



steamsounds Riding behind steam Black Fives

When William Stanier left Swindon to become Chief Mechanical Engineer for the London, Midland & Scottish Railway, for a while a little of the GWR influence remained with him; look at some of his early designs. A good example is the Princess Royal which to me, looks remarkably like an attempt to build a Pacific version of a King!

Many, myself included, would say that Stanier's first really successful design first appeared in 1934 with the emergence of the first Class 5 4-6-0 more usually referred to as a Black 5.

These locomotives proved so successful that they were still being built in 1951 and eventually numbered 842 locomotives. They were to be seen in virtually all parts of the UK and proved able to master of almost any task asked of them.

The first Black 5 to emerge appeared from the Vulcan Foundry in late 1934; that was number 5020 but the first in the LM&SR's numbering series for these locomotives was 5000 which was completed at Crewe Works in 1935. 5000 was the locomotive selected to be part of the National Collection and is now on static display at the National Railway Museum in York but in the early 1980s it was on loan to the Severn Valley Railway and also worked a few trains on the main line so what better locomotive to start this CD...

1. On 5th March 1983 5000 was employed working the outward leg of a Welsh Marches Pullman from Hereford via Shrewsbury to Chester and during the journey we had a photo stop at Craven Arms.

With photographs taken and everyone back on board 5000 is heard departing and heading for Shrewsbury.

2. Once steam returned to the main line and I began making sound recordings I soon came to appreciate Black 5s and one in particular became a favourite. This was 5305.

5305 had a lucky escape. After having survived right up to the end of steam it was withdrawn in August 1968 and was purchased by Albert Draper & Sons; scrap dealers on Humberside. Like over 700 locomotives before it, 5305 would have gone to the cutters torch at Drapers had Albert Draper not decided to restore the loco. The task of returning the loco to working order fell to the Humberside Locomotive Preservation Group which later became the 5305 Locomotive Association. The locomotive was first steamed in 1976 and soon became a regular and reliable performer on the main line.

For a number of years H LPG ran a Santa Special from Hull each December and on 28th December 1985 5305, having recently returned to traffic after overhaul, worked that year's train from Hull to Scarborough and back.

During the outward journey on a freezing cold day, in this recording, the Black 5 is heard departing from Bridlington and climbing the 1 in 92 gradient through Flamborough and Bempton in fine style. Frosty rails in the cuttings caused slipping in a few places but otherwise an excellent performance with speed being maintained at around 30 mph on the climb with a 10 coach load.

3. Since being built and particularly in preservation Black 5s have visited almost every corner of the UK rail network but some routes would have been more familiar to the class than others. One such route was the line along the North Wales Coast and in 1989 BR sponsored a series of mid-week trains from Crewe to Llandudno and we'll hear a Black 5 on this route later. However, to facilitate the movement of locomotives to Crewe for these workings, some additional trains were run steam hauled from Carnforth to Crewe the first of these running on 24th March 1989 behind Black 5 5407 which, along with another Black 5, is now owned by Ian Riley but in 1989 it was still owned by Paddy Smith.

Paddy's engine, as it was often referred to was always a good performer and this occasion, with the engine in the more than capable hands of Carnforth driver Charlie Parkinson, was no exception as you can hear in this recording which begins as the loco comes off Whalley Viaduct and ends at the top of Whalley Bank.



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4. Some routes on which steam hauled trains run appear most unlikely to provide much in the way of entertainment for the sound recordist and one new route which first saw a steam hauled train in 1989 appeared to fall into that category.

This was the route from Derby and Nottingham through Newark to Lincoln which having little in the way of gradients didn't seem particularly exciting. Still, it was a new route so had to be done and the first train on this route ran on 22nd April 1989 behind 44932.

Starting from Derby, as we expected the loco was worked fairly easily but, as the journey progressed things became far more entertaining with the loco being worked hard away from stops and speed restrictions; this was far better than we had expected!

The return journey was just as good.

In this recording 44932 is heard departing from Newark Castle heading for Nottingham after a brief stop.

5. In 1993 steam returned to the steeply graded Central Wales Line and on 23rd May 44767 worked a train from Shrewsbury to Carmarthen. This was the second train to have traversed the route the first having done it in a northbound direction but its starting point had been very difficult for me to reach. In addition, this first train had been double headed so the second train, with 44767 working by itself was a far more attractive proposition.

44767 was one of the final locomotives built by the LM&SR being completed on the last day of 1947, the day before the railways were nationalised. 44767 was one of a number of Black 5s to receive modifications, in this case; outside Stephenson link motion; a double chimney (which was later removed); Timken roller bearings and electric lighting.

Having already surmounted some steep gradients, after stopping at Llanwrtyd Wells 44767 is heard departing and beginning the next serious climb.

At first the gradient is 1 in 70 but this soon eases slightly to 1 in 80 which lasts all the way to the summit.

On the climb, except where a 10 mph speed restriction has to be obeyed, 44767 maintains speed at a little under 30 mph but is able to accelerate with some superb sound effects to a little above this speed before passing Sugar Loaf summit and entering the tunnel just beyond. An excellent performance with 7 coaches behind the tender.

6. In the mid-1990s we found ourselves having steam hauled runs on some lines we had never in our wildest dreams expected to cover. For some time Mel Chamberlain had been threatening to start running a programme of steam hauled railtours and to the surprise of many, by early 1994 trading under the name Days Out he had actually run a few tours.

One of the side effects of the privatisation of British Rail was the introduction of an open access policy which meant that, in theory at least, anyone could run trains anywhere. This meant that, again in theory, routes which had been effectively closed to steam were now available and it was Mel's intention to make the most of this situation.

In view of what later transpired it would be easy to criticise Mel for the way he conducted his business but, whatever else he achieved, he certainly changed the face of the steam railtour market.

My first Days Outing was on 25th March 1994 when 44767 worked a train from Stockport to London St. Pancras via Stoke, Uttoxeter and the Midland Main Line, most of the route being new for steam.

This recording begins soon after passing through Market Harborough and 44767's driver has the loco going well on the climb to Desborough mostly at a gradient of 1 in 132. On the final part of the climb above Braybrook the Black 5 is really roaring!

7. By the late 1990s an essential piece of kit that steam locos running on the main line had to have was an efficient spark arrester fitted in the smokebox to avoid the risk of setting fire to the surrounding countryside when worked hard. Various designs had been tried and these, of course, had to be tested.

On 7th March 1999 45110 newly returned to the main line had a new design of spark arrester fitted which had



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its test during a railtour along the North Wales Coast.

In 'real' steam days Black 5s were two a penny on this route but since steam returned they have been a bit of a rarity with larger engines being preferred to draw the crowds so it was nice to get a run on the route with a 'Five'.

The method of testing spark arresters was quite simple; wait for it to get dark then thrash the loco. The efficiency, or lack thereof, could easily be observed simply by looking to see what was coming out of the chimney!

The first attempt to check the spark arrester was made during the return journey soon after Llandudno Jc. departing with a hole in the fire just to make sure and, as you can hear, the once away from the station, the loco was worked rather harder than required which had the desired effect. Unfortunately most of the fire could soon be seen emerging from the chimney and spreading itself around the surrounding countryside. Back to the drawing board then...

8. Back in the 80s I spent many happy hours each summer travelling on the Scarborough Spa Express and it was a very sad day when after the 1985 these very popular trains were reduced to run between York and Scarborough only.

In more recent times the SSE has returned and proved just as entertaining as it did in the 80s but for the 2010 season we had a change of route. No longer would the SSE go round the very popular Harrogate & Leeds circuit morning and evening but instead go via Wakefield Kirkgate and Westgate then miss Leeds returning to York via Woodlesford and Castleford.

When the change of route was announced, doubts were cast concerning how well the trains would fill compared with the using the previous pick-up points but the doubters, myself among them, were quickly proved wrong as the trains did very well indeed.

From a sound recording point of view the new route for these trains is, in many ways, better than the old Harrogate circle. Students of loco performance would disagree as it doesn't really for allow any fast point to point running as the section of the old route between York and Leeds did in previous years. One of the few interesting sections from the performance point of view is, of course, the climb from Wakefield to Ardsley and this is also the best bit for the sound recordist.

Advertised motive power for the 2010 season was 5972 *Olton Hall* which, thanks to its appearance in Harry Potter films carries the name *Hogwarts Castle*. I suppose marketing the train to Harry Potter fans during the school holidays can't be a bad move though it wouldn't have been the enthusiasts most popular choice of loco but as things turned out the Hall never worked a train due to gauging problems on part of the route and instead we had a feast of LMS power including no less than 3 different Black 5s!

The last of the trio to have a go was 44871 having been preceded by 45407 & 44932 and on the final day of the SSE season, 2nd September 2010, I was keen to see how 44871 would compare.

The start from Wakefield Westgate is a difficult one which begins with the train on a 1 in 100 gradient in the platform at Westgate. Then, on starting trains have to negotiate a reverse curve to regain the main line from the platform road. This was always a difficult start in steam days and there are many tales of locos slipping badly and requiring rear end assistance to continue their journey towards Leeds.

For the SSEs this difficult start wasn't made any easier by the trains loading to 12 coaches; probably 2 or 3 more than comfortable for a Class 5 loco though, having said that, all three Black 5s did very well indeed.

As you can hear in this recording 44871 made a rather slippery start didn't help and by the time we approached the easing of the gradient from 1 in 100 to 1 in 280 near Outwood we are only in the low 20s. Speed picks up after that and on the following 1 in 122 settles down to around 30 mph. Nothing wrong with that taking into account the load and the gradient. And of course, I have no complaints about the noise!

The climb ends at Ardsley where the train begins the descent towards Leeds and enters Ardsley Tunnel and this recording ends.



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9. I'm going to finish with one of my favourite on-train recordings of my favourite Black 5.

On 12th January 1985 the Humberside Locomotive Preservation Group ran what was intended to be the first of a series of steam hauled tours each featuring one of a selection of locomotives mainly based in the north and the first of these was hauled by 5305.

Steam haulage began at Sheffield taking in the Hope Valley route to Manchester where the train reversed before continuing to York via Standedge and Leeds.

Unfortunately, this and the few subsequent trains that ran were not well supported by the enthusiast fraternity and the full series never materialised. What a shame that so few passengers were on board to hear my favourite Black 5 produce such an excellent sound on the climb out of Sheffield.

This recording begins with the departure from Sheffield and ends in Totley Tunnel where the 1 in 100 gradient eventually eases.

Soon after the start 5305 is producing that wonderfully sharp beat that echoes back from buildings alongside the line and it sounds as though the fireman is doing well as the safety valves lift briefly a couple of times.

Once well into the climb speed settles at around 30 mph until approaching Dore & Totley, where the line to Manchester diverges from the main line to Derby and London, shortly after a HST heading for Sheffield passes our driver sights adverse signals and the regulator has to be closed. Before the signal clears speed falls to around 15 mph before the road is set for us and the signal ahead clears.

Once over the junction 5305 is soon going well again passing through Dore & Totley station, continuing on the 1 in 100 gradient and into Totley Tunnel.

Now do you see why I like Black 5s and this one in particular?



STEAMSOUNDS *Riding behind steam*
Black Fives

1. 5000 departing from Craven Arms. 5th March 1983
2. 5305 climbing from Bridlington to near Speeton.
28th December 1985
3. 5407 climbing Whalley Bank. 24th March 1989
4. 44932 departing from Newark Castle. 22nd April 1989
5. 44767 departing from Llanwrtyd Wells and climbing to
Sugar Loaf summit. 23rd May 1993
6. 44767 soon after passing Market
Harborough to Desborough.
25th March 1994
7. 45110 departing from Llandudno Jc.
7th March 1999
8. 44871 departing from Wakefield
Westgate and climbing to Ardsley.
2nd September 2010
9. 5305 departing from Sheffield and
climbing to Totley Tunnel.
12th January 1985

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