a far better climb of the gradient with a Jubilee than I had experienced in 1967.

The original date for the train proved, for various reasons, impossible and it was almost a year later that the train actually ran.

The only fly in the ointment was the weather forecast which through the previous week hadn't sounded at all promising. Weather forecasters are often wrong with their prognostications but unfortunately, for once they were spot on. The weather was absolutely atrocious with heavy, continuous rain and a strong wind almost all day.

Still, as we were determined to turn out for this train we went to Shap Wells as usual, donned the waterproofs, wrapped recorders in plastic bags and attempted to find a reasonably sheltered spot hoping all the while that the train would be on-time and we wouldn't be out there for hours!

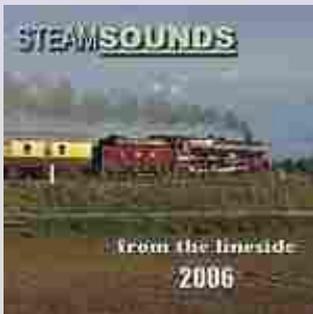
The area is fortunate in having that boon to lineside sound recordists: dry stone walls. No finer wind break and rain shelter has ever been invented and we set up our microphones in the shelter of a handily situated one with plenty of time before the train was due and settled down to wait.

Had the weather been better we could have expected the area to have been thick with photographers and videographers but besides the two of us, only one other person joined us. No doubt everyone else had more sense and stayed with their cars!

Our wait in the rain proved most rewarding. *Leander* turned up just about on time and as you can hear was going very well at the head of a 9 coach train.

In 1967 I'm sure that *Alberta* didn't roar up Shap like this!

15. For the return from Carlisle we went to a spot we had tried before at Harrison's Siding not far north of Shap village. If anything, while the rain seemed a bit lighter the wind had strengthened but here again there was a handy dry stone wall for shelter.
Once again 5690 was going well on the gradient towards Shap Summit.
16. Through the summer of 2006 the North Yorkshire Moors Railway had once again operated trains to and from Whitby and timetable saw just two round trips between Whitby and Glaisdale during the course of the day. This was to fit in with the normal service trains which passed the steam hauled trains at Glaisdale.
However, on the Esk Valley Line there is only a Sunday service during the Summer months so on Sunday 1st October, during the NYMR's Autumn Steam Gala, they had sole use of the railway and could run more trains.
Heard at Lease Rigg not far from Grosmont, despite having only 4 coaches behind the tender, BR Standard Class 4 2-6-0 76079 sounds good accelerating away from the station.
Soon after passing, the driver closes the regulator as there is a speed restriction on a bridge over the River Esk not far away.
Once over the river the 2-6-0 can be heard continuing the climb.
Although the earlier rain had stopped, falling water was still dripping from the trees and a greasy rail surface causes some adhesion problems for the Standard 4 as it climbs the 1 in 100 gradient towards Glaisdale.
17. A few weeks later on 29th October the LNER designed K1 2-6-0 62005 was working the final day of trains to Whitby for the 2006 season.
Returning from Glaisdale with a mid-morning train to Whitby 62005 stopped at Sleights and is heard in this recording making a vigorous start with its 4 coach train.
18. Our next recording was of 62005 returning from Whitby and was made between Grosmont and Egton Bridge not far beyond the first bridge over the River Esk where we found a suitable spot on the hillside at the opposite side of the



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valley from the railway.

As the recording begins the K1 can just be heard departing from Grosmont.

The train soon reaches the river bridge which has a speed restriction on it but once clear, the regulator is reopened and the K1 continues on the climb through Egton Bridge. Once again, no really hard work is required with this light train on the 1 in 100 gradient.

19. As time was short, our last lineside recording of the K1 was made close to Egton Bridge station.

We only had about 5 minutes to wait before 62005 came through whistling a warning to spectators on the platform.

20. On 16th November 1936 the LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* completed a record breaking non-stop run from London Euston to Glasgow and seventy years to the day the same locomotive was back on the West Coast Main Line working a train to commemorate the anniversary.

Organised by Kingfisher, The Mid-Day Scot, an all dining train, ran on 16th November 2006 steam hauled from Preston to Glasgow returning south, again steam hauled, the following day.

As might be expected, running a train on this busy route on a weekday meant that, as well as water stops, the timetable included visits to many of the loops en-route, however, as we have seen in the past, just because there is a booked stop in the working timetable...

Our first recording was made at the usual place near Shap Wells and despite the rather poor weather, we made sure that we set off to walk to our spot in plenty of time, at least we thought that 45 minutes before the train was due was plenty of time!

According to the timetable the train was booked to stop, presumably for pathing, in the loops at Carnforth and Oxenholme before following a Euston - Glasgow Pendolino from the latter and as we reached our recording spot the Glasgow train came past so we had plenty of time to get set up.

Oh no we hadn't! 6201 hadn't stopped at Carnforth or Oxenholme and had been looped at Grayrigg so, while we still looking around for the best place to get shelter from the wind, steam appeared over hill down at Greenholme and it became a bit of a race to get everything set up, plugged in and switched on!

Fortunately there was just time and aside from a little wind noise, the recording was a good one.

6201 with driver Bob Morrison at the regulator was going well with a load of just 7 coaches with the addition of a Class 67 diesel at the rear, there to provide ETH power but not assist, just adding to the weight to the train which must have been around 350 tons.

21. Now we had a problem. According to the timetable we had well over three hours to get to Beattock and find a suitable spot. We had only been there once before so it would have been handy to have had plenty of time to look at a few possibilities. However, while 6201 had stops booked at Penrith, Carlisle and Lockerbie we couldn't be sure if it would actually make any of them. And it was already running 45 minutes early!

We decided to play safe and assumed that it would only make one stop of about 30 minutes somewhere for water and we could expect it to be perhaps an hour or more early on Beattock.

Guess what? When the train passed us at Greskine, about half way up the climb, it was only about 15 minutes early! It had made a water stop at Penrith and had been held there for right time.

The problem with recording on Beattock is that the railway and the very busy A74(M) occupy the very narrow valley of the Evan Water and it is impossible to get away from the incessant noise of the road. We chose the spot at Greskine as at that point the railway is on an embankment and it is possible to get to the west side of the line, the opposite side to the

