

steamsounds from the lineside 2012

1. There are some days when it really doesn't seem like it will be worth getting out of bed in the morning and considering leaving the house verges on insanity.

One such day was Saturday 4th February 2012 and almost the only reason that day was the prospect of my favourite Black 5, 45305, working the second of a series of Winter Cumbrian Mountain Expresses over the Settle - Carlisle line but in view of the weather forecasters prophesies of doom, actually going out seemed like a very foolish venture. However, over here in the east, as the day dawned fine and calm if very cold, I felt had no excuse for not joining my friend for our first recording trip of the year.

We had already decided that, as we weren't going to stay out for the return over Shap, we thought it would be worthwhile to try to get a recording before Hellifield and went to a spot near Nappa where my friend assured me that he had made a very good recording a few years ago. Well, all I can say is he must have been lucky as when 45305 passed us the regulator appeared to be firmly closed; we were probably a bit too near Hellifield.

By this time the forecast snow was falling steadily and the wind increasing but just the same, off we went to our usual spot at Selside hoping that our first attempt wasn't going to set a trend.

Arriving at Selside on the snow covered roads we set off in the snow hoping to find a little shelter from the wind behind a handy dry stone wall. Although the wind was coming from the south, almost straight up the track, we did manage to get some shelter but not from the snow which can be heard pattering round the microphone throughout the recording.

Huddled behind the wall trying to keep the circulation going and the snow off my recorder I'll admit that I was starting to wish I'd stayed in bed when, at about the expected time, I started to hear the faint sound of the approaching train.

One of the good things about this spot is that it gives a good view. That is on a good day, which this wasn't, and without being able to see, I assumed that 45305 had already reached Horton-in-Ribblesdale since that is where the first sounds usually come from but then the sound stopped suddenly. Was there a slip? It was hard to tell but after a few seconds the sound resumed and after a while I began to think that perhaps I was hearing the loco from much further away. A little later I realised that the gap in the sound was the loco passing through Stainforth Tunnel which, I might add is over 6 miles from our recording spot.

This track begins as 45305 emerges from the cutting above Stainforth Tunnel on the approach to Helwith Bridge where the gradient becomes level for a short distance and the acceleration across this section can be clearly heard; remember, 45305 is still over 5 miles from our recording position.

Continuing on the 1 in 100 gradient after Helwith Bridge the sound from the loco continues to grow particularly once it comes into the open above Horton, although we still couldn't see it through the falling snow. As it approaches, as usual, 45305 sounds to be on top form, well in command of its 11 coach train and before it passes, a southbound service train hurries down the gradient towards Settle.

Due to the strength of the wind we didn't expect to hear very much as the train headed for Ribbleshead and once it had passed under the bridge at Selside Shaw, we heard no more.

What an excellent recording to start off the year. So you see, sometimes, even when it seems complete madness, it really is worthwhile getting out of bed!

2. On 25th February 2012 BR Standard Class 7P6F 4-6-2 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* was out on what had originally been planned as the last of four Winter Cumbrian Mountain Expresses. So popular did these trains prove that more were added in the following months.

Unlike the first one that we recorded, this one was running north over Shap, returning south over the Settle - Carlisle line rather than the other way round; much better from a sound recording point of view.

We started our day at Shap Wells where the weather seemed fine with just a light breeze blowing in the right direction to carry sound from the motorway away from us but, of course, by the time the train was due the wind had increased and it even managed to rain a little - typical!

Due to the wind, we didn't hear the loco clearly until it was well past Scout Green and 70013 sounds to be going very well when it passes with 12 well filled coaches behind the tender.

Once past, the wind did carry the sound back to us very strongly and we could hear the Brit reach the summit and begin to accelerate before the sound faded away.

3. Saturday 10th March 2012 was a very good day for steam in the North of England with no fewer than 3 steam hauled trains running involving 4 locos and surprisingly, the weather wasn't too bad either.

After seeing and recording the first of these trains at York, a charter running to the North East with 70013, I met up with a friend and we headed off to Kirkby Stephen for the second of the three charters.

This one had been diesel hauled to Carlisle and was returning south over the Settle - Carlisle line behind 70000 *Britannia* which had worked north to Carlisle the previous Saturday putting in an excellent performance by all accounts.

As often happens with trains which stop to take water at Appleby, 70000 was a few minutes early when it passed our usual spot near Greengate Bridge not far south of Kirkby Stephen and while it was going well enough with its 12 coach train, I don't think any records were in danger of being broken this time.

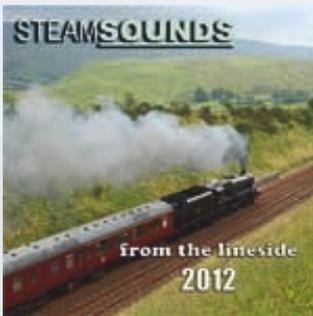
4. The third charter was running from Tyseley to Carlisle and back, outward via Shap returning over the Settle - Carlisle line and this one was booked to be double headed.

Now, I don't really like double headers at the best of times as two locos often mean shorter recordings with less noise, this one for example being loaded to 12 coaches would mean that each would have just 6 to haul. However, I can appreciate that double headers with appropriate pairings can make interesting recordings but in this case the pairing was anything but appropriate.

The two locos involved were LMS Princess Royal Pacific 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* and GWR Castle 4-6-0 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and while these are both fine locos in their own right, personally I can see no possible attraction in having them running them as a double header especially when either would be quite capable of taking the train over the route single handed - and just as well as, while waiting, we received a message that 6201 had been failed at Carlisle with a hot axle box and the Castle would be taking train back south by itself.

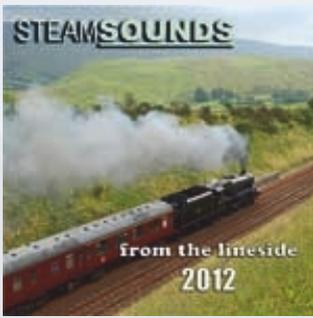
Now, as everyone knows by now, aside from the noise, I am no great fan of Great Western engines but I have to say that I was mightily impressed with the way 5043 came up from Kirkby Stephen with its 11 coach train. However, I also have to say, as I've said before that we must remember that this is a BR modified Castle and if GW fans want me to be really and truly impressed with the products of Swindon then they'll have to produce for me a similar performance with an original, as built Castle!

I'll not be holding my breath then...



steamsounds from the lineside 2012

5. The Castle, heard in the last track ran a good 15 minutes early which was a good thing as the timings of all these trains gave us the possibility, if the roads were clear, to get to Durham for 70013's return from the North East with the train that I had recorded leaving York earlier in the day. As things turned out we had plenty of time and went to a spot we had used before at the top of the deep cutting not far south of the station. We have made a few recordings here but none of them could be described as special. This one however had the potential to be very good as, unlike our previous attempts here, this train was stopping at Durham. The train was booked to stand in the loop just north of Durham for some time while three or four service trains passed and, after the last of these had gone we thought we could just hear 70013 start out of the loop. As I said, with a start out the station on the gradient to Relly Mill we were hoping for a really good recording. Well, I was more than happy with what we got, even with the interruption from a northbound East Coast service. See what you think.
6. While I have quite a few on-train recordings made climbing the 1 in 100 gradient heading north from Bridlington I had never had the opportunity to get a lineside recording until 14th April 2012 when 70013 was booked to work a train all the way from Kings Cross to Scarborough. Before setting out to try to find a suitable spot word reached us that a signalling problem on the ECML had delayed the train and by the time everything got under way it was running around 90 minutes late. This caused us to wonder if they might decide to save some time by not running via the booked route but head for Scarborough via York but a later message informed us that we were going to get our chance for a recording after all. Trying to find a recording spot wasn't easy as much of the line from Bridlington is in heavily built up areas and once it leaves the town there aren't any public footpaths to give access. So, after looking at a few possible spots, we ended up in a public park near Sewerby Road level crossing. Not only was it the only likely spot but the trees there gave a little shelter from the strong wind that was blowing. As the recording begins a distant whistle is soon followed by the sounders on the nearby level crossing beginning to give warning that the train is approaching. 70013 had 12 coaches behind the tender and sounds to be going well on the climb as it passes. Although the wind was far stronger than we would have liked, it did carry the sound back to us as the loco continued on the climb towards Bempton. After this we had intended to try for another recording of the train on its way back to York but, due to the late running, the diesel which had been provided to work the train back from York to Kings Cross had been sent light engine to Scarborough to take the train back from there while 70013 returned later with its support coach.
7. In early May the North Yorkshire Moors Railway held their usual Spring Steam Gala which for the time being, on Sundays, are made more interesting as they include some main line running between Whitby and Battersby giving some locos the chance to stretch their legs at 40 rather than the 25 MPH permitted between Grosmont and Pickering. On 6th May 2012 the BR Standard Class 4MT 4-6-0 75029 was in charge of the first train to Battersby. This loco has been out of traffic for some years and we were pleased to see it back as it's a loco that could usually be relied upon to make plenty of noise and, as you will hear in this recording, it still can! For our recording we headed for a spot overlooking the Esk Valley line below Southside Farm between Grosmont and Egton and, as this recording begins, the church clock at Egton across the valley can be heard chiming the hour - despite the fact that it was actually quarter past! Soon after, 75029 can just be heard departing from Grosmont and starting on the 1 in 101 gradient. A little later the regulator is closed while the train negotiates the speed restriction over the river bridge not far away but once clear, the loco makes a fine sound with its 7 coach train continuing on the gradient through Egton.
8. Now, as they say, for something completely different! I've been producing these annual Lineside CDs for some years now and, so far, all the recordings have been made of steam hauled trains running on the main line in the UK. Well, regular visitors to the Steamsounds web site will know that in the last couple of years I've been widening my horizon a little by visiting various European countries and in June 2012 I visited the Harz Mountains in Germany. Many of you will already be aware of the HSB, the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, a meter gauge network of lines in the Harz Region between Wernigerode, Nordhausen and Quedlinburg which still has regular steam hauled passenger services. Now, make no mistake, this is not a preserved railway; the HSB is a 7 day a week, all year round public transport network although, of course, many of its passengers are tourists. To say I was most impressed with my visit would be an understatement so I'm going to break with tradition and include a non-UK recording on this year's disk. Not only that, but this recording was made from on-board a train. Although every part of the network sees steam hauled trains, the principal HSB line for steam haulage is the Brockenbahn with a frequent service of trains between Wernigerode and the summit of the Brocken Mountain, a little over 3700 feet above sea level. The main climb to the summit is from Schierke on gradients as steep as 1 in 30 and because of this steep gradient, instead of being divided by a passing loop, there is a level siding adjacent to where the Goetheweg footpath meets the line which downhill trains can run into to allow an uphill train to pass and it didn't take me long to realise that here was an opportunity for a lineside recording albeit one made from another train. On 21st June 2012, the last day of my visit, as the weather in the morning didn't seem suitable for spending time at the lineside I had taken a misty and rainy ride to the summit on the first train of the day from Wernigerode; the noise is good whatever the weather. At the summit the sun was shining but my plan was to return on the same train and try for a recording from the train at the siding. We had been late coming up from Wernigerode due to having to deal with some sticking brakes and, as we were also late returning, the uphill train arrived at the signal protecting the siding before we were safely inside and the train crew could set the points for the main line. As this recording begins 2-10-0 99 7239 restarts the uphill train and makes a fine sound passing on the steep gradient. Once the uphill train is clear and the points reset 99 7234 is able to propel the downhill train back out onto the main line ready to continue down towards Schierke. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the Harz and, if you've never been, I can strongly recommend it; I can be pretty sure that you won't be disappointed!
9. As well as giving me the opportunity to ride behind steam on the main line, something I used to do a lot of, the annual Scarborough Spa Express programme also gives me the chance for a few lineside recordings. This year we seemed to have a bit of a loco shortage and at one point it seemed that we might only have two locos working the entire series of 22



steamsounds from the lineside 2012

trains with the ex LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0 46115 *Scots Guardsman* working the majority.

So, having had a ride behind the Scot on the first train of the series two days previously, on 19th July 2012 I was out on the lineside for a recording on the climb from Wakefield Westgate.

When I rode behind it, the Scot, as it often seems to, had a bad steam leak from the middle cylinder cock but, when I saw it arrive in Scarborough earlier in the day, the leak appeared to have been fixed and with good weather conditions I thought it worthwhile to make the journey to Wakefield meeting up with a friend on the way.

Our recording spot was in the park at Wrenthorpe not far from Westgate station, a spot where we've had some excellent recordings in the past.

46115 was just about on-time departing but it sounds like the repair of the cylinder cock didn't last long. Not too bad a recording all the same.

10. The summer programme of trains also included a run on most Sundays from York to Carlisle and back and on 29th July 2012 the Scot was motive power.

Having seen and recorded the train at Helwith Bridge in the morning we had been unsurprised to hear the usual leaky cylinder cock providing an unwelcome hiss.

For the return from Carlisle, once again we had been determined to try to find somewhere new to record from and after looking at a few places between Griseburn and Kirkby Stephen we eventually decided to record at Stockber about a mile south of Griseburn where the initial 1 in 100 gradient ends. The drawback with this location was that, to get shelter from the wind we had to set up alongside a track leading to a farm and I recall saying to my friend that if we tried here, 'You know what will happen?' and, sure enough, as 46115 approached, a van arrived and drove down to the farm. While it was nice to have an 'I told you so!' moment I could have done without that!

Still, with a bit of careful editing, I've been able to get rid of the van and I have to say I am quite pleased with the recording as I didn't think the Scot would be sounding quite so good.

And they'd fixed the leaking cylinder cock too!

11. After having worked various trains for first few weeks almost without a break the Scot was due for a boiler washout and at the beginning of August its place on the Scarborough Spa Express was taken by Black 5 44932.

After a few days 44932 had a spot of bother with a hot bearing and was replaced on the SSE by the Scot returning to service earlier than planned after its boiler washout but while working a Sunday train to Carlisle the Scot too had lubrication problems so on Tuesday 7th August 2012 44932 was back on the SSE and I was able to get to Wakefield in the evening for a lineside recording.

As seems almost compulsory for Scarborough Spa Express departures from Wakefield Westgate there has to be a southbound service train approaching as 44932 gets its 12 coach train under way.

Once clear of the station the Black 5 makes a fine sound on the 1 in 100 gradient heading up the 1 in 100 gradient towards Outwood and sound carries back well until yet another southbound service train comes down towards Westgate.

12. After almost 20 years since last riding behind the loco on the main line, to say I was delighted would be an understatement when I discovered that my favourite Black 5, 45305, was planned to be doing the last week of Scarborough Spa Expresses. Of course, there was always the chance that plans would change...

Fortunately, plans did not change and on Tuesday 28th August 2012 I decided that, as I intended to ride on the last two trains of the season, getting a lineside recording that day would be a good idea.

The day was quite windy and, as it was a southerly wind, I felt that we might get a better recording at Outwood rather than our usual spot at Wrenthorpe; unfortunately we were wrong and while we did hear the loco coming up from Wakefield for longer than on previous visits, the sound from the nearby M1 motorway was much more intrusive than on previous visits.

Still, as you can hear, 45305 was going very well when it passed the site of Lofthouse Pit just north of Outwood station - but I still wish we'd gone to Wrenthorpe.

13. The last Waverley, which had run from York to Carlisle and back each Sunday through the summer, ran on Sunday 9th September 2012 with 45305 as motive power.

The day was quite windy so for our recording of the northbound run we went once again to Helwith Bridge where a handy dry stone wall would provide some shelter.

The train was almost an hour late when we first saw smoke in the distance and as the recording begins 45305 is emerging from Stainforth Tunnel.

My favourite Black 5 sounds to be going very well at the head of 11 coaches and accelerates nicely on the level section before heading off towards Horton-in-Ribblesdale back on the 1 in 100 gradient.

14. For the return from Carlisle the wind was even stronger so our best option for some shelter seemed to be the dry stone walls near Greengate Bridge not far south of Kirkby Stephen but even with this shelter, you will still hear the wind battering against the wall at times in this recording.

Unlike the northbound run, 45305 turned up almost bang on time and sounds to be going particularly well as it passes.

15. The North Yorkshire Moors Autumn Steam Gala was held at the end of September and on Sunday 30th September 2012 we had trains running to Battersby once more.

The afternoon train to Battersby was hauled by Black 5 45428 so we went to a spot we had used before not far west of Glaisdale hoping that it would be sheltered from the wind and while it was a bit breezy there, it wasn't too bad.

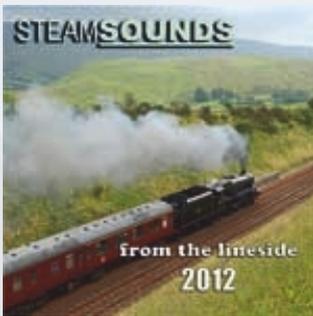
As the recording begins, 45428 having crossed 75029 with a train returning from Battersby is ready to leave and sounds very good departing and climbing the gradient.

Not far from our recording position is another bridge over the river which has a 10 mph speed restriction so the regulator has to be closed and, as often happens here, the safety valves lift.

Once clear of the bridge the regulator is re-opened and 45428 makes a fine sound passing and heading away towards Lealholm.

I t will be a shame if the NYMR find that, as seems likely due to timetable changes, they will no longer be able to run to Battersby on Sundays in the future.

16. When it first appeared in the programme, the rail tour running from York to Stanhope and Boulby hauled by the ex LNER K4 2-6-0 61994 *The Great Marquess* on Saturday 20th October 2012 looked very good but, as often seems to happen, plans change so instead of being steam hauled up to Stanhope and back from Boulby, the train ran the other way visiting Boulby first then, after being diesel hauled to Stanhope, steam hauled back to



steamsounds from the lineside 2012

York. Still, even with the changes, we felt it worthwhile going out for some recordings.

Unfortunately our attempt to get a recording of the K4 climbing the 1 in 49 gradient through Loftus was thwarted by the Class 37 diesel on the rear of the train doing much of the work; hardly surprising as the load was a massive 11 coaches. Only in the realms of fantasy could anyone have expected an unassisted climb with that load; we had expected a load of 8 at the most!

A further attempt at a recording of the departure from Stanhope on the Weardale Railway wasn't much better but before calling it a day we decided to try for one more recording at Shildon where the train had a stop to pick up passengers who had alighted to visit Locomotion, the NRM's museum there, rather than go through to Stanhope.

We had called in there on our way to Stanhope to see the two repatriated A4s, 60008 and 60010, but on attempting to enter the car park had been less than impressed to be told that we couldn't visit as they were preparing for a night photo session and the museum was closing early; this was at about 3.45. Despite our protests that all we wanted to do was have a look at the A4s which were outside and clearly on view, the security staff on the gate wouldn't hear of it; jobsworths to a man! Luckily, a second attempt via the pedestrian access and some hard talking got us in for a couple of minutes before we were turfed out - unless, as one of the organisers said, we wanted to pay £60. Sixty quid to photograph the two static A4s plus 60009 in steam? Sorry, I think not!

Anyway, when we returned shortly before 7 o'clock, though we couldn't see the crowds of photographers who had paid up, no doubt the photo session was in full swing and we had hopes that, with 60009 in steam, there would be an exchange of whistles as 61994 passed.

As you can hear, the K4 did its part as it passed but sadly there was no answering chime whistle. Despite the K4 not needing to be worked all that hard and the lack of an answering A4 whistle, this was our best recording of the day.

17. As 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*'s boiler certification will expire soon and the loco will be coming out of service for a while, we felt that the tour run by Vintage Trains to Carlisle on Saturday 17th November 2012 was one to go out for.

Although it would have been nice to have been able to get a recording of the northbound run over Shap in the morning, we were unable to but as the return was over the Settle - Carlisle line we headed for Kirkby Stephen and got a reasonable, if not particularly outstanding recording north of there not far from Crosby Garrett.

Not wanting to go home with just one recording we headed off for a fast run down the M6 and reached Langho in plenty of time to find somewhere suitable to get a recording of 6201 climbing Whalley bank.

As things turned out, we had far more time than we expected - or indeed wanted...

After having looked at a spot near a bridge closer to the bottom of the bank we eventually decided that our best bet was a field above Langho station on the north side of the line where, although the road isn't all that far away, at least it would be behind us.

Once again, thanks to the internet we knew that the train had left Hellifield just about on time and later information suggested that it had reached Whalley a few minutes early although, as it was not far behind a service train, we thought it might have been checked there. Anyway, as we knew 6201 wasn't far away, we switched on our recorders and waited. Twenty minutes later with the service train well out of the way, we were still waiting. Something had obviously gone wrong!

Although it was some time before more information reached us, we had already guessed that the problem was probably down to rail conditions and indeed it turned out that the loco had slipped to a stand close to the bottom of the gradient about 2 miles away from our position and, standing there in the dark, all we could do was wait and speculate. At one point my friend decided that nothing was going to happen; they were probably waiting for diesel assistance and we might as well pack it in but I persuaded him to hang on for a while longer as from a nearby foot crossing I could see Lizzie's headlight somewhere beyond Langho station. Although there was little sign of movement this was at least a confidence booster that perhaps the train might eventually reach us!

The difficult section of the bank is close to the bottom where trees and cuttings conspire to cause the worst rail conditions that even cause problems for the DMUs working the service train and I thought that once clear of that part, they would be Ok and so it proved for, about an hour after we had expected the train, we started to hear 6201 beginning to stick to the rails and accelerate towards us.

And what a sound! I've made some spectacular recordings of this loco in the past but I can't recall it sounding as good as this especially once it has passed when the light wind carries the sound back strongly as it accelerates on the 1 in 82 gradient towards Wilpshire.

As you will hear towards the end of the recording, 6201's troubles weren't quite over. As it rounds the curve towards Wilpshire Tunnel it starts to slip again but this time there was no danger of a stall.

Well, if that is going to be my last recording of *Lizzie* for a while, it is certainly a fine one!

