

ATR 7002

RAILWAY RHYTHMS

A fascinating variety of rhythmical sounds of steam locomotives, at work with passenger and freight trains on British Railways between 1955 and 1961

SIDE ONE

Band One

At Evershot Tunnel, on the Castle Cary–Weymouth line, in the darkness of a calm night in August 1961. A motorcycle drones past on a nearby road as a Weymouth-bound mail and parcels train approaches in the distance on the 1 in 51 climb from Yetminster headed by an unidentified 'Hall' class 4-6-0 locomotive which passes below through a short, deep cutting, plunges into the tunnel and whistles. When the train has disappeared into the tunnel a signal arm just outside the tunnel clatters back into the on position.

Band Two

On the East Coast main line, just south of Retford Station where the GC Sheffield–Clarlborough Junction line crossed the main line on the level. The bells of nearby Odsall Church are being rung for practice on a Saturday afternoon in August 1956.

An A4 class 'Pacific', No. 60021 *Wild Swan*, appears from the south with the 'Norseman' London–Newcastle express, rattles over the crossing and takes the train away through Retford Station.

No. 60892, a V2 class 2-6-2, approaches in the opposite direction from the station and heads past and away with a southbound express, the wheels of which beat a tattoo on the crossing.

The sounds of the bells are next drowned by the shrieking whistle of A3 class 'Pacific' No. 60088 *Book Law* heading north over the crossing with the down 'White Rose' London–Leeds–Bradford express.

Another A3 'Pacific' approaches through Retford Station with a southbound express. The engine's driving wheels suddenly slip, but No. 60067 *Ladas* quickly recovers adhesion and heads the train past over the crossing.

Bells and levers in Retford Crossing Signal Box are heard and then a K3 class 2-6-0, No. 61803, starts from signals with a GC line freight train from Sheffield, brings it past and clatters away over the crossing towards Carlborough Junction.

An A4 class 'Pacific', No. 60010 *Dominion of Canada*, struggling to gain adhesion on greasy, drizzle-damp rails, starts out from Grantham Station with an up express and heads it past at the start of the 5-mile 1 in 200 climb to Stoke Tunnel, on a July afternoon in 1957.

Band Three

On the Audley End–Bartlow line a G5 class 0-4-4 tank engine, No. 67279, approaches under a bridge with a push and pull train from Audley End and, with brake pump thumping rhythmically, stops in Saffron Walden Station on a May afternoon in 1956. No. 67279 whistles, draws the train forward, pauses briefly for an exchange of chat between station staff and footplate crew and then takes the two-coach train away towards Bartlow.

The sounds of a brake pump are heard again as a J39 class 0-6-0, No. 64775, running light, moves past and away in the distance, at Audley End in May 1956.

Band Four

On the West Coast main line, in the depths of Tring Cutting, early on a June morning in 1956, a 'Coronation' class 'Pacific', No. 46228 *Duchess of Rutland*, approaches on the 1 in 333 climb from Cheddington and tears past and away, towards Tring Station, with an overnight express from Glasgow. The train includes some LMS sleeping cars with six-wheeled bogies and their distinctive rhythms can be heard as they pass by.

In contrast are the slower rhythms of a train of loose-coupled trucks on the Melton Mowbray–Kettering line, on which a 4F class 0-6-0, No. 43923, approaches on the 1 in 296, 1 in 260 climb from Melton Mowbray and passes through Saxby Station with an up coal train on a February morning in 1957.

Band Five

The rhythms of loose-coupled shunting.

A 1400 class 0-4-2 tank engine, No. 1473, inappropriately assigned to shunting duties on a February morning in 1957, moves past with some trucks in the goods yard at Princes Risborough. Buffers clang as the train stops, points levers are moved by the shunter and then an ex-L&Y 0-6-0 Saddle Tank, No. 51423, is heard at work in a yard at Preston on an August morning in 1956. A chain coupling clangs and loose brake handles rattle intermittently as No. 51423 propels a rake of trucks up the yard, whistles, pauses nearby, moves away and gradually brings the trucks to a stop.

Band Six

A 'King' class 4-6-0, No. 6008 *King James II*, approaching on the 1 in 88 falling gradient of the down line at Princes Risborough, tears past and away through the station with a Paddington–Birmingham express on an August morning in 1961.

A 'Castle' class 4-6-0 starts out from Princes Risborough Station with a Birkenhead–Paddington express on a misty night in November 1955. The engine, No. 5093 *Upton Castle*, sometimes losing adhesion on the damp and slippery rails of the 1 in 161 rising gradient, brings the train past, heads it under a road bridge and climbs steadily away into the distance on the 1 in 167 gradient towards Saunderton Tunnel. Meanwhile, another engine moves away in the station.

A signal clears, an engine whistles in the distance and No. 6024 *King Edward*, recovering from a signal check, accelerates down the 1 in 88 gradient, passes by and whistles away through Princes Risborough Station with a Paddington–Birkenhead express on an April evening in 1957.

Note: 'King' class locomotives No. 6008 and No. 6024 were both fitted with double chimneys.

SIDE TWO

Band One

The distinctive three-cylinder rhythms of a V2 class 2-6-2 are heard on the Carlisle–Edinburgh 'Waverley' line on an April evening in 1961 when No. 60873 *Coldstreamer*, tackling the continuous 10-mile climb from Newcastleton to Whitrope Summit with a northbound freight train, approaches through lonely Steele Road Station, climbs past and takes the train away across the moors on the unbroken 1 in 75 climb to Riccarton Junction.

Band Two

The rhythms of a busy mainline station, at Basingstoke in August 1959.

No. 75078, a class 4 Standard 4-6-0, approaches from the station and moves past, running light.

Pneumatically operated points change position nearby and then a class 5 Standard 4-6-0, No. 73114, approaches through the station, rattles over points and crossings and tears past and away towards London, Waterloo with an 'Ocean Liner' express from Southampton.

No. 73084, another class 5 Standard 4-6-0, giving a watery sounding whistle in protest at adverse signals, runs past and away through the station with an express for the Salisbury line. Then a class 4 Standard 4-6-0, No. 75067, whistles through the station and rushes past and away towards London with an express from the Bournemouth line.

No. 34049 *Anti Aircraft Command*, a rebuilt 'Battle of Britain' class 'Pacific', heads slowly past towards the station with an express for the West of England.

Another rebuilt 'Battle of Britain' class 'Pacific', No. 34060 *25 Squadron*, recorded at Okehampton in May 1961, climbs out from Okehampton Station on the 1 in 77 gradient towards Meldon Junction with an express for Plymouth.

A GWR 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 6975 *Capesthorne Hall*, running light, moves past and away towards Basingstoke Station.

Band Three

In the yard at Bromsgrove, at the foot of the Lickey Incline, on an August afternoon in 1959.

An 8400 class 0-6-0 Pannier Tank, No. 8403, running light from the summit, approaches from the station and runs past towards the far end of the yard.

A 'Crab' 2-6-0, No. 42822, moves slowly past in the opposite direction with a northbound freight train and stops in the yard to wait for assistance on the 2-mile, 1 in 37¼ climb to the summit of the Lickey Incline, at Blackwell.

When banking engines have moved up to the rear of the train and signals have cleared No. 42822 whistles. The banking engines whistle in reply. No. 42822, with driving wheels slipping on greasy rails, eases the train forward. Then the couplings slacken as the banking engines take up the load and the train accelerates past, towards the station, with the two banking engines, 8400 class 0-6-0 Pannier Tanks No. 8406 and No. 8402, blasting past at the rear of the train with exhaust beats almost perfectly synchronised. As the train climbs away, under bridges beyond the station and into the distance towards the summit, the exhaust beats of the 2-6-0 and the banking engines are sometimes heard alternately.

Band Four

The varied rhythms of a train with banking engines are heard again, on the Lickey Incline, roughly midway between Bromsgrove and Blackwell, on a June morning in 1959. An 8F class 2-8-0, No. 48388, approaches on the 1 in 37¼ climb from Bromsgrove and heads past with a northbound freight train, assisted at the rear by two 0-6-0 Pannier Tanks, No. 8402 and No. 8405, the exhaust beats of which run slightly out of step as the train climbs away towards Blackwell.

Band Five

The lonely rhythms of a signal box, on the Settle–Carlisle line at Dent Station.

On a November morning in 1961 the signalman answers a telephone call from a colleague up the line and a solitary crow, perched above the gently humming telegraph wires, croaks intermittently

nearby. Instrument bells ring and are acknowledged, signal levers are moved and soon a Leeds–Glasgow express is heard in the distance, approaching on the 1 in 264 rising gradient from Blea Moor Tunnel. ‘Britannia’ class ‘Pacific’ No. 70054 *Dornoch Firth* tears past, rattling the signal box windows, and swings the express away under a road bridge and into a cutting beyond the station.

Lever are moved again and then an 8F 2-8-0, No. 48321, approaches through the station, clanks past the signal box with a southbound freight train and heads it away into the distance, down the gradient towards Blea Moor Tunnel.

Band Six

In a steep-sided, curving valley through which the Central Wales line climbs on a 1 in 60 gradient towards Llangunllo Tunnel, nearly 1,000ft above sea level.

Shortly after 5.00am on a June morning in 1961 the York–Swansea mail train approaches in the distance on the single line from Knighton headed by a class 5 Standard 4-6-0, No. 73034, which climbs steadily past, filling the valley with echoes of the exhaust beat, and whistles into the tunnel in the distance.

Some minutes later an 8F 2-8-0, No. 48468, emerges from the tunnel, clanks rhythmically past and swings away down the valley towards Knucklas and Knighton with a freight train.

Note: unless otherwise stated none of the locomotives heard on this record had been fitted with double chimneys when the recordings were made.