

ATR 7015/SPA 557

CASTLES AND KINGS

GWR 'Castle' class and 'King' class 4-6-0 steam locomotives at work on British Railways between 1956 and 1967.

SIDE ONE

Band One

On the Paddington–Birmingham line, near Hatton Station, on a June evening in 1962.

From Warwick, in the Avon Valley, the line climbs for some three miles on gradients of 1 in 108, 1 in 103 and 1 in 110 to Hatton Station and reaches a summit about a mile beyond the station, after a final climb on a gradient of 1 in 177.

No. 6001 *King Edward VII* (double chimney) brings a Paddington–Birkenhead express up the gradient from Warwick, heads it past and away through the station, towards Birmingham. A signal arm swings up nearby after the train has passed and points change position as the train goes away into the distance.

No. 6021 *King Richard II* (double chimney) whistles in the distance, approaches through the station and heads past, down the gradient towards Warwick, with a Birkenhead–Paddington express.

A '5100' class 2-6-2 Tank engine, No. 4125, moves cautiously past and away, down the gradient, with a goods train from the Stratford-upon-Avon line.

No. 7026 *Tenby Castle* (double chimney) climbs past, away through Hatton Station and into the distance with a Paddington–Birmingham–Shrewsbury express.

Band Two

At Bristol, Temple Meads Station in April 1958.

One of the station announcers gives details of a train to Plymouth.

No. 4073 *Caerphilly Castle* moves past, taking two coaches towards a siding.

No. 5044 *Earl of Dunraven* starts out from the station with a train for Swansea.

Caerphilly Castle moves past again, running light, backing down towards the waiting coaches of a Plymouth–Manchester train, then, when given the 'right away', whistles and heads the train out of the station.

Punctually at 4.30pm No. 7015 *Carn Brea Castle* makes a vigorous start with the 'Bristolian' express and whistles away for a scheduled 105-minute non-stop journey to Paddington.

Band Three

On the Plymouth–Exeter line, at the Totnes end of Dainton Tunnel, in July 1957.

No. 6026 *King John* attacks the 1 in 38, 1 in 43, 1 in 37 gradients of the climb from Totnes on a windy afternoon. Approaching in the distance, under a bridge, *King John* blasts under another bridge, climbs through the woods which surround Dainton Sidings Signal Box, whistles in the deep cutting, heads the train into the tunnel and whistles again at the far end.

A 'Hall' class 4-6-0, No. 6988 *Swithland Hall*, approaches through Dainton Tunnel, which is at the summit of the climb from both directions, bursts out into the open and accelerates away down the gradient, towards Totnes, with a Swansea–Plymouth train. Meanwhile, a Plymouth–Paddington express, double headed by No. 6996 *Blackwell Hall* and No. 6003 *King George IV*, climbs through the wooded cutting and, with a whistle from the leading engine, No. 6996, disappears into Dainton Tunnel.

One of the banking engines, '5100' class 2-6-2T, No. 4109, whistles and moves smartly away from Dainton Sidings, running light, down the gradient towards Totnes.

No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, approaching against the wind, heads under the bridges in the distance, climbs past the signal box and whistles into the tunnel with the up 'Royal Duchy' Penzance–Paddington express.

Band Four

In a wooded valley through which the Gloucester–Swindon line climbs from Chalford to Sapperton Tunnel on gradients of 1 in 74 and 1 in 60.

In the early darkness of a November evening in 1959 an unidentified 'Castle' class 4-6-0 heads a Cheltenham–Gloucester–Paddington restaurant car express up the valley from Chalford, climbs past Frampton Crossing Signal Box, disappears round a curve and whistles into Sapperton Tunnel in the distance.

SIDE TWO

Band One

At Exeter, St David's Station on a busy Saturday afternoon in July 1957.

No. 5079 *Lysander* accelerates through the station with an express for Plymouth and Penzance.

No. 7018 *Dryslwyn Castle* (double chimney) starts out from the station with a train for Paignton.

No. 5098 *Clifford Castle* heads an express for Paddington through the station.

Carriage examiners tap the wheels of the coaches of a waiting train, then No. 5046 *Earl Cawdor* starts out from the station and heads away, past the West Signal Box, with a train for Plymouth.

Band Two

On the Paddington–Birkenhead line, near Arkmond Park, sheltered from a strong wind by a clump of trees beside the line on the 1 in 100, 1 in 240 climb from Shrewsbury.

No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* approaches from Shrewsbury, against the wind, climbs past and away into the distance, towards Leaton and Chester, with one of the special trains which were run on 4 March 1967 by Ian Allan Limited to commemorate the end of steam haulage and the end of through services on the Paddington–Birkenhead line.

In the Chiltern Hills, further south on the Birkenhead–Paddington line, No. 6015 *King Richard III* (double chimney) roars through a cutting on the 1 in 167 climb towards Saunderton Summit with a Birkenhead–Paddington express in June 1961.

Band Three

On the footplate of No. 6029 *King Edward VIII* (double chimney) heading a nine-coach, 325-ton train, the 9.00 am, Mondays only, Paddington–Wolverhampton express in November 1961.

To the hissing background of a good head of steam the fireman passes on the 'right away' to the driver. The driving wheels slip on the greasy rails at the platform end and No. 6029 eases the train out from Paddington Station. The bell and siren indications of the AWS sound intermittently in the cab and the fireman expertly builds up the fire. Then he turns his attention to the injector, while the train gradually gathers speed through the London suburbs.

Some two hours later, slowed by signals as a result of early running, No. 6029 threads a path over points and crossings near Bordesley. Then the regulator is eased open for the final 1 in 45 climb through the tunnel to Birmingham, Snow Hill Station.

The engine plunges into the smoke-filled tunnel and whistles a warning. Another engine shrilly whistles past, adding to the deafening noise and choking atmosphere inside the tunnel. No. 6029 plods on up the steep gradient, then loses adhesion on the greasy rails before heading out of the tunnel into Snow Hill Station where the hiss of brake applications finally bring the train gently to a stop. The arrival is eight minutes ahead of time, despite the loss of six minutes through permanent way workings and signal checks. "They'll either give you a medal or the sack", says the inspector to the driver, concerning the early arrival.

Notes: the sounds heard in the cab of a steam locomotive are completely different to those heard from the train. The sound of the engine's exhaust is generally much less sharp than when heard from the train or the lineside and, at times, tends to be felt rather than heard. There is a general hiss of steam from various points and a great deal of vibration. The whistle, mounted close to the cab, often drowns all other sounds when it is used.

The general level of sound on the footplate is extremely high and at times quite deafening, as can be judged by the relative level of the voices of the crew. Consequently, any recording made on the footplate, such as this band, should be played at a reasonably high volume level to create a realistic impression.

Band Four

On the Paddington–Birmingham line, in the Chiltern Hills.

No. 6000 *King George V*, after a three-mile, 1 in 176, 1 in 200 climb to Princes Risborough, roars through the station with a Birkenhead–Paddington express on the continuing climb towards Saunderton Summit, on a September evening in 1956.

No. 6009 *King Charles II* (double chimney) whistles down the gradient, tears past and away through Princes Risborough Station with a Paddington–Birkenhead express in October 1957.

No. 6018 *King Henry VI* (double chimney) makes the difficult start from High Wycombe Station with the down 'Inter City' Paddington–Wolverhampton express on an April morning in 1958. The engine whistles from under a road bridge, starts on a rising gradient of 1 in 141, 1 in 380, approaches under a footbridge and climbs smartly past and away, round a curve on a rising gradient of 1 in 179, towards West Wycombe and Saunderton, while an aircraft drones in the distance and a signal arm changes position.

No. 6002 *King William IV* (double chimney) heads the up 'Inter City' Wolverhampton–Paddington express through a cutting on the 1 in 167 climb towards Saunderton Summit on a March evening in 1961.

No. 5001 *Llandoverly Castle* tears past, down the 1 in 88 gradient of the down line and whistles away, through Princes Risborough Station and into the distance, with a Paddington–Birkenhead express on an April evening in 1958.

Note: Unless otherwise stated, the locomotives heard on this record had not been fitted with a double chimney when the recordings were made.