

COPPER CAPPED ENGINES

Ex-Great Western Railway steam locomotives at work on British Railways at: Talerddig, Basingstoke, Llanvihangel, Gresford, Princes Risborough and Evershot Tunnel.

SIDE ONE

Band One

On the Aberystwyth–Oswestry line, near Talerddig Summit.

The sound of a stream rushing over the rocky falls near Talerddig Farm makes a steady background to spring birdsong on a calm, golden evening in May 1964. In the distance, away down the valley, dogs start barking as the evening goods train, hardly heard as yet, toils slowly up the valley towards Talerddig on the 1/52, 1/56, three-mile climb from Llanbryn-mair. A motorcycle drones down the main road and away under the railway bridge as the train plods steadily on, now rounding a curve and coming into view, headed by a 'Manor' class 4-6-0, No. 7827 *Lydham Manor*, with, at the rear of the train, another 'Manor', No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor*, giving banking assistance.

Lydham Manor climbs steadily past in a cutting and heads the train away under the bridge which carries the farm lane over the railway. Beyond the bridge *Lydham Manor*, now passing through a deep rock cutting, whistles a warning to the Talerddig signalman as *Dinmore Manor* blasts past at the rear of the long train. The sounds of the two engines and the train echo back from the wooded hillsides and the farm dog comes barking defensively down the lane as, in the distance, the train slows to a stop in Talerddig Station.

Band Two

At Basingstoke Station on a Saturday in August 1959.

A through train from the Midlands to Portsmouth has been held by signals just outside the station on the line from Reading. The signals clear and, whistling an acknowledgement, 'Grange' class 4-6-0 No. 6854, *Roundhill Grange*, brings the train forward on the 1/255 rising gradient, clattering past across the SR main line and away towards the down platforms of the SR station.

The compressed air operated points change nearby and one of the station pilots, 'Hall' class 4-6-0 No. 6975 *Capesthorpe Hall*, leaves a siding and moves past towards the station.

No. 5902 *Howick Hall*, starting from the station with a through train for the Midlands, heads away down the gradient towards Reading as *Capesthorpe Hall* again moves past, running light from the station towards the sidings.

Band Three

On the Newport–Hereford line at Llanvihangel.

The closed station at Llanvihangel stands at the summit of a four-mile climb on gradients of 1/85, 1/82, 1/95 from Abergavenny. From the opposite direction the line from Hereford climbs to Llanvihangel for three miles on a gradient of 1/100.

On a cold, misty morning in November 1960, chickens cluck busily around their run at the back of the station yard as a goods train, assisted by a banking engine, climbs up the valley from Abergavenny. The exhaust beat of the train engine and banking engine, although faintly heard at first, are sometimes heard separately, sometimes together as the train approaches. Soon, 'Grange'

class 4-6-0, No. 6821 *Leaton Grange*, emerges from the thick mist, heading the train past and away over the summit as, at the rear of the train, the banking engine, a '7200' class 2-8-2T, No. 7241, comes past, dropping back from the train and coasting on through the station to wait in the loop until there is a clear road back to Abergavenny.

Starting from the signals beyond the station with a goods train from the Hereford direction, a '2800' class 2-8-0, No. 2874, heads slowly through the station and stops briefly, so that wagon brakes can be pinned down, before resuming the journey down the gradient towards Abergavenny.

One of the banking engines, a '5700' class 0-6-0 PT, No. 4639, moves out from the loop and accelerates away, running light down the gradient towards Abergavenny while, approaching up the gradient from Abergavenny, a '2800' class 2-8-0, No. 2896, unassisted, makes light work of the climb with a long train of empty wagons.

SIDE TWO

Band One

On the Chester–Shrewsbury line, at Gresford Station.

From the Chester direction the Chester–Shrewsbury line climbs from Rossett on an unbroken gradient of $1/82\frac{1}{2}$ for $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Wheatsheaf Junction on the outskirts of Wrexham. Gresford Station, closed in 1961 and now demolished, stood roughly midway between Rossett and Wheatsheaf Junction. At Gresford Station a wooded hillside rises steeply towards Gresford village above the curving line and, on the opposite side of the line, there is an equally steep drop down to the River Alun.

On a sunny afternoon in May 1964 children are playing with a puppy in the little station yard at Gresford as, whistling a warning for the footpath crossing, a 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 6907 *Davenham Hall*, approaches round a curve with a passenger train from Shrewsbury. Heading cautiously past in compliance with the speed restriction, *Davenham Hall* swings away round a curve, taking the train on down the gradient towards Rossett and Chester.

The sound of the vigorous exhaust beat echoes back from the woods above the station as a '5600' class 0-6-2T, No. 6604, brings a goods train up the gradient from Rossett. Heading the train past Gresford Station and over the road bridge, No. 6604 climbs away towards Gresford Colliery as a '4300' class 2-6-0, No. 7318, heading down the gradient from Wrexham, whistles round the curve, rattles through Gresford Station and away towards Rossett with a down goods train.

Band Two

A snowy morning on the Paddington–Birmingham line, at Princes Risborough.

On a January morning in 1962 deep snow blankets the countryside muffling such sounds as break the frozen silence of mid-winter. Heard from a high point above the line, just south of Princes Risborough station, engines whistle in the station as a much delayed Birmingham–Paddington express approaches Princes Risborough on the $1/200$ rising gradient from Haddenham. Double-chimney 'King' class 4-6-0, No. 6017 *King Edward IV*, heads the 14-coach train through the station and on under the road bridge. Whistling past, the 'King' takes the train away through a snow-filled cutting on the $1/161$, $1/167$ climb towards Saunderton Tunnel.

Double-chimney 'Castle' class 4-6-0, No. 5036 *Lyonshall Castle*, at the head of another Birmingham–Paddington express, starts out from Princes Risborough Station and draws forward to a signal. The signal clears and the 'Castle' whistles again, bringing the train forward under the road bridge, to climb lustily past and away through the cutting towards Saunderton Tunnel.

Band Three (mono recording)

On the Castle Cary–Weymouth line, at Evershot Tunnel.

A fierce, almost unbroken climb of some 5½ miles faces Weymouth-bound trains approaching Evershot. The last 1½ miles of this climb is on a continuous gradient of 1/51 to a summit just beyond Evershot Tunnel.

On a sultry August morning in 1961 flies buzz lazily and a faint breeze stirs the leaves of the trees which line the deep cutting at the mouth of Evershot Tunnel as, in the distance, a through train from the Midlands to Weymouth climbs towards the tunnel from the Castle Cary direction. 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 5965 *Woollas Hall*, heads the train round a curve, blasting past through the cutting and on into the tunnel, from inside which the 'Hall's' whistle is faintly heard. In the rear of the train an SR 'U' class 2-6-0, No. 31614, is giving banking assistance and the sound of the exhaust slams back from the steep cutting sides as the 2-6-0 barks past towards the smoke-filled tunnel.

Band Four

A busy summer morning on the Paddington–Birmingham line at the north end of Princes Risborough Station.

On a July Saturday in 1959 a '6100' class 2-6-2T, No. 6142, stands in the station waiting to leave with a passenger train for Oxford. Whistling acknowledgement of the 'right away' No. 6142 heads out from the station and swings away behind the North Signal Box on to the Oxford branch line.

An 0-6-0 PT whistles and runs gently out from behind the station buildings, heading the Watlington branch goods train away, round the curve behind the North Signal Box, just as a double-chimney 'King' class 4-6-0, No. 6009 *King Charles II*, whistles through the station and tears past, heading a Paddington–Birmingham express down the 1/200 gradient towards Haddenham. Approaching up the gradient from Haddenham, a 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 5985 *Mostyn Hall*, comes past, heading away through the station, with a through train from the Midlands to the South Coast.

A '6400' class 0-6-0 PT, No. 6429, starts out from the bay platform with a push and pull train for Aylesbury. Whistling cheerfully No. 6429 swings away from the main line on to the Aylesbury branch line as another '6400' class 0-6-0 PT, No. 6413, chatters past down the main line with a push and pull train for Banbury.

Slowed by signals a 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 5906 *Lawton Hall*, coasts past on the main line heading towards the station with another through train from the Midlands to the South Coast.

On the Oxford branch a goods train, headed by a '7200' class 2-8-2T, No. 7238, has been held by signals. The signals clear and No. 7238 starts the train, bringing it across the main line and away towards Princes Risborough Station.