

TRAINS TO REMEMBER

Trains remembered: 'The Cambrian Coast Express' at Talerddig Station; some trains in the night at Grantham Station; a passenger train and a goods train at Llangunllo Station; 'The Pines Express' on the Lickey Incline; 'The Whitby Moors' special train at Ravenscar and Goathland; and 'The Northern Irishman' passing Killochan.

SIDE ONE

Band One

At Talerddig, on the Aberystwyth–Shrewsbury line.

Chickens peck contentedly around the yard of the tiny station, drowsing in the sunshine of a May morning in 1964, while in the signal box the signalman takes his morning tea with the permanent way lengthman.

The up 'Cambrian Coast Express' is rung through from the direction of Machynlleth and the signalman sets the points and signals for the express, then walks down the signal box steps carrying the single-line token. He strolls past the station cottages, inside which the radio drones with the drama of the morning serial, places the token in the lineside holder and walks back to the signal box.

The express, headed by a 'Manor' class 4-6-0, is faintly heard in the distance slogging up the valley on the 1 in 52, 1 in 56 climb from Llanbrynmair. Whistling from the deep rock cutting, No. 7803 *Barcote Manor* brings the 'Cambrian Coast Express' out into the open and on through the station, where the fireman drops off the token for the previous section and deftly picks up the new one. The signalman, having collected the dropped token, walks back to the signal box to ring 'train out of section' as the express accelerates into the distance on the falling gradients towards Carno.

Note: Talerddig Station, like the other small stations on this line, is now closed.

Band Two

Night on the East Coast main line, at the north end of Grantham Station, on a drizzly Friday night in August 1961.

Just before midnight a 'V2' class 2-6-2 No. 60867 slips away from the station with a northbound goods train. Another 'V2' passes by, running light towards the sheds, as No. 60867, giving a somewhat strangled whistle, passes behind the North Signal Box to head down the gradient towards Peascliffe Tunnel and Barkston Junction.

After clearing Barr Road Junction, just to the north of Grantham Station, an 'L1' class 2-6-4 tank engine opens up briefly, then clanks past towards the station with the 12.2am train from Nottingham.

A signal arm clatters 'on' and an 'A4' class 'Pacific' whistles beside the North Box, moves away on the down line and whistles again distantly. Meanwhile, another light engine has moved out from the sheds and, with cylinder cocks open, moves on past the North Box. In the opposite direction another engine clanks slowly past, whistling before moving on towards the sheds.

At the down platform 'A4 Pacific', No. 60014 *Silver Link*, has taken over the 12.37am Kings Cross–Edinburgh–Dundee sleeping car train. Slipping occasionally on the greasy, drizzle-dampened rails,

Silver Link takes the heavy train out of the station, passing behind the North Box and on towards Peascliffe Tunnel while, in the background darkness, another 'A4' stands simmering gently.

Buffers clang as a van is shunted nearby and an 'L1' runs past on shunting duties. In the background, an 'O2' class 2-8-0 shuffles past with an up train of iron ore wagons, while the 'L1' shunts back and a 'B1' class 4-6-0 No. 61202 runs past, light, on the down line.

A 'V2' swings round the curve from Peascliffe, heading an up fitted freight on the 1 in 330 rising gradient. Whistling briefly through the station the 'V2' heads for Stoke Tunnel and the south.

A shunter blows his whistle and an 'A4' whistles distantly. Then, from the station, comes the powerful bark of a single-chimney '9F' class 2-10-0 starting a heavy goods train on its journey north.

It is now after 2.00am and some engines have finished their shifts while others are just beginning. An 'L1' runs past, light, in the background and whistles. A 'B1' clatters past on the down line and another engine moves back towards the sheds.

A relief express for Newcastle waits at the down platform. The signal clears and the 'V2' that heads the train whistles, slips madly and heads north into the drizzling darkness beyond the North Box, not apparently inconvenienced by an appalling knock from the connecting rods.

Note: Grantham engine sheds, closed after the withdrawal of steam locomotives, have since been entirely demolished and little trace remains of their once busy existence.

SIDE TWO

Band One

Morning at Llangunllo Station, on the Central Wales line.

This little station lies hidden in a fold of the hills, almost 1,000ft above sea level and about ¼ mile from the summit of this section at Llangunllo Tunnel, which takes the line on, down the valley, towards Knucklas and Knighton.

Standard 'Class 5' 4-6-0 No. 73049, heading the Swansea (Victoria) –Shrewsbury passenger train, drifts round the curve towards Llangunllo where, on the station platform, the signalman stands holding the single-line token. As the fireman catches the token, the engine quickly comes to life, barking up the 1 in 100 gradient between the hills and whistling in the cutting before diving into the tunnel.

'8F' class 2-8-0 No. 48761 at the head of the early morning goods train starts slowly out of the loop at Llangunllo Station. The hills reverberate with the deep-throated exhaust beats and the rumble of trucks as the engine takes the heavy train up the 1 in 100 gradient into the tunnel.

Note: the recording of No. 73049 was made in June 1961 and that of No. 48761 in April 1964. Later in 1964 through freight trains ceased to work over the Central Wales line and the passenger trains, now diesel operated, ceased to work through to Swansea (Victoria).

Band Two

A July afternoon in 1959, about ½ mile from Blackwell Station, on the 1 in 37¼ Lickey Incline.

'The Pines Express' is climbing out of Bromsgrove, 1½ miles away, down the Incline. Occasional traffic passes under the bridge on the nearby road as the express, double headed by Stanier 'Class 5' 4-6-0 No. 45280 as pilot to Standard 'Class 5' No. 73031, comes on up the 1 in 37¼ gradient. The banking engine, double-chimney '9F' class 2-10-0 No. 92231, whistles a gentle acknowledgement to

some boys who stand waving near the farm crossing. The sounds of the train soon die away after it enters the deep cutting which leads up to Blackwell Station. At Blackwell the banking engine will drop back leaving 'The Pines Express' to continue its journey through Birmingham and Manchester.

Note: 'The Pines Express' has since been re-routed and no longer travels over Lickey Incline, where diesels have replaced steam locomotives on banking duties.

Band Three

'The Whitby Moors' special train on the Scarborough–Whitby line on 6 March 1965. The train, organised by the Stephenson Locomotive Society and the Manchester Locomotive Society, was double headed by 'K4' class 2-6-0 No. 3442 *The Great Marquess*, restored to LNER condition by Lord Garnock, as pilot to 'K1' class 2-6-0 No. 62005.

South of Ravenscar a number of people have turned out to watch the train and, encouraged by the fitful sunshine, a photographer standing on the road bridge asks his friends to "wave to the train" now coming up the valley against the wind on the 2¼ mile 1 in 41 climb from Stainton Dale.

An aircraft flies high across the moors as the two engines, whistling their greetings to everybody at the lineside, bring the train under the road bridge where, after the train has passed, car doors slam as photographers move off to new vantage points. The exhaust beat of the three-cylinder 'K4' contrasts with the heavier beat of the two-cylinder 'K1' as the engines approach the end of the 1 in 41 climb, reaching the summit at Ravenscar Station, 631ft above sea level, just as a thick curtain of sleet and snow sweeps in from the sea.

Band Four

'The Whitby Moors' special train, again double headed by *The Great Marquess* as pilot to No. 62005, on the Whitby–Pickering line on the evening of 6 March 1965.

With the evening comes a hard frost to glaze the recently fallen snow which covers the fields around Abbot's House, half a mile from Goathland Station. In the deepening dusk a pheasant rockets for cover as, in the distance, 'The Whitby Moors' special climbs up the valley from Grosmont. Soon, as the engines tackle the last part of the 2¾ mile 1 in 49 climb towards Goathland, the sound of their whistles echoes over the moors.

Heading the train through the station and under the road bridge, the two engines are on easier gradients of 1 in 136, 1 in 90 and are working less hard as they bring the train rumbling over the two bridges that cross the Brocka Beck towards Abbot's House. Passing behind it they enter a cutting, which soon deadens all sounds of the train as in the near darkness it climbs out across Goathland Moor and on towards Fen Moor, Levisham and Pickering.

Note: in spite of vigorous local opposition, the Whitby–Scarborough and the Whitby–Pickering lines were both closed completely on the night of 6 March 1965.

Band Five

The up 'Northern Irishman', double headed by Stanier 'Class 5' 4-6-0 No. 45490 and 'Britannia' class 'Pacific' No. 70041 *Sir John Moore*, on the Stranraer–Ayr line on an August night in 1965.

It is just after 11.00pm at the closed station of Killochan, some 2½ miles from Girvan. The express has made its conditional stop at Girvan and almost immediately after the start faces a continuous 2¾ climb, mostly at 1 in 71, to the summit about ½ mile beyond Killochan Station.

Making light of the climb the two engines slam up the 1 in 72 gradient towards Killochan, suddenly blasting under the road bridge, which has masked their approach on and through the deserted station. Still climbing at 1 in 72 the train roars through the woods towards the summit, where the engines are eased for the run down to Bargany, conserving some of their strength for the switchback line ahead on the journey towards Ayr and Carlisle.

Note: steam locomotives no longer work 'The Northern Irishman' over the Ayr–Stranraer line.