

steamsounds from the lineside 2007 & 2008

1. The period just after Christmas always seems a bit flat, particularly early 2007 with the lack of steam activity and some less than good weather didn't help either, so it was nice to get out on Saturday 20th January to try for some recordings of Ian Riley's Black 5 4-6-0 45407 especially as the route included Greetland Bank meaning that if everything went to plan, 45407 would be the first steam loco up there since 1967.

Back in the late 60s before steam finished in the West Riding of Yorkshire I travelled over this route regularly, in fact during the summer of 1967 on an almost weekly basis, although I usually travelled down Greetland Bank rather than up it!

The reason was because a regular mid Summer Saturday out usually started on board the 8.20 Bradford Exchange to Bridlington which went via Halifax and Wakefield. This was a popular move as at Exchange at 8.20 on a Saturday morning 2 steam hauled trains departed, the other being the Bradford portion of a Skegness train. Two parallel departures up the 1 in 50 gradient out of Exchange made quite a sight and sound - how I wish I'd been recording then! The reason for the choice of the Bridlington train was that it stopped at Normanton where, after a short wait one could join the SO Birmingham - Glasgow which was Jubilee hauled from Leeds, take that to Keighley for a Black 5 on a train from Morecambe into Bradford Forster Sq. followed by a dash across to Exchange for a Fairburn tank to Leeds. After that I usually went for dinner (what they call lunch down south)!

My last steam hauled journey up Greetland Bank was behind 45593 in April 1967 on a Jubilee Society railtour which ran from Bradford to Chester, Wrexham, Shrewsbury & Crewe returning to Bradford via Huddersfield. To be honest, I don't remember much about it. Well, it was dark and it had been a long day!

Until recently, last year in fact, I hadn't thought that there was much chance of ever seeing a steam hauled train up there again but when Past-Time Rail ran a railtour out of Bradford I began to think that some of the routes in the area might just see steam again and it was with some pleasure that I saw another train to Bradford advertised. Perhaps a visit to Bradford will become an annual event each January!

While I was pleased to have the opportunity of getting a recording at the lineside I would dearly love to ride behind steam into and out of Bradford again but the ticket price was just too much. I know steam railtours are expensive to run but £79 is beyond my pocket nowadays.

The tour started in Manchester and ran via Standedge and Brighouse to Bradford, was then diesel hauled to Leeds before returning to Manchester steam hauled via Brighouse once again, Copy Pit, Blackburn and Chorley.

As this was a recording that I really wanted I had been hoping for a fine day, dry with a light wind so, of course, what did we get? A very strong wind and heavy showers - typical!

Worse still, the weather forecast suggested that the only likely recording spot at Greetland would be exposed to the wind and finding a sheltered spot seemed most unlikely.

Arriving at Greetland with plenty of time to spare we were amazed to find that, although the clouds were still scudding rapidly overhead the area we wanted was completely sheltered. The only problem with our recording spot was the busy road at the other side of the valley but there was nothing we could do about that.

This recording begins as, running perhaps a few minutes early, 45407 appears in the distance negotiating Greetland Jc.

Due to the sharp curve following the junction there is little chance to get a run at the bank but the Black 5 sounds to be going well with its 7 coach load on the 1 in 44 gradient.

Although the rail conditions were dry, soon after passing under a nearby bridge, 45407 goes into a rather dramatic slip which proves to be a little difficult to stop.

Once the slip has been corrected the Black 5, now going a little slower, continues sure-footedly on the gradient until, reaching Salterhebble Tunnel and the sound fades away.

An excellent first recording for 2007!

2. In late April & early May 2007 the North Yorkshire Moors Railway planned to hold a major steam gala with an LNER theme. The list of locomotives intended to be available was impressive including, amongst others, 3 A4 Pacifics, a J15, an N7 and a B1. The reality proved somewhat different as, one by one the visitors dropped out until all that was left was one A4 and the N7. Even the railway's own K1 62005 wasn't available by the time the first gala weekend, 28/29th April, arrived. Obviously, the LNER theme was no longer appropriate so the theme was changed to East Coast and other locomotives were added to the list.

Now, I had been under the impression that this was going to be a steam gala and, despite the lack of visiting locos, was still looking forward to it, that is, until I discovered that the additional locos were to be diesels!

In view of this change and the fact that the one loco that I would have wanted to see and record, the N7, was only to have very limited use I wouldn't have bothered going except that the news wasn't all bad.



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Earlier in the year, the NYMR had started operating trains to Whitby again. The difference this year being that, instead of using another operator, these trains were now completely 'in house' and were running off and back onto the NYMR at Grosmont rather than to Glaisdale as in past years. However, for these gala weekends, the trains were once again running to Glaisdale and, even better, all the way to Battersby. Motive power for these trains was to have been the B1 but, as that wasn't available, the BR Standard Class 4 4-6-0 75029, now passed to operate trains to Whitby, and 62005, for the second weekend, were to work the trains.

We visited on 29th April when 75029 was in charge.

The steepest gradient encountered by these trains is the initial climb at the start of the return journey from Battersby where a 1 in 47 gradient runs almost to the small station at Kildale.

We had already recorded the train during its outward journey but because of tortuous roads in the area we only just made it to Battersby in time to get this recording of 75029 on the gradient recorded about half way between Battersby and Kildale.

3. A fine weather forecast on 9th June, including those all important light winds, tempted me to go to Settle to try for another recording high on the very exposed hillside to the north east of the town and, for once, the forecasters got it right. It was calm and very hot walking up the hill but well worth the effort.

The loco I was there to record was the same one that I managed to record there almost exactly a year ago, the LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*.

6201 turned up with a train of 12 coaches running about 10 minutes late and although I wasn't aware of any speed restrictions, the loco wasn't really opened up until quite near the station.

As an added bit of atmosphere, there was a wedding taking place at the Parish Church and you can hear the bells as the recording starts. Curiously, the bells stopped while 6201 was passing only starting again after it had gone by. Perhaps the Settle campanologists are ferroequinologists too!

After that recording, my day was far from over. After recording 6201 I travelled to Kirkby Stephen by train as in theory at least, there were two steam hauled trains booked to run over the S&C. The other train, which had worked north to Carlisle over Shap, was hauled by the unique BR Standard Pacific 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* and I had taken the precaution while buying my ticket to Kirkby Stephen to ask at the very helpful man at Settle station if he could check to see how 1Z70 was doing. 'Six minutes early arriving at Penrith', came the reply. If only I'd had the full story!

So, on arrival at Kirkby Stephen, confident in the knowledge that I was waiting for a train likely to run near to time, I walked up to Bull Gill, found a suitable recording spot and settled down to wait.

Half an hour after booked time I knew the train was going to be rather late as there were two southbound service trains to pass within the next 40 minutes or so. More worrying, by the time the second service train had passed (the one I should have been travelling home on) I couldn't help but notice that the other lineside observers in the area, apart from a couple of other hardy souls, had all packed up and left. Obviously, something had gone wrong.

Well, as I now had almost two hours before the next train home, I waited, saw a couple of freight trains pass and, just as I was getting ready to leave, the charter that should have been steam hauled appeared around two hours late hauled by a pair of Class 47 diesels!

I later discovered that, after arriving at Penrith 6 minutes early the Duke had been failed with leaking tubes and been removed from the train there.

And yes, I did record the Class 47s but I hope you won't be too disappointed or surprised to hear that the recording will NOT be appearing here!

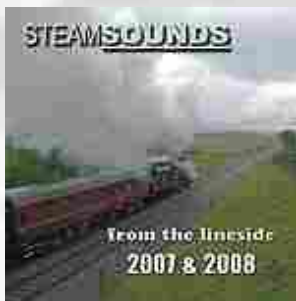
4. What do you get when you want a nice day? Well, on 30th June 2007 what we got from the weather forecasters was not just a bad forecast but a severe weather warning! And this is supposed to be summer...

I suspect that we would have decided to stay at home had it not been for the fact that June, while looking very promising with lots of main line steam to go out for, proved in the event to be a bit of a disappointment due to cancellations and failures.

Two trains were running in North West England and for once, the timing of these trains allowed recordings of both.

The first of these was a Railway Touring Company charter employing ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45407 running from Manchester, over the Settle - Carlisle line before returning to Manchester over Shap.

In view of the weather we decided to play safe and go to our usual recording spot near Selside as we knew that we would be able to get some shelter from any rain and wind behind those very handy dry stone walls. As it turned out, the weather wasn't quite as bad as forecast, still what might be called typical S&C weather, but the rain was intermittent and not too heavy.



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Only a minute or two later than expected, steam appeared over the hills down to the south.

Carried by the southerly wind, we could just hear 45407 approaching Horton-in-Ribblesdale long before we could see it and in due course the loco passed us going very well on the 1 in 100 gradient with 10 coaches behind the tender.

5. Having plenty of time between recordings allowed us to dry out a little and consider where might be best to go for our second recording which was to be of 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* working a charter train for Pasttime southbound over the S&C. This should have been the last in a four train programme had not been for the fact that the middle two trains been cancelled, presumably due to lack of bookings.

Although the weather wasn't as bad as forecast the wind seemed to be getting stronger so, in our choice of location, shelter from the wind was quite important. Ais Gill was out of the question so we tried the spot at Bull Gill where I had failed to get a recording of 71000 a few weeks before and while it was sheltered there, there was some agricultural machinery working in the vicinity, very noisy machinery too, so that was out.

We finished up not far from the south portal of Birkett Tunnel where there was both peace and quiet and some shelter from the wind.

As with the previous train, 6201 emerged from the tunnel just about on time with a train of 13 coaches going fairly steadily on the gradient.

I have just one minor complaint about this recording; these days, do drivers not use the whistle when passing through tunnels? That was the only thing missing!

6. Our last recording of the day was of 45407 again on its way back to Manchester and we went to a spot near Harrison's Siding on the southbound approach to Shap Summit where, once again dry stone walls provided much appreciated shelter from the wind and increasingly heavy rain.

In view of the weather we didn't want to spend ages waiting in the rain for a late running train. For the previous recordings, the train had turned up just about spot on, was this going to be third time unlucky?

Charter trains have a habit of running late, often very late, but I am very pleased to say that our luck held out and 45407 turned up just about on time and, better still, during a brief respite from the rain.

Once again, the Black 5 was going well on the 1 in 125 gradient and the southerly wind carried the sound back nicely. Well worth getting wet for!

7. On 28th July 2007 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* and I was able once again to get to Settle for a recording.

This tour was organised by Fishwicks, a name that might be familiar to some as it was their buses which often used to take us from Preston station to Lostock Hall in our train spotting days!

The day was very windy so instead of my preferred spot high on the hillside above the town I chose a spot just to the south of the station on the west side of the line which proved to be reasonably sheltered. The downside to this being that, due to the strength of the wind, which would be carrying the sound away from me, I expected a quite short recording.

For once, I was pleased to be wrong. I could hear 6201 almost all the way from Settle Jc. to well beyond Settle station!

8. Robert Burns tells us that the best laid schemes of mice and men go oft a-gley and on Saturday 4th August a scheme of this particular man and his friend certainly went decidedly a-gley!

That day should have seen three locos working in the North West; first there was 60009 doing an out and back Cumbrian Mountain Express, then there was 6201 working south over the S&C and lastly an ECS move from Carnforth with 48151 to round off the day.

First the weather; let's just say that the rain and miserable conditions, aside from being only a little warmer, would have done justice to January. Then a late start meant that we would miss the northbound run with 60009. Well, we should have missed it but passing Hellifield a cloud of steam indicated that the A4 was running late but, as we didn't want to risk missing 6201 coming south, we pressed on to Ais Gill hoping that we would beat the A4 to the summit and perhaps have a chance of a recording. We just made it but without time to set up! As things turned out, we would have had plenty of time for a recording on the climb to Blea Moor but hindsight is a wonderful thing - if only we could have it in advance!

So it was on to Kirkby Stephen and Bull Gill about a mile south of the station to wait for 6201.

We stood there in the rain for quite a long time. It was the sort of rain that seems light but makes you very wet in a surprisingly short time. It was also quite windy. Worse was to come.

The train turned up only a little late but hauled by a Class 67 diesel! We later found out (but still can't quite believe it) that although in steam and ready to go, 6201 was unable to work the train south from Carlisle due to a problem concerning some paperwork that Network Rail apparently needed! Getting wet and having no recording was a minor disappointment compared with that felt by the passengers who had paid £79 or more for the privilege of travelling on the train.



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We had plenty of time to cheer ourselves up with Fish & Chips in Kirkby Stephen and then went on to Appleby to discover that due to the late running during the outward journey, 60009 would be leaving Carlisle behind the last service train rather than in front of it so we decided not to try for a recording north of Appleby as well as on the climb to Ais Gill since the A4 wouldn't be having a one hour stop there to allow the service train to pass and went straight back to Bull Gill where it was still raining and, if anything, the wind was stronger. Oh joy!

Very fortunately as things turned out, our wait and another soaking proved worthwhile. As you can hear in this recording, *Union of South Africa* was going very well indeed with a load of 12 coaches.

But our day of getting it wrong wasn't yet over!

Now, the A4 was a little late but we still felt that we had a sporting chance of reaching Clapham before 48151 and, thanks to empty roads we got there just a little before the time that we could have reasonably expected the 8F to arrive.

We rushed to get set up feeling fortunate to have got there, pleased that the rain had eased a little, that there was hardly a breath of wind and sounds seemed to be carrying very well indeed. As an added confidence booster that we hadn't missed it, we could see what appeared to be at least one spectator waiting on the platform at Clapham station not far away.

I'm sure you can guess the rest - after waiting for about 30 minutes we realised that we had indeed missed it. The 'spectator' proved not to be person but part of a fence!

9. On August Bank Holiday Monday 27th August, as it was the last week of Scarborough Spa Expresses and as the motive power was to be ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45231 I decided that I should at least try to get some lineside recordings. Although I'd travelled on quite a few trains that summer I hadn't managed to get out for any lineside recordings. My first attempt was of the train during the outward journey and I went to Horsforth to try for a recording of the loco completing the climb through Bramhope Tunnel.

Now one problem with recording on the line from Leeds to Horsforth is that it lies directly under the usual flight path for aircraft approaching Leeds Bradford International Airport and, with the wind coming from the north I knew that I could have my attempt spoiled by arriving aircraft. In that respect I was lucky that nothing arrived at the critical time. However, what I hadn't anticipated was having trouble with departing aircraft as I knew that they would be leaving in the other direction.

The problem was that the end of the main runway was no more than half a mile distant so I had the full benefit of aircraft taxiing to the end of the runway then throttling up prior to take off! Fortunately, once under way, the sound reduced quickly so it was a case of fingers crossed and hope for the best.

As you can hear, soon after the Black 5 emerges from the tunnel, a large jet waiting on the runway gets the 'right away' from the control tower! Still, it could have been worse and I have to say that these big jets heard from close quarters do make quite an impressive noise - perhaps I should take up recording aircraft as a hobby instead.

A further attempt at recording later in the day at Micklefield produced a deeply unimpressive recording of the Black 5 which I wouldn't want to bore anyone with!

10. The following day, 28th August 2007, saw me out again for more Scarborough Spa Express lineside recordings, this time with a friend. After the previous day's attempts, I wasn't confident of getting anything really worthwhile!

Our first recording was made near Knaresborough about half way up the climb to Starbeck and, as the recording begins, 45231 can be heard not long after starting from the station.

As you can hear, unlike the previous day, it sounds like we have a driver prepared to go a little harder and it certainly sounded a lot better than it did at Micklefield the previous evening.

11. Thanks to having a 30 minute stop booked in Leeds, we just had sufficient time to get to Cross Gates and find a suitable spot in the fields on the north side of the line, behind Seacroft Hospital, a place I remember only too well from my childhood; I wonder if they still have my tonsils?

As the recording begins 45231 is beginning to recover after negotiating a 20 mph temporary speed restriction near Neville Hill. On the 1 in 153 & 1 in 162 gradients the Black 5 is soon working hard and passes, still accelerating. However good the loco sounds, I must say that I have rarely heard a finer set of wheel flats on the coaches!

It was our intention after this to try to get to Haxby east of York for another recording but heavy traffic on the A64 foiled us so, our next recording should have been on the climb from Church Fenton and we found what should have been an eminently suitable spot. Note the 'should have been'.

About 20 minutes after we had expected the train to arrive steam appeared down at Church Fenton but it soon became obvious that the source was stationary. For a while we were able to pretend to ourselves that the Black 5 was being held to allow other trains to overtake but as time went by it became obvious that all was not well.



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We eventually discovered that the Black 5 had failed having seriously damaged the right hand cylinder, apparently the cylinder end had been pushed off! Earlier we had noticed that the loco had a rather loud knock coming from the right hand side and had assumed that the noise was coming from a big end. Anyway, whatever the cause, that was the end of that.

12. The North Yorkshire Moors Railway held their usual Autumn Steam Gala over the last weekend in September and, with a friend, I was only able to make one visit on the last day of the three day event, 30th September 2007.

Once again, as well as running trains between Grosmont and Pickering the railway also had the opportunity to run more trains to and from Whitby and as there was no Sunday service on this line at this time of year, had exclusive use of the route as far as Battersby. They made full use of this by operating two trains on the line, crossing at Glaisdale. One loco that we were very keen to get recordings of was the ex LNER K4 2-6-0 61994 *The Great Marquess* which, along with 61264 was working these trains.

We walked up towards Egton Bridge to a spot we had used before just a little way beyond the bridge over the River Esk, the one with the speed restriction and as this recording begins, 61994 can be heard crossing the bridge then, once over, making a fine sound accelerating on the gradient towards Egton Bridge and Glaisdale.

By the way, the sound of coughing heard after the K4 has passed isn't me. In the next field was a herd of cows who all came to the fence presumably to see what the strange men next door were up to. Perhaps they aren't used to noisy three cylinder locos passing their field as they became quite agitated. Maybe one had just taken a good mouthful of grass and it went down the wrong way?

13. On Saturday 3rd November Pasttime Rail ran a railtour on a circular route from Manchester which took in the climbs of Platting Bank, to Standedge Tunnel, Copy Pit and Sough. Motive power for this train was Ian Riley's pair, ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45407 and BR Standard Class 4 2-6-0 76079.

The train didn't have the best of starts. Delays getting the locos and stock down from Castleton to Manchester Victoria lead to departure from that station being an hour later than planned and, although an hour's stop was allowed at Stalybridge for water, this was taken in full, not just for water but for pathing among the frequent service trains on the line.

Our first recording was made during the climb of Copy Pit.

We have made recordings here before and although in the past we have found good locations on the southbound climb we were still trying to find the best spot for northbound trains.

This time we tried a spot high up on the west side almost opposite Kitson Wood Tunnel and while the view was spectacular there was quite a strong north westerly breeze was blowing and we had some difficulty finding shelter from it.

45407 & 76079 appeared to have gained a little time when smoke appeared in the distance down towards Todmorden slightly sooner than we had expected. This was hardly surprising when we saw the length of the train. We had heard that the load was supposed to have been 13 coaches but when the train came into view only 8 were behind the tender, easily sufficient for the number of passengers travelling.

As you can hear in this recording the two engines with this lightweight load are making easy work on the 1 in 65 gradient passing through Kitson Wood Tunnel and continuing the climb towards Copy Pit.

14. As the train was booked to stand at Blackburn for some time we had plenty of time to find somewhere for a recording on the climb to Sough (pronounced Suff!).

We had tried recording once before on this climb and had a less than satisfactory result as we were too near Darwen Station and its passing loop so this time we found somewhere lower down the climb.

The location we found proved to be very close to the site of Lower Darwen loco shed although nothing now remains to mark the site.

Also not far away was Ewood Park football ground which later in the day was to see Blackburn Rovers at home to Liverpool and while we waited, we couldn't fail to hear lots of away supporters arriving at the ground entertaining themselves and us with frequent choruses of 'When the Saints go marching in!'. Fortunately they were far enough away to just add atmosphere to our recording rather than being a nuisance!

Once again running about an hour later than planned we eventually heard the train starting on the climb. Only 45407 was audible with 76079 coupled behind being worked very easily and, as you can hear, the Black 5 now has a cylinder cock stuck open. With this load the 1 in 101 gradient presents no difficulty.

The match was a 0-0 draw, in case you are interested!

15. Saturday 24th November 2007 should have seen the A4 Pacific 60007 on its inaugural main line working after overhaul with a train from Preston to Carlisle and back over Shap. As often seems to happen these days, problems getting the



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appropriate paperwork prevented the loco being available and a most satisfactory substitute was provided in the shape of the 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*.

The weather was typically 'Shap'. After fine and calm weather the previous few days we suffered the seemingly usual combination of wind and rain.

We were lucky in that our choice of location, at Shap Wells, seemed remarkably sheltered from the strong wind and, although we could see 6201's smoke being blown away across the fields as it approached, we weren't forced to take shelter behind dry stone walls on this occasion. However, there was no avoiding the rain!

6201 seemed to be going well when we first saw it away down near Greenholme but, by the time we began to hear it above Scout Green speed had fallen. Although the load was only 10 coaches there was a Class 47 tied on at the rear of the train making the load equivalent to at least 12. The diesel can't have been doing anything to help power the train. As it passed us, although the diesel driver seemed to open his charge up a little, there didn't seem to be any noticeable acceleration and we were able to hear 6201 all the way to the summit.

16. On the 10th May 2008 the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group ran another of their annual railtours with the LNER designed K1 2-6-0 62005 prior to its departure for yet another season working trains on the West Highland Line between Fort William and Mallaig.

Originally this train was planned to run from Middlesbrough to Newcastle then down the coast through Sunderland but just two days before the tour Network Rail recalled that steam locos were banned under the Metro wires between Pelaw and Sunderland. Unbelievable!

The change of plan saw the train steam hauled to Tyne Yard then diesel hauled back down the main line, through Darlington and Eaglescliffe to Hartlepool where it was able to take up its booked itinerary. As the train was making a number of reversals it had been booked to be top and tailed by a diesel so there were no additional operating difficulties but missing a run down the coast and the loss of steam mileage must have been disappointing to the passengers on this fully booked train.

From the Hartlepool the train was steam hauled to Billingham Jc. where it reversed before proceeding diesel hauled to Port Clarence and along the branch to Seal Sands. Returning steam hauled the K1 had a water stop at Port Clarence alongside the Transporter Bridge which, contrary to popular belief, wasn't actually dismantled and transported to Arizona!

After leaving Port Clarence the train was steam hauled to Eaglescliffe before being diesel hauled through Middlesbrough for what for many would be the highlight of the trip; the journey to Boulby Mine and, of course, the journey back steam hauled.

Thinking we would only have only one chance to record the train on the steep gradients between Saltburn and Boulby we decided to go for the climb away from the mine rather than the climb from Carlin How to Hunts Cliff.

The line from potash mine to Grinkle Tunnel climbs at 1 in 61 along the north side of the narrow and very steep sided valley of Easington Beck and we chose to try a recording from the opposite side of the valley, the only downside to this spot was that although the line was only a quarter of a mile away there was absolutely no view of it whatsoever.

After a not too long a wait we heard the diesel hauled train heading down to the mine. I did think that at one point I could see the tops of the carriages through the trees but despite the lack of view, sound seemed to be carrying well and we could hear the train reach the mine almost $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away. So far so good.

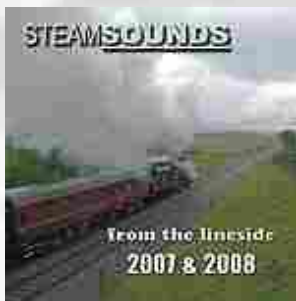
At around the booked time we heard 62005 whistle and start the train back up the line. The load behind the tender was 9 coaches. Add to this the weight of the Class 47 diesel and you have a load equivalent to 11 for the K1 to haul single handed up the gradient. In view of this we were expecting that the diesel would be providing some assistance.

After a few slips the K1 sounds to be really digging in on the steep climb and it soon becomes apparent that the diesel isn't helping at all. From the way that the K1 is able to accelerate not long after the start I would guess that the gradient isn't the continuous 1 in 61 that is shown on the profile but as the train approaches, speed is falling again.

The fireman sounds to be well on top of his job as the safety valves lift as the K1 passes.

The distance from the mine to Grinkle Tunnel where the gradient eases is a little less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles and as the K1 reaches the deep cutting leading to the tunnel, although not going fast, everything sounds Ok until the loco slips, apparently on a flange lubricator, and the train loses momentum. Worse still the line approaching the tunnel curves sharply through almost 90 degrees. With the train stretched out round this curve the load proves a little too much and the driver wisely decides to stop short of the tunnel mouth rather than risk stalling inside.

After a short delay diesel banking was arranged and the train proceeded on it's way.



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As the train was booked only a brief stop at Crag Hall and we knew that we wouldn't have time to get to a suitable spot for a recording of the train on the climb to Hunt Cliff we set off for home. It was with not a little annoyance that we later discovered that the K1 had stopped at Crag Hall for water and we would easily have made it. Hindsight is a wonderful thing!

17. 11th August 1968 is a date that somehow sticks in the memory!

Fortunately British Rail's intention that it was to be the last time that a steam hauled train would run on a British main line hasn't been realised (and, with a bit of luck, never will!). So, what better way to mark the 40th Anniversary of that date (well, we can forgive being just one day out) than with a steam hauled train running over the same route!

Even better, 10th August 2008 saw the first main line run of the BR Standard Britannia Pacific 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* for 40 years; it's previous main line run with a passenger train having been at the head of the aforementioned train in 1968.

Back in 1968 I was fortunate in that a friend's father took us in his car first to Blea Moor then to Mallerstang for the return and I had hoped to go to those two places 40 years on and see the re-run. 40 years before we had a fine, warm summer's day, warm enough to melt my chocolate biscuits! Sunday 10th August was anything but fine. From a sound recording point of view the worst feature of the weather was the wind, of which there was plenty!

This meant that getting recordings at the same two locations wasn't a possibility and for the northbound run we ended up at our usual recording spot, behind the handy dry stone wall at Selside.

That dry stone wall proved not just handy but essential. As well as giving shelter from the wind which you can hear battering against the wall as this recording begins, it also protected us from the frequent heavy showers; our intended recording spot at Blea Moor would have been horrendous! Our wait behind the wall proved well worth while.

About 10 minutes later than expected we sighted smoke rising over the hills down towards Horton in Ribblesdale and as the train came into sight I was able to hear something that I haven't heard at the lineside for 40 years; the sound of a Brit's whistle.

With 11 coaches behind the tender, Peter Walker at the regulator and Craig Stinchcombe on the shovel 70013 was being driven hard and making a fine sound as it passed. Well worth hanging about in the wind and rain for!

While I would have liked to have been at Blea Moor for this, even had the weather been kinder, I doubt that I'd have got a recording as good as this one.

18. As I said above, I would have liked to have gone to Mallerstang to see the two Black 5s on the return train but when we went to have a look at the possibilities there we found two problems; first, there was no handy dry stone wall to provide shelter from the wind and secondly, I hadn't taken into consideration the fact that trees grow quite a lot in 40 years! The view I remember isn't quite the same as it was. So, change of plan once again and, as shelter was essential we went to Bull Gill between Kirkby Stephen and Birkett Tunnel where yet another dry stone would keep our microphones out of the wind. Once again, we were there in plenty of time and had set up our equipment by the time the service train that should have overtaken 1T57 at Appleby came past.

Aside from the dry stone wall, another useful thing about this recordings spot is the fact that it gives a view of Kirkby Stephen's outer home signal and, at about the time that the service train would have been at Garsdale, we were surprised to see the signal pulled off. It couldn't be, could it?

To be on the safe side I set my recorder running and set off to walk down to the nearby bridge for a photograph expecting to have about 20 minutes to wait. As I approached the bridge I heard another spectator say, 'Hurry up, it's nearly here!'. I thought he was joking, but he wasn't.

The two ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0s, 45407 piloting 45231 were almost at the bridge going very well and running a good 15 minutes early; I only just managed to get a picture.

Because of the wind we could hardly hear the train's approach but the two Black 5s certainly sounded well going away towards Birkett Tunnel and we were even just able to hear them beyond the tunnel and beginning to accelerate as they reached the less steep section at Mallerstang.

If I'm still around in 2018, if I can still climb hills and if the weather is a little better, perhaps I'll see the 50th Anniversary run at Blea Moor and Mallerstang? You never know but, despite the weather, I'm very glad I got out for this!

19. On Saturday 20th September 2008 there were two steam hauled trains running over the Settle - Carlisle line so we could have reasonably expected, based on past experience, that the weather would be pretty dire but surprisingly it wasn't! Just a light breeze, no rain and even sunshine came as something of a pleasant change after the poor weather we have had for most of this so called summer.

The first of the two trains we recorded that day was hauled by the LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 5690 *Leander* running northbound from Hellifield to Carlisle and we went to our usual spot at Selside even though the dry stone wall, usually essential for shelter from the wind, wasn't required this time.



steamsounds from the lineside 2007 & 2008

Back in 1967 the last two Holbeck Jubilees, 45562 & 45593, were the usual motive power from Leeds for the Summer Saturdays only Birmingham - Glasgow train which left Leeds at 10:15. Pocket money never allowed me to get further than Keighley in those days and although I've travelled over the S&C behind Jubilees since then, I've never managed to see one from the lineside so it was nice to have this opportunity.

Back in the 60s, the load entrusted to a Jubilee on this route probably wouldn't have exceeded 9 coaches and, if I remember correctly, the train mentioned above usually loaded to just 7 but on this occasion 5690 had 11 coaches behind the tender.

Perhaps a few minutes after we might have expected, smoke appeared over the hills down towards Horton and carried on the light southerly breeze we were just able to hear *Leander* before we could see it. To be honest, with that load I expected 5690 to be just plodding on the 1 in 100 gradient but as you can hear, it was going far better than that. It's always hard to judge just how a loco is being worked but I had the impression that it wasn't being worked to its full capacity and there was more available if required. Based on past experience I've never been a great fan of the performance of the class but I have to say that since its last overhaul *Leander* no longer performs like a typical Jubilee!

20. Sunday 28th September was the final day of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's Autumn Steam Gala which, once again, featured steam hauled trains on the Esk Valley line.

I'd had rather mixed fortunes as far as recording was concerned; one recording had been truncated due to the battery in my recorder giving out while another had been a complete waste of time due to my having omitted to notice that I had left the recorder paused until after the train had passed!

The railway wasn't having a good day either with plenty of late running. Although the first two trains from Grosmont, one to Battersby and one to Pickering had left on-time, after that, things went downhill.

Problems shunting the first Whitby train, which led to that train going forward with 7 coaches rather than the booked 5 and the next Pickering departure being a train of just three coaches delayed matters considerably.

The 7 coach set on the Esk Valley line was a bit of a bonus as in the past any trains working west from Grosmont had never exceeded 5 coaches and have usually been just 3 or 4 and even better, this 7 coach set was being hauled by the visiting ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45231. When the Black 5 made its second trip from Whitby to Battersby in the mid-afternoon both batteries and fingers were in full working order which was just as well.

Trains were still running late so we had quite a while to wait at our recording spot below Southside Farm between Grosmont and Egton Bridge before we heard the Black 5 departing from Grosmont. Not long after the start the regulator is closed for the restriction over the river bridge.

45231 had developed a blow somewhere since we recorded it earlier by that doesn't detract too much from the fine sound of the loco recovering from the restriction, accelerating and climbing through Egton Bridge on its way to Glaisdale & Battersby.

21. November 2008 saw a most significant event in steam preservation. Earlier in the year the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust had at last seen their brand new LNER design A1 4-6-2 60163 *Tornado* completed and in steam. The loco had been run in at the Great Central Railway including some running at 60 mph but November was to see *Tornado* on the main line for three test runs.

The first of these was an engine and coach run from York to Scarborough and back so, as they had gone to the trouble of bringing the loco to my home town it would have been churlish not to go and see it!

That was on 4th November but two days later 60163 was to have a loaded test run from York to Barrow Hill and back; well worth a trip to York to try for a recording.

In view of the way things were supposed to happen, we decided that a spot at Dringhouses would be our best bet. For one thing, being close to Holgate sidings, we thought that, although there isn't much of a view, we'd have a better chance of seeing what was happening as the stock for the run, 12 coaches with a Class 67 diesel attached at the rear was supposed to be stabled there prior to reversing into York station with the A1 attached.

Aside from not having much of a view, the other problem with Dringhouses, as well as other spots south of York, are other trains which can pass at the most inopportune times, it just needs a bit of luck!

I've commented before about the best laid schemes...

We arrived at our spot in plenty of time and expected that it wouldn't be long before the A1 came past us before reversing onto the stock. We hoped for the added bonus of an extra recording of *Tornado* drawing the stock out of Holgate sidings onto the main line as it isn't possible to get into the station directly from there.

Later than we anticipated the sound of a steam loco could be heard away towards the station and a single headlight appeared under Holgate Bridge. But then it went away again! It turned out that the stock was already in the station.

I was hoping that departure would be somewhere near time as I didn't want to hang about in York waiting for the last train home but departure time came and went without anything happening.

I've already mentioned the problem with other trains so it was typical that, after 15 minutes without a single train passing in either direction, when 60163 finally put in an appearance we had not one but two trains passing eastbound!

The first was an eastbound DMU which wasn't too bad but the second was a Class 66 hauled freight train which spoiled any chance of us hearing the A1 as it headed away towards Challoners Whin.



steamsounds from the lineside 2007 & 2008

Still, I'm not going to complain as I was most impressed with the way the loco was being worked with 12 coaches and the diesel behind the tender.

It doesn't seem like 18 years ago since this project was first mooted and got plenty of 'It'll never happen!' comments from the doom and gloom brigade. It just goes to show what you can do if you really want to. It has been a long wait but the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust have done an amazing job, a job to be extremely proud of!

22. Having been out for the new A1's first two test runs, as you can imagine, I was quite keen to complete the set and get out for the third which was to be a 75 mph run from York to Newcastle and back during the evening of Tuesday 18th November.

These sort of events come all too infrequently so it's definitely worth the expense and effort to get out and be able to look back and say, 'I was there!'

There had been a slight problem with the loco on the previous 60 mph test run to Barrow Hill with some overheating so, prior to this run, the loco with its support coach ran to Milford and back just to make sure everything was Ok. Apparently it was as when I arrived from Scarborough just after five thirty the loco was outside the NRM ready to go to Holgate to pick up its train of 10 coaches with a Class 67 diesel attached at the rear so we were able to set off north with some confidence that we would have a train to record that evening.

For this run we headed to a spot not far from the village of Overton just a little way from where the ECML crosses the River Ouse north of York. The line here also sees quite a bit of freight traffic and a couple passed noisily while we waiting so it was a case of fingers crossed.

At about the time we expected *Tornado*, what should we see approaching from the north? Yes, you guessed - another freight train on the slow line. The only positive thing was that the signal just south of us was still on red and as the recording begins, you can hear the Class 66 diesel stopping at the signal to wait for the a clear path over the main line to reach the goods lines avoiding York station.

The freight was actually being held for *Tornado* which I would guess was only a few minutes late when we saw it approaching from the south going very well on the main line heading north.

Taking into account the fact that York station is only just 3½ miles away *Tornado* seems to have reached a very respectable speed already and doesn't sound to be being thrashed to do it. I think this loco is going to provide some very entertaining running for us in the future.

23. Since it is now my home town it seems appropriate to include a recording made in Scarborough.

Through 2008 I've made a few attempts at getting recordings of steam hauled trains leaving Scarborough but haven't had much success. Well, there's not a lot of scope for locations and engines tend not to be worked hard when they depart but the last booked steam working in Scarborough for the year on 29th November 2008 tempted me out for yet another attempt.

This was a train running from Carnforth and was booked to be hauled by *Lord Nelson*. Now, I've recorded 850 in the past and found it pretty quiet and even when worked really hard all you get is a roar from the chimney so had the booked motive power worked the train, I doubt that I would have bothered leaving my house on this cold and foggy day as I would have had very little chance of getting any kind of worthwhile recording! However, that morning, I received a message to the effect that it wasn't *Nelson* that had left Carnforth with the train but the far more attractive alternative of the ex LMS Rebuilt Royal Scot 4-6-0 46115 *Scots Guardsman*, a loco I hadn't even seen since its overhaul had been completed earlier in the year, so plans changed; here was a chance I wasn't about to miss!

I'm pleased to say that my recording of the Scot that afternoon, made a little way west of the station was my best so far for this location and while not exactly earth shattering thrash, is certainly worthy of inclusion to round of this CD. It's an even more appropriate recording to end with as one of the earliest recordings in my collection was made on a cold and foggy November afternoon in 1978 of the self same engine leaving York with one of only two main line railtours it ever worked as a preserved loco.

Thirty years on, my collection of recordings seems to have come full circle!

