



steamsounds from the lineside 2004

1. The 1st February 2004 was a busy day for steam fans in the North of England as, in addition to an enthusiast event on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, Standard Class 4 2-6-0 76079 and Unrebuilt Bullied Battle of Britain Pacific 34067 *Tangmere* were working a train southbound from Carlisle.

Our first attempt for a recording was between Long Marton and Appleby where we had hoped that the locos would still be accelerating after the speed restriction at Kirkby Thore. The pair looked fine with 76079 leading, sporting a Pines Express headboard and disguised as 76029 to make a typical S&D pairing with 34067 but the recording was disappointing as the pair made very little noise for us but we hoped to do better at Ais Gill.

After this we called in at Appleby where the train was to wait for about an hour while both locos took water, to allow a service train to overtake and, of course, to allow the passengers an opportunity to have a look at the locos.

Going back not that many years to when we were regulars on these trains we would have known or recognised quite a number of the passengers travelling but only saw a very few familiar faces. Like us, the high cost and difficulty in getting recordings or photographs has perhaps caused many of the regulars that we knew to travel far less than in the past. Had we been travelling on this day we would have had seats at the back of the train, the dining coaches being at the front and, even in the unlikely event that we had been permitted to stand by a window at the front of the train we would still have had the loco support coach and generator coach in front of us.

So, instead of travelling we continued by car to Ais Gill where we found a spot high on the hillside to the west of the line and managed to find a little shelter from the quite strong and bitterly cold north easterly wind.

We waited about 20 minutes, although it seemed longer in the cold wind, before the pair appeared in the distance at Mallerstang.

Even with a load of 13 coaches 76079 & 34067 don't sound to have to work all that hard on the final 1 in 100 gradient to reach the summit.

2. On 13th March 2004 the ex LNER B1 4-6-0 61264 worked a railtour from Doncaster to Scarborough and back, out via York, back via the coast and Goole - at least that was the plan.

The loco was attached to the train south of Doncaster station at the Royal Mail Terminal and we had decided to try for a recording somewhere near the station. Not having been to Doncaster for some years, what we hadn't realised was that the previously accessible area to the north of the station is in the process of being redeveloped so we ended up, with a lot of other people, on the platform and didn't get much of a recording either!

As 61264 was booked to take water at Milford we had plenty of time to get to Strensall Common about 7 miles north east of York where, in spite of a man with a chain saw who, fortunately ceased activities at the appropriate time, and the army practicing shooting nearby, we got a much better recording of the B1, running just about on time, hurrying past towards Scarborough.

3. After a visit to Filey, where we attempted to do justice to the largest portions of Fish & Chips that it has ever been my pleasure to buy, our next appointment with 61264 was at Hunmanby.

Here the line becomes single track after the double track section through Filey and begins to climb over the Wolds to reach Bridlington. Having already identified a potentially suitable location on the map for our recording we were rather disappointed to see that, in a nearby field, preparations were underway for grass track car racing on the following day. These preparations included the use of a tractor but we seemed doomed not to be able to get a recording when they started testing the public address system and various warning sirens! However, sometimes things just work out right. Shortly before the B1 appeared all became quiet and we had a remarkably uninterrupted few minutes.

This was just as well for it would have been a great pity if this recording had been spoilt by extraneous noises as the B1 makes a very fine sound starting away from the station and climbing the gradient. Thanks to a light breeze the sound of the loco going away was carried back for quite a long time and can be heard almost all the way to the top of the gradient near Speeton. An excellent recording!

The humming sound heard as the back of the train passes isn't a diesel attached at the rear of the train but the generator coach there to provide electrical power for train heating. In view of what transpired later it would have been better had it been a diesel loco!

Our next port of call was Goole but I have no recording. The loco failed just south of Bridlington and had to be rescued by a diesel some hours later.

4. On 27th March 2004 a relatively new (to me at any rate) charter train operator, Lancashire Railtours, arranged a series of steam hauled trips using the ex LNER K1 2-6-0 62005.

Starting at Carnforth in the morning the route was via Lancaster, Preston, Blackburn then through Clitheroe to Hellifield and back to Carnforth. Then, after a break of a couple of hours the K1 repeated the same route before finishing off the day with a run down the main line to Preston and back.

Thanks to plenty of pick up points and sensible fares these trains did very well for passenger loadings and should certainly be just as popular if repeated later in the year.

After a recording in the rain on the climb from Bamber Bridge, as 62005 was booked to stop for water at Cherry Tree before stopping again to pick up passengers at Blackburn, this gave us plenty of time to get to Clitheroe and find a suitable spot near Horrocksford Jc. where the short line to the nearby cement works, just audible away to the left, branches off.

The train stopped to pick up more passengers at Clitheroe and can be heard departing as this recording begins.

However, the signalman in Horrocksford Jc. signal box has a message for the driver and the K1 has to stop at the box.

Once the signalman has passed on his message, Frank Santrian once a driver at Crewe but now working for the West Coast Railway Co., who



steamsounds from the lineside 2004

- provided the stock and train crew, soon has 62005 on the move again on the rising gradient. The K1 slips dramatically on the pointwork leading to the cement works but this is quickly controlled and the train is soon accelerating towards its next stop at Hellifield.
5. For the afternoon run we returned for another recording on the climb from Bamber Bridge to Hoghton and, having seen the train leave Lancaster, an extended stop at Preston, where 62005 took water once again, enabled us to get back to the field near Gregson Lane level crossing where we had started in the morning.
- This time, in drier conditions, the K1 was being driven somewhat harder and, as this recording begins, can just be heard beginning to climb the gradient at Bamber Bridge and making a fine sound climbing the 1 in 99 gradient before passing heading for the top of the climb at Hoghton not far away.
6. On some days lineside sound recording is memorable for perfect conditions. Those days with a light breeze from the right direction, no distractions and a steam engine working hard are unbeatable. Other days are memorable for quite different reasons.
- 3rd April 2004 was a day in the later category when the LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* worked a train from Preston over Shap to Carlisle.
- It was one of those days that Shap sometimes produces with an almost gale force south westerly wind accompanied by very heavy rain. As this recording begins the wind roars in the overhead wires and batters against the dry stone wall behind which I and my microphone were sheltering from the rain passing horizontally overhead.
- Faintly, carried on the wind, the sound of a Stanier hooter can be heard as the recording begins and, in due course, above the noise of the wind, 6201 working hard coming up the gradient from Scout Green.
- Despite the conditions, the sight and sound of 6201 passing with 13 coaches behind the tender was superb and well worth getting wet to experience!
- As 6201 approaches the cutting leading to Shap Summit the sound fades away to be replaced by that of a Pendolino descending the bank, a reminder that this is 2004 not 1954!
- Although all sounds well in this recording later in the journey to Carlisle things went wrong and the locomotive suffered serious damage when a core plug in the left hand middle cylinder came loose. This caused substantial damage to the piston head, cylinder lining and rear cover plate. The crosshead, connecting rod and crank axle bearing also suffered.
- This happened south of Penrith and caused much delay to services trains.
- Repairs required were extensive and the loco didn't return to the main line until over 12 months later.
7. On Sunday 2nd May 2004, the Mid-Cheshire Rail Users Association organised two return trips from Chester to Altrincham. These trains were hauled by the BR Standard Class 4 2-6-0 76079 and were very well supported.
- As the trains called at all stations they seemed ideal for lineside recording and our first was made at Mouldsworth station. Mouldsworth is on the climb from the Gowy Valley into the Delamere Forest and in this recording 76079 with 8 coaches behind the tender can be heard approaching and stopping in the station.
- After a short pause and with a few more passengers on board 76079 departs heading for the next stop at Delamere making a fine sound on the rising gradient. Even the nearby clay pigeon shooters cease firing for a while to listen!
8. Later in the day we went to a spot west of Delamere station in the forest of the same name where 76079, now running tender first, made a fine sound for us departing and accelerating away from the station on the rising gradient through the trees.
9. On 29th May 2004, in connection with Railfest held at the National Railway Museum in York, the LNER A3 Pacific 4472 *Flying Scotsman* was supposed to work a train from Doncaster and make a triumphant arrival at the NRM, its new home.
- Unfortunately during its journey north from its previous base at Southall the loco developed leaking tubes and was failed.
- The, to me at any rate, rather odd choice of substitute provided to work this the train from Doncaster was GWR Hall 4-6-0 *Olton Hall* still in the red 'Hogwarts Express' livery applied for its appearances in the Harry Potter films.
- For our recording, were fortunate to find a suitable spot on the 1 in 150 gradient between South Kirkby Jc. and Hemsworth.
- As the recording begins, a Sheffield bound DMU passes braking for a signal check at the junction before 5972 is heard approaching and passing going well with 10 coaches behind the tender.
10. Over the many years that I've been making them, I've had my recordings interrupted by many things but on 12th June 2004 I was able to add a new one to the list - a rowing boat!
- I had gone to York to try for a recording of ex LNER A4 Pacific 60009 *Union of South Africa* departing with a train for Newcastle and had decided to try to record from the east bank of the River Ouse just to the north of the station almost opposite the NRM.
- The first problem turned up in the shape of one of York's many sightseeing boats which turned up just as the A4 was about to depart. However, this chugged off towards the city with the commentator mentioning the NRM, home to 'The Mallard steam train' just as its stable mate was getting in to its stride! As No. 9 passes, a noisy outboard powered boat heads up stream but worse was to come in the shape of a rowing boat occupied by four young ladies being taught how to row by their cox. Despite his advice and as the A4 continues to make a fine sound heading north, Cheryl's performance doesn't improve.
- After a Class 142 DMU passes southbound and peace finally descends the A4 can still be heard accelerating north up the main line. Next time I'll try the other bank!
11. On the same day, in addition to the A4, GWR 4-4-0 3440 *City of Truro* worked two return trips to Scarborough for Vinatge Trains.
- With the second of these 3440 is heard accelerating soon after leaving York not far to the east of Bootham level crossing as an almost silent Class 158 passes heading west.
12. In the days preceding the weekend of 24/25th July 2004 the weather forecasters had been promising fine weather and, as there were



steamsounds from the lineside 2004

steam hauled trains over the Settle - Carlisle line on both Saturday and Sunday, a couple of days making lineside recordings seemed like a good idea.

As the weekend drew nearer the forecasts became less and less good and it came as no surprise to us as we waited on the Saturday afternoon at Ais Gill for ex LNER A4 Pacific 60009 *Union of South Africa* to find our recording being troubled by a little rain and a very strong wind.

As this recording begins a farmer further down the valley can be heard making another circuit of his field cutting grass for silage as 60009 appears climbing the 1 in 100 gradient towards the summit.

Judging by the clag coming from the A4's chimney all was not quite as it should be with the fire and the loco is making heavy weather of the 13 coach load on the climb as it passes.

13. On the following day the ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45407 worked a train off the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway to Carlisle and back.

After the poor weather conditions we had experienced the previous day when recording 60009 at Ais Gill, had we been hoping for better weather, we would have been disappointed. It was far worse with heavy and persistent rain added to a stronger wind.

After a poor recording near Bell Busk, a water stop at Long Preston and a stop to pick up passengers at Settle meant that we had plenty of time to get to Selside where the weather was even worse!

The choice of this location was a good one as there was a handy dry stone wall to provide some shelter from the wind and even heavier rain.

In view of the strength of the wind I thought that we would only get a short recording here but sound was carrying well and we were able to hear 45407 approaching soon after it became visible through the falling rain above Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

Although not being worked all that hard the Black 5 makes a fine sound climbing the 1 in 100 gradient and can be heard almost all the way to Ribbleshead. Well worth getting a soaking for!

14. During the summer months, everybody's favourite loco, *Flying Scotsman*, was working trains, sponsored by the NRM, between York and Scarborough on three days each week.

After its failure on the way to the Museum, the NRM may have been beginning to wonder if they'd bought a lemon as it had suffered a number of failures and been replaced a few times by 45407. Passengers had even found themselves paying £25 to go to Scarborough behind a Class 47 diesel more than once!

After a couple of embarrassing failures while working these trains the operators had decided that it would be wise to have the Class 47 at the rear of the train, just in case, and this was the situation when I went out to try for some recordings of the loco on 5th August 2004.

This first recording of 4472 was made at Bootham, just to the north of the level crossing, was the best of them. Despite a steam leak from one of the cylinders, the loco doesn't sound too bad heading for Scarborough with its fully loaded train. This proved to be the best recording of 4472 for the day.

15. Also out on the York to Scarborough line that day was the BR Standard Class 4 2-6-0 76079 working a charter for Hertfordshire Railtours.

This loco is heard from the bank of the River Derwent just to the east of Malton accelerating away from the speed restriction through the station.

16. On 22nd August 2004 the ex LMS Black 5 4-6-0 45407 worked another very well supported train from Keighley to Carlisle and back and in better weather than the last time, we went to Horton-in-Ribblesdale to try for a recording.

Once again, sound was carrying very well and, as the recording begins, the Black 5 can just be heard approaching Helwith Bridge about 2 miles away.

At Helwith Bridge the 1 in 100 gradient is interrupted by a short level section and 45407 can be heard accelerating a little before the climb through Horton resumes.

17. On 4th September 2004 the LMS Coronation Pacific 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* worked a train from Crewe to Carlisle and back so, once again, we went to Shap Wells to attempt to get a recording of the loco climbing the 1 in 75 gradient.

Despite the noise from the nearby M6 motorway and someone starting to use what sounds like some kind of mechanical digger among the trees on the opposite side of the line after the train has passed and is nearing the summit, I was quite happy with this recording.

With 12 coaches behind the tender, West Coast Railway Co. driver Bill Andrews was working 6233 a little harder than on past occasions and the loco sounded much better. As 6233 reaches the summit a Virgin Pendolino passes going down the bank.

18. Another visit to Shap was required on 30th October 2004 when ex LMS Black Five 4-6-0 45407 provided the rare sight and sound of a train hauled by a single Black Five working from Manchester to Carlisle and back.

By the time we reached Shap Wells we had already seen the train twice, first at Boar's Head on the short climb from Wigan and again at Barton & Broughton where the train was booked to be looped (but wasn't) and had been a little disappointed, but not surprised to find that at the back of the 10 coach train was a diesel which would surely be required to assist on the climb to Shap Summit. In the past, a diesel had sometimes followed just one section behind steam hauled trains on this route and we hoped that would be the case with this train.

Weather conditions were excellent with only a light breeze and plenty of sun the only slight problem being that the light breeze was coming from the south east, just the right direction to carry the sound of traffic from the busy M6 motorway not far away.

Just a few minutes later than expected the breeze also carried the sound of 45407 coming up the climb from near Scout Green. The Black 5 was carrying the number 44996 and not the cleanest I have ever seen it after a busy summer in Fort William.



steamsounds from the lineside 2004

We were very pleased to see that the diesel that had been on the back earlier had been detached during the water stop at Carnforth but was, as we had hoped, following along behind as insurance.

The train must have been down to around 20 mph as it passed on the 1 in 75 gradient and the sound carried back all the way to the summit.

19. A visit to Carlisle, where our recording would have been better without the sound of a circling light aircraft, followed by a fast run down the M6 enabled us to just make it to Shap before the train arrived but without sufficient time to set up for a recording. Still, it was nice to see 45407 on the last part of the climb.

After this we had plenty of time to get to Lancaster and try to find a suitable spot for a recording on the 1 in 98 climb away from the station. We had tried to find somewhere here before without success but this time, more by luck than by good navigation, we found an excellent spot among some trees at the very top of the gradient at the site of the junction off the West Coast Main Line to the original station in Lancaster the line to which now, except for this small area of land, has long since vanished.

Running a little late and with the diesel, 57601, re-attached at the rear we could hear 45407 departing from Lancaster station and climbing the gradient in fine style without assistance from the diesel. We could be sure about this as the buffers between the Class 57 and the train did not appear to be compressed when it passed!

As the sound of 45407 fades away to the south towards Preston a Class 175 DMU heads down the gradient towards Lancaster.

20. On 27th November 2004 the LMS Coronation Pacific 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* worked a train from Derby to York and back. Recorded in the afternoon close to the site of Dringhouses marshalling yard, now covered by housing, 6233 can be heard approaching from York station. After the train has passed the light south westerly breeze carries back the sound of the loco as it rapidly accelerates its heavy 13 coach train past Chaloners Whin and on towards Copmanthorpe.

21. In the weeks before Christmas, Vintage Trains ran a series of Christmas Lunch trains starting at Dorridge and running through the Midlands via Tamworth, Burton, taking in the scenic delights of Coalville before returning to Dorridge via Nuneaton utilising the two GWR Hall 4-6-0s based at Tyseley.

On 16th December 2004 4936 *Kinlet Hall* was motive power at the head of an 8 coach train and for the train's return I tried for a recording of the Hall departing from Solihull on the last leg of its journey back to Dorridge. The location chosen was in a public park on the west side of the line just to the south of Solihull station and although there have been many occasions over the years when, while making lineside recordings, I have been forced to question my sanity and this was definitely one for the book!

For a start off it was almost dark, it was very cold, there was a strong wind blowing and the notices warning that this particular park was a crime hot spot did nothing to inspire confidence or make it sensible to stand in the middle of a field clutching a recorder and a hairy windshield while muggers gathered in the surrounding bushes.

Still, I survived the experience and the recording of 4936 departing with 8 coaches wasn't at all bad!

22. On the following day, 17th December 2004 the same itinerary was run, this time with 4965 *Road Ashton Hall* in charge of a train of just 5 coaches.

For the outward journey I went to rather safer location of Widney Manor station where the large car park alongside the line north of the station provided a surprisingly quiet spot to record from in this heavily built up area.

4965 sounds to be going very well considering that the start at Dorridge is less than 2 miles away and the next stop at Solihull is even closer.

23. Perhaps I have a death wish or maybe I'm just stupid but the evening of the same day saw me back in the same park at Solihull waiting to give the muggers another chance and to get a recording of 4965 departing.

Once again I survived the experience but, if I ever go back there again, I swear it will only be in summer and in daylight!

