

20 - 20 VISION

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EDITORIAL

Well we left you last time with us all wondering if we'd get the DBS rail-head treatment train contract, and you'd had to have been a bit of hermit perhaps not to know by now that we succeeded! In summary, it was unbelievably hard work from beginning to end and amazingly 20.227 didn't let us down once. DBS were very happy indeed with the results and declared the trains had the highest availability figures for years. Two of our star performers as well as 227 were Trev who did some superb contract management for the duration of the contract and Lester who featured at Doncaster maintenance depot almost every Sunday for 10 weeks. All the "regulars" did sterling work as well, going way beyond the call of duty to keep the show on the road. As if that contract wasn't an incredible enough achievement, we also returned to the LUL S-stock workings as well for a while as you will see! Having said "in summary", quite obviously there was far more to it than that. As they say in all the best stories, read on.....

During August DBS continued to wobble about how many locos they needed, or whether they could just use 67s instead (Network Rail refused that and insisted on 20s due to axle loading). Michael's locos had a couple of crew training runs but these stopped while discussions continued. LUL requested a couple of locos for a special train in September so things were generally up in the air. Another meeting with DBS was quite downbeat and our emails met with deaf ears, and of course we needed to spend time fettling the locos if they were eventually required. Then suddenly at the beginning of September DBS decided they were going to go ahead but only with three locos, then they told us that it might indeed be six as originally considered but it still wasn't confirmed after all!

On a completely separate note, at this time we put an advert in the press asking for help to refurbish the second ICI wagon and a noble gentleman has offered to pay for it to be repainted in the same livery as 3200.

Never mind the ongoing DBS situation we had to make a quick dash down to LUL with 227 to help with the heritage trains in September so mid-week Lee, Dom and myself featured at Butterley to give her a quick A exam and a test run, both of which proved successful apart from a slight air leak under the cab somewhere. Our minds were somewhat concentrated by the fact that Alleley's would be arriving at lunchtime to pick her up whether we were ready or not! While we were there we'd decided to take a quick mountainbike spin round the Peak District by way of light relief, although I'm not sure the guys were convinced it was that light! I also seemed to spend most of my ride talking to Butterley and Alleley's about 227's progress and Neil Boden about 001. Dom and myself partook of another ride the next day including a non-stop slog all the way up the 1 in 8 Middleton Incline at Wirksworth – shame the winding engine isn't still in action or it would have been considerably easier. Our day was rounded off by Trev calling at 8pm to say we'd finally won the DBS contract!

Next morning 227 arrived at LUL and subsequently performed faultlessly on the heritage trains. We then had to decide where to send her for examination before moving on to DBS at Doncaster, possibilities being Butterley or Barrow Hill, with the latter being our choice so that they could test 227 with her proposed mate 20.096. She was duly picked up from Ruislip by a DBS crew and whisked off to Barrow Hill, with Lester taking her sandboxes there to be re-attached – with Lester doing the thankless job himself (the bane of our lives these sandboxes, on/off, off/on, like, well, something that goes on and off a lot). To add some spice, D8001 was also ready for collection from Neil Boden's. The power unit and generator refurbishment was a very thorough job and they should certainly outlast us all! As a reminder, the engine and generators were completely dismantled, cleaned and parts replaced. The generator(s) had its main bearing replaced and it was fully cleaned and re-baked; the power unit had five new pistons, new rings, liners cleaned, injectors and pumps overhauled, main bearing shells all replaced, and the whole thing was hot-washed – leaving us to all intents and purposes with a brand new power unit. This did not come cheap (although the costs were actually good value) and involved a number of substantial loans from members while the work was continuing and until we managed to get a contract to build our funds back up. A bit seat-of-the-pants for a while but the risk, luckily, paid off. If you think your fees and donations are not really needed – this shows they certainly are!

Various issues were sorted out on 20.227 at Barrow Hill, including the AWS pickup on the bogie being slightly too high, a problem with the fuel pump (which actually turned out to be a dirty fuel/air separating valve), and the engine governor switches not being set at quite the correct adjustment meaning that under heavy load the engine came close to stalling. The deadman's TMV7 valve was also not supplying the correct time delay for a DSD application – four separate spares were tried, and the main air res safety valve was not calibrated correctly meaning it wasn't blowing off at a low enough pressure. Finally, a bushing or keyway on the fan drive shaft was worn out. One or two wiring issues are becoming apparent now, including one in the power control relay (PCR) circuit which they fixed. Once the various faults had been rectified, 20.227 was tested in partnership with 20.096 on the Barrow Hill test line.

After D8001 had arrived at Wirksworth a few of us wandered over to welcome her back. A curious fault had developed with the compressor contactor "hunting" on and off continuously, with lots of associated sparking and banging, and this was traced to the compressor governor switch being set incorrectly and telling the compressor to start when the main air res pressure fell to 120psi but to stop when the main res air pressure rose to, er, 120psi! We also gave her an A-exam, then waddled over to Butterley to weatherproof the LMS brake van (new coat of wood preserver, more roof sealant etc), tidy up the BG, and also to start 20.205 to try and keep her happy for a bit longer.

20.227 and 20.096 were finally ready for delivery to DBS, but there was still loads of contract admin to sort with one of the main issues being the maintenance regime. Lester sorted himself out with a PTS course, and we'd been told all of us had to do one. This was later retracted because Doncaster depot – where maintenance would be carried out – does not have PTS requirement. Eventually it was decided that maintenance teams would be able to visit on Sundays, allowing us several hours to do an A-exam every week. With ten weekends to cover, all of our usual reliable bods would have to chip in, with the alternative being paying Barrow Hill £50/hr to do them for us thereby wasting a fair chunk of our income.

Monday 10th October saw 227 more or less sorted out, with a final tweak to the engine governor voltage raise/lower switches because she was suffering from low power, and during the week she moved from Barrow Hill to Doncaster, followed by a test run to York and back. The drivers restricted their whinges to lack of armrests, draughty cab, and wobbly floor! Strangely those are things that would actually appeal to me but there you go. Lester kindly steamed up there on the Saturday to fix these issues. The following week they both tripped to Toton and back to fetch an additional RHTT wagons set. The intention was to carry out maintenance exams on Saturdays and Sundays although the arrivals/departures of the trains varied making it difficult to plan ahead. Once the workings settled down all the locos stayed on more or less the same diagrams and our day tended to be Sunday, but we were going to have to be quick to get through the A exam and a big cleaning job every weekend. Take it from us, sandite is extremely hard to get off and a week's worth of it results in the locos looking like someone has blasted cement slurry all over them.

After the return from Toton, Shaun from Barrow Hill did an A-exam rather than us doing it (because he said they'd need one before doing the following week's circuit). He said the driver and inspector reckoned that 227 was completely fine.

Dom and myself visited Wirksworth on Saturday to look at the minor oil leaks on 001 (usually the case after a refurbishment as the engine settles down), tightening various bolts and joints up including the cam shafts covers and a number of high-pressure joints around the free end of the power unit. Lots of cleaning and painting was carried out to help show up any subsequent leaks and we also added some meths to the compressor reservoir ready for winter, and bunged 25L of antifreeze into the water header tank.

Front Page: Mystery Shot. A prize to anyone who can identify the exact location of this bit of cultivation! Track experts will get it straightaway obviously. Bonus point for what breed of tomato. Answer given later.

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20.227 departed Sunday lunchtime on her first circuit with 096 with our best wishes, prayers, fingers crossed, and whatever else we could think of! Once up to speed she would be operating up to 22 hours a day for five days a week. There was a minor issue when they tried to reverse into the yard at York Sunday night and Shaun attended. It was found to be a wire shorting to earth in the cut-off switch on 096. This was swiftly fixed for them to go into traffic Monday. 096 then failed again on the Wednesday with a lighting circuit fault.

The following weekend Brian, Lee, Lester and Trev paid a visit to Doncaster to do another A-exam, check her over and find out for the first time what a nasty job pressure-washing and cleaning is! There were more Class 20s on shed than 66s or any other type! A marvellous sight:



It was noted that a sand pipe bracket had gone AWOL and Brian fashioned a new one in the DBS workshop! (Interestingly Michael has also had one taken from 189, which he has patched up with Jubilee clips). The fan clutch mechanism on 227 seemed to be holding up but we'd have to keep an eye on it. There was a bit of a wobble as Barrow Hill requested that 227 was swapped out as when 096 failed last week with a positive earth problem, it was of course made critical by 227 having a negative earth fault (which of course we know about). We were not keen at all on 227 missing out on a week of revenue especially as she was booked spare the next week, so a discussion with Shaun showed that the fault on 096 was clear and it would be unlikely if another fault the same occurred on 096. So Michael made the call to let them go out which they duly did Sunday evening.

We had a message from Michael saying that 096 did indeed fail again with a positive earth fault the next night and she has now been swapped out with 189, so we were now back on circuit with 189. While Shaun was testing 227/096's wiring he found 5 cables in 227 that are down to earth and tagged them to be fixed at a later date.

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Above: 20.227 and 20.096 barrel along after picking up the RHTT set from Toton. Grey and blue, two double-arrows – replace RHTT with 22 MGR wagons and it would be 1989!

We originally decided to go to Doncaster on the Sunday as well but that was cancelled as Shaun had done the A-exam. However, late Saturday evening Michael told us that 227 had a "high amps problem". Bit of a shame nobody told us earlier, and there was nothing in the fault book either. I couldn't get any more firm details so decided to call Shaun, and he said she was fine as far as he was aware. Given what Michael had said we thought it may be a KV10 issue, so the next of many long phone calls saw Brian heroically offer to jump on a train the next morning and bring the spare KV10 electronic boards up. He would arrive at 11.50, convincing his better half Angela with a day out in York – very many thanks to them both. We agreed that Lester could go to Doncaster the next day to meet Brian, then dash over to the depot and have a look at the problem. Dom and myself would wait at Wirksworth in case we needed to pick other spares up from B'ley on way to Doncaster if required. There seemed to be "plenty" of time because 227/096 were not due off until 15.30 or even 21.30.

Dom and me arrived at Wirksworth at 9.30 on Sunday at which point Michael phoned and told us to get to Doncaster asap to look at 227 because it was due off shed at 12.30 (not 15.30 or 21.30 as originally told!). We steamed off arriving there at about 10.30am. Initial tests showed amps OK, but we tested again and she showed high amps up to 1000 at ¼ controller (so presumably Shaun had overcompensated when tweaking the governor switches at Barrow Hill). Shaun was also there looking at 901/905 with his help we tweaked the VRS/ADS switches again and miraculously the amps settled correctly at 700 at ¼ power with the brakes on. 227 was finally fixed 45 minutes before our first train was due to be shunted for departure, so another "CTLS Cliffhanger" for us there. In return we cleaned 096 for Shaun, then legged it back to Wirksworth for more painting on D8001. A bonkers day. The Doncaster "depot induction course" had been rather lengthy and onerous though after we asked a bloke to give us one: "Watch out for trains and that" was the exact sum total of it.

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The following weekend 6th November it was the turn of Lester, Chris, and Brian to feature at Doncaster. It was great to see all the regulars chipping in with the exams and cleaning, and over the course of the contract this saved us a lot of money. 20189 and 20227 were due to arrive Saturday evening so that weekend's maintenance day would be a Sunday, and we asked for the locos to be over the pits for latest 08.30 Sunday morning.

20.096 was removed from the circuit the previous week and Shaun had been working on her during the week and she was on test during the Saturday. If the tests went OK DBS would allow her back on the circuit and she'd go out Sunday with 20.142. So both 20.227 and 20.189 should be standby from Sunday for a week. Michael was unable to attend Sunday and asked us to examine his loco as well for which we would be paid. A exams and underframe cleaning were the priority, and bodywork cleaning if there was time. At this point we knew of four defects on 20227; port side turbo seal oil leak; the fan clutch which we were keeping an eye on, the engine hours meter was broken, and also the negative earth, all of which we wanted to leave until after the contract was finished.

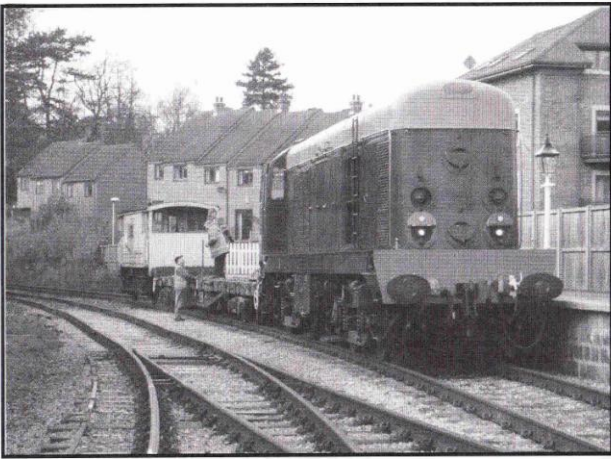
That Sunday turned out to be a long one. Lester got himself up to Doncaster early morning, and I was due to pick Brian up from Leighton Buzzard station at 7.30am. I checked my phone at 7am and Brian had left a message saying all WCML local trains had been cancelled! Also his mobile wasn't working so the call was from a payphone. By great fortune the handle of his bag had broken so he was still at the phone when I rang it expecting no response! We agreed he'd go via Kings Cross to Harlington instead and I'd collect him there. I waited there 45 minutes (partaking of kedgeree and kippers in the 1st class refreshment rooms while I waited), then we steamed up to Donny in 1h45mins which was a little insane. 227+189 were behind the shed on the tankers, which was annoying because we really needed the pit and water and washer. We carried out the A-exams on both locos over the next few hours, along with topping up all battery cells. Someone had nobbled 227's controller lock so the driver's key now doesn't lock it properly, sigh. The bogies and couplings etc were greased, and we washed most of 227. At this point the depot manager said it would be more convenient for him if they stayed on the train and since they'd been exam'd and we'd have time to wash 189 in the afternoon, Michael agreed. We kicked a 66 out from D road and shifted the train round there. 227's washing was finished, then 189 was washed as best we could, followed by Sandite chipping and washing off bogies and brake gear. Some bits of brake gear were adjusted and a loose sanding pipe on 189 tightened (well spotted Lester). Some loose traction motor bolts were also tightened. We finally finished about 5pm – possibly 10 man hours on each loco – and had a chat with the depot manager who said that so far he was quite impressed – availability is even higher than last year so he's pleased. He rated 189/227 as the best locos (of course ☺). Sounds like tempting fate to me with 4 weeks still to go but there we go. Last week was one of 189/227's longest circuits – and the longest of any of the pairs.

Sunday 13th November didn't turn out much different! In addition to the A exam tasks, we needed to change the brake blocks, change the bodyside air filters and check/top up the turbo oil. Attendees were supposed to be Lester, Trev, Rob and Dom with Paul Mee a possible. After this weekend we would be spare for a week and then due one more turn before being spare the final week. It was a successful but long day thanks to Lester, Dom and Rob for turning up in the end. The A exam was carried out, the filters changed and brake blocks all completed so 227 would be on hot standby the next week with 20.189, with 20.142 and 20.096 taking over our circuit. Changing brake blocks in a pit filled with water and sandite was by far the most disgusting job so far, still it was Armistice Sunday so Somme-like conditions were our honouring of fallen comrades.

On Monday 14th there was a slight change of plan when 20.901 had a power fault and 189/227 were swapped into 901/905's circuit. It didn't last long though and we were swapped back out again! However the rest of the plan also changed with 20.227 being given all of the last three weeks in action with no rests in between.

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At the end of November a few of us rolled up at Wirksworth to check D8001 over and update our route knowledge. Below: D8001 on our test run at Duffield:



Friday 2nd December ended a bit of a frantic week for DBS as they'd had some problems with the actual Sandite trains and had to swap sets losing some circuits. Fortunately 20.227 and the other locos again performed faultlessly (touch wood etc.), so we'd had a full week of circuits and 227 and 142 would be back at Doncaster late Saturday night ready for maintenance on Sunday. The next week should have been the last week, possibly only a few days as the circuits were being wound down. 20.227 was due back at Donny on the 10th and the idea was for as many of us as possible to put aside the 11th December to give her a full clean and check-over before she was delivered back to Ruislip, where we could get stuck into repairing our various defects in the new year. Sunday 4th saw a top job from Lester, Rob and Brian, ready for the final week, after which the intention was to ask DBS to return 227 and 142 to Ruislip, dropping 189 off at Washwood Heath on the way.

During the last week there was a report that all the cab heaters on 227 had failed. In fact, they hadn't failed, the lack of heat hadn't been noticed before because it hadn't been cold enough. HNRC offered to have a look at them which we declined since there were only a couple of days to go, and a number of us spent wasted effort trying to track down some spare heater elements. In the end as there was only two days left the drivers sensibly just turned the cooker on instead!! As we'll see later, the HNRC offer wasn't quite all it seemed anyway! Our final visit to Doncaster was 11th December, to give the locos a final wash and finalise our defect list: some bushing on the fan drive shaft starting to break down; some negative earth wiring faults; engine-hours meter not working; one turbo using oil due to worn seal; and the fuel filler cap leaking. Hardly catastrophic considering the incredibly intensive work load!

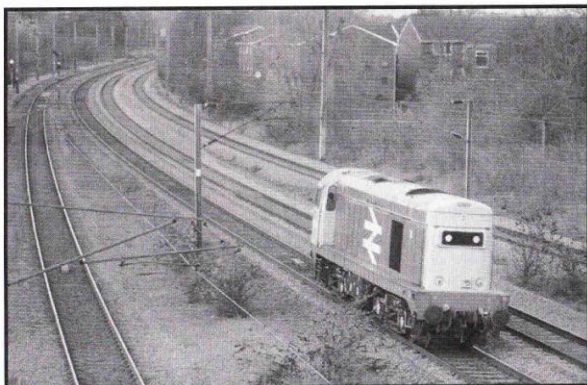
8

Towards the end of the DBS contract, GBRf let it be known that they were interested in talking to us again about the LUL S-stock delivery contract, due to the not very sparkling performance of the existing providers. Suddenly, just after Christmas, they gave us three weeks of work while the availability of the "other" locos had completely collapsed. We therefore had to steam down to Ruislip with little notice to take the sandboxes off (for the millionth time) and fit the tripcock. Luckily she had just enough days left before a due B-exam, although the brushes in the auxiliary generator were giving us cause for concern.

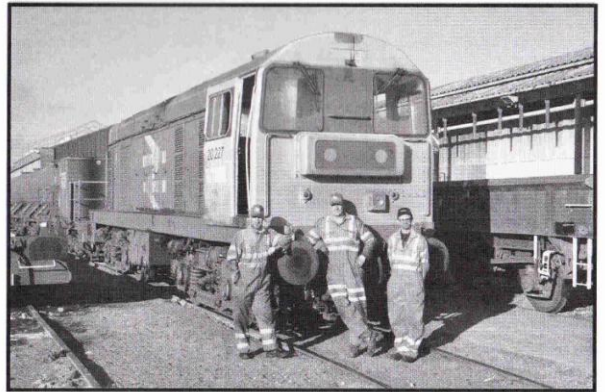
During January Michael met GBRf and they explained that DRS had declined to continue with the LUL S-stock contract. There was a possibility that Bombardier would even start to move the trains by road, but apart from DRS the only people with Class 20s are of course our good selves with Michael and HN. 20.189 was under repair at Barrow Hill so our three weeks of tests would be operated by 142/227/901/905. No time was lost and GB told us they wanted to collect 227 from Ruislip on the Monday morning and she would pick up 142 on the way to Derby ready to work the next week. Lester checked that LUL track gauge and tripcock for 227 were in the BG with a possibility of him going to Derby on the Tuesday to fit it. So that left the sandboxes to be removed either the Friday beforehand or at the weekend, and an A exam carried out, turbo oil topped up and anything else that was urgent sorted out. We reckoned we had just about three weeks left before the B exam was required – cutting it very fine. The leaky turbo seal and the fan drive were still causing us concern but we'd have to let those ride for the next few weeks.

In a bankers dash Trev collected the tripcock from Michael at Stevenage and brought it down south on Saturday 7th January ready for some of us to fit on the Sunday. Michael also confirmed that Bombardier still favoured rail and that the next few weeks would indeed be a trail of our capabilities, and if all went well we might get a year's contract and a possible extension if we did OK. Sunday saw Trev, Brian and myself appear at Ruislip (so much for a nice rest after the insanity of RHTT!), and we managed to get all the sandboxes off and label them (with two bolts taking as long as the rest of the other twenty-two put together), bunged the tripcock on, and even did an A exam in a spare couple of minutes. All of us were well into "injury time" for getting back to our other halves, and no doubt many words were said behind closed doors that evening! So hopefully we were ready to go for Tuesday's first working. Yet another "CLTS Cliffhanger". Honestly, the things we do for our locos.....

Below: 20.227 is given the privilege of the fast line at Oakleigh Park on her way from Ruislip to Peterborough on 10th January 2012. You can even see Brian's old gaff in the background!



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Above: One of our last visits to Doncaster was the first weekend of December. Here are the weary trio of meself, Lester and Dom, and of course the star of the show behind us looking like a proper 1980's Class 20.

In fact 20.227 suffered NO operational failures during the whole contract, and after initially being wary of her DBS reckoned she was probably their favourite of the bunch. DBS were in fact complimentary about all the locos and told us that RHTT availability had been the best ever, meaning Network Rail were equally pleased. Once again, all our normal stalwarts did a superb job keeping a presence at the maintenance days, but huge thanks must go to Lester for spearheading the maintenance teams, and to Trev for keeping the whole contract on the straight and narrow. It's very difficult to put across how much ("spare"!) time these guys spent on the contract and what a great result it was because of that effort.

Lots of "youtube" of the workings RHTT, LUL/GB etc - just search for "20227"! And "20189", "20142" come to that. These are some good examples:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1X0p8Lit6k> – not hanging around through York station
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVHblZ8bdM> – more barmy telephoto stuff
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VumWPfGOM4g> – interesting views and a bonus Class 60 for Lee
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISRTR0cY0LO> – Class 66 giving way to proper Locos
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qd3z8s3dgOU>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgPMzg09-PA>

The plan after DBS was to take 20.227 with 20.142 back to LUL Ruislip for a warm winter shed, and 189 to Washwood Heath for repair work. In the end, 142 went to Washwood Heath, 189 to Barrow Hill, and 227 pressed on alone to LUL Ruislip as OZ20 from Bescot 1030 to West Ruislip on 29th, arriving at 1430. 227's run from Bescot to Ruislip was a rare nose-first operation – search "20227 Dorridge" on 'youtube' for some ace footage!

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To add to the pressure, 227's OTMR box was now out of date and needed to be returned to Arrowvale. The blower motor brushes were also getting very low, and the brake blocks were also very thin, so the B exam was getting rather critical and would have to be done straight after the test runs. Also also, the "NRN" cab radios will be superseded by GSMR radios next December and we're going to have to think whether these are worth the expense.

On Tuesday 10th 20.227 duly departed Ruislip and arrived at Peterborough at 16.43 to be met by Michael. Extra news was the GBRf wanted the locos on Friday and Saturday as well to shunt trains around with all four locos returning north on the Sunday night. We obviously needed to bend over backwards for GB but this rather suppered our plans to work on 227 at the weekend and made the B exam rather a challenge. Arg! Lester and Michael kindly made themselves available for the following Monday to do a B exam at Derby or Peterborough. On Wednesday Michael reported from the footplate at Knighton Junction that 227 was leading the train and pulling well, with 142, and 901/905 trailing at the back. Things changed yet again with the locos now not leaving Ruislip on Monday at 1300 so Lester and Michael would have to meet them at Derby early in the evening, following that the locos would go to Asfordby on the Tuesday and London on the Wednesday so GB were certainly getting their money's worth and giving us a headache in the process.

Whilst all this was going on, there were many political shenanigans between the original train operators, GB, and Bombardier; with our main contract being on, off, or in the balance several times in several hours! We had to plan ahead for not getting the contract at all, and Ruislip seemed a sensible place to send 227 to keep warm over the winter. The other option was Washwood Heath with 142, being charged for storage. However it dawned on us that the latter might actually be a good move since we could ask Neil Boden to do the B exam for us along with having a look at the other little jobs. It would also mean the jobs would be done in time if we DID actually get the main contract. A difficult call but the correct one as it turned out.

On 16th January, 20.227/142/901/905 returned north from Ruislip via Ealing Broadway!!! as seen in this rare bit of film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecz5ZjpOc6Y>.

I wobbled up to Peterborough to give 227 and 142 an "emergency" A exam with Michael. GBR helpfully parked them right down the yard with no water or pit or anything and it was also very nippy indeed. Header tank water was topped up, and the turbos checked. I started to change the bodyside air filters but the first door wouldn't lock back because the top catch of the three had a knackered screw. As in all the best horror stories, it was getting dark..... The locos had to leave the next morning so not fixing it was not an option. I managed to extract the remains of the screw and tried to swap the middle catch to the top instead but whatever I did the catch wouldn't stick behind the frame. Sigh. Eventually I received an excellent suggestion from the Phone Help Line (Brian) – wire it closed for now, so that was duly done and cable tied as well. The brake blocks were low on a couple of axles, the cab end especially, and Michael signed her off for one trip only. As Trev said, that's all it needed to get back to Ruislip anyway, but just as I was leaving Michael said they'd been requested to leave tomorrow (Monday) arriving Ruislip on Tuesday at 0200, then possibly come back north Tues afternoon for ANOTHER trip!! "Is that altogether wise Captain Mainwaring?". She was now overdue for B exam. If we needed to change the brake block we might have to work out a plan involving getting some from the BG or elsewhere and ferrying them south for fitting on Monday evening!!! Stand by, men.....

Meanwhile, nice one to Lester for visiting D8001 and investigating a small problem with one of the driver's FV4 brake valves, and swapping it for a spare one. Whilst there Lester spoke to a guy who has offered to help with welding on the loco. The intention in 2012 is to carry out some major cab reskinning work, replace the cab floor, and have a think what to do about the underfloor corrosion.

Michael confirmed that GBRf had indeed added an extra run for Monday night that we were not aware of! So now the brake blocks would clearly not last out until the end of the trail. We managed to source a supply at Hastings Diesels on the Monday and started to arrange "TNT"ing them up to Ruislip. However this was deemed too risky and in the end Trev actually went and collected them on Tuesday morning from Hastings before going to work that day!

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20.227 and 20.142 roar through Wychnor Junction in February 2012

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What a superb text-book execution of a "CTLS Cliffhanger" – number 214 since 1981 if I'm not mistaken although I'd have to check the Cliffhanger Log to be sure. So we now had the blocks but had to contact GBRf to see when the locos would be at Ruislip for a high-speed block swap, if we couldn't manage it we'd have to duck out of the last trips which would a/ not look good, and b/ lose us some cash. After another red-hot phone session (Trev loves his 0800 numbers, arf arf) GBRf confirmed they could give us a couple of hours on Tuesday afternoon between arrival and departure of the locos. We'd have to work fast with sixteen brake blocks to change! We still weren't quite sure what was happening the rest of the week, with some impression being given they'd go north on Tuesday afternoon and be back again on Thursday with another set of S-stock. 227 would certainly need another A exam in there somewhere too.

Trev and myself duly met at Ruislip and in a bonkers couple of hours we swapped almost all the blocks, apart from one brake hanger which either had a bent block retaining pin or the hanger bushes were worn. Whatever it was the block on that hanger was incorrectly positioned on the wheel and was wearing offset.

Luckily that block had some meat left on it and Dave Brabham at LUL passed the fitness to run exam for us. It was quite a pitstop because just as we arrived, the locos also arrived at the depot at the same time, drove straight into the shed, we leapt into the pit and started work, and soon as we finished they reversed out and away north! We noticed the running gear was looking a bit dry so some greasing would be needed during the B exam. Dave Brabham kept us company and gave us moral support, drip feeding us various interesting stories about the previous operator of S-stock deliveries. One curious story concerned no locos apparently being available for a working, then a while later Dave being very surprised to see a photo of one on a special train at Penzance instead! Some light relief for Trev was spotting a "Tasty Baps" cafe on the A21. I suggested that the cafe should sort out a twinning arrangement with the "Super Sausage" cafe on the A5, a cracking combination I'm sure you'll agree.

Below: 20.227 and friends blast up the hill through Bagworth:



14

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Towards the end of the trial GBRf requested that 227 accompanied the other three locos back to Derby via Peterborough for fuel, the reason being that they need them for a run from Derby to Asfordby the next day. The plan then was to return 901 and 905 to Doncaster and 142 to Washwood Heath, however GBRf had a crewing issue with 142 going nose first to Washwood Heath so have asked if 227 can also go there. They agreed to return her the following week at their cost to Ruislip, and Neil Boden appeared not to mind 227 lounging around in his shed for a few days. We suspected though that the real reason GBRf weren't keen on returning 227 to Ruislip just yet, was that they don't think the other operators are going to show up and would rather have our loco's nearby just in case! Some good news was that GBRf made a verbal offer to Michael for an extended contract to provide 4 locos for a weekly delivery, with us having to find a spare loco if needed (easy as we have 189 spare), so they just pay for 4 locos whatever happened. They said this was also the basis of the offer they have made to the other operators who will run a train each week as well as us, so in theory GBRf would have 8 locos each week (although amusingly, the other lot said they didn't have four class 20's serviceable at the moment!).

So, we had a number of key things that needed a decision fairly swiftly. The unchanged brake blocks would probably only make one more run, but we could get them changed Boden's. The B exam was getting a bit desperate, and Michael decided to pay Neil Boden to do his, but our replacement auxiliary generator brushes hadn't turned up yet. We needed some extra engine oil, so I ordered that from our new supplier for delivery to Washwood Heath. GBRf drivers had whinged about the lack of can heating so we needed to look at that. But we were in limbo until GBRf decided what they wanted to do. On Thursday 26th GBRf asked to re-marshal the train today to help them, and it would leave Ruislip that night at around 20:00 with all four locos on the front, and 142 leading, which promised to be an interesting sight.

Our final "trial" S-stock run was due at the end of January, and as it turned out all the trips went without a hitch which seemed to impress everyone. GBRf still thought "the other lot" would take over again but they suggested that we could still have an extra 5 months work to help them speed up the deliveries. The Other Lot duly turned up for the next runs and three of their locos failed at Saltley before the journey to Ruislip had even started. Still, all the activity provided the fascinating situation of EIGHT Class 20s – 301, 302, 304, 205, 901, 905, 142 and 227 - at Derby on 27th January, just like the good old days!

Below: 20.227/20.142 pause for a couple of hours at Ruislip with a few electric friends while we sort the brake blocks out.



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On Saturday 28th 20.227 and 20.142 had arrived at Washwood Heath. Michael received a complimentary mail from GBRF thanking us for a trouble free loan period and still saying discussions were ongoing for us to do the extra runs, but they didn't need us for 2 weeks. Also DBS mailed him Friday asking if we are interested in doing the test trains again in the Autumn. It's nice to be wanted! So still plenty of interest for potential work. Michael suggested leaving 227 with 142 at Boden's under covered store for a couple of weeks until we knew what was going on, and Neil offered to do the B exam. After some discussion we decided to stay at Washwood Heath and get the various jobs done, because it was too risky not to be ready if GBRF gave us the nod. Amusingly the locos had been delivered with about 10 gallons of fuel on board so they were probably running on fumes as they arrived. Rob, Dom and myself wandered up the following Saturday to look at some of the jobs, and conveniently GB actually arranged to fuel them the previous day. Urgent stuff that needed doing by now included the B-exam, working out why the cab heaters had failed, fixing the faulty brake hanger and changing its brake block, but the wiring issues and fan problem could be left for another time. Saturday was extremely chilly – minus 11 when I set off at a stupid 6am. Mr Boden was tinkering with "Mayflower" and seemed quite chilled in more ways than one. We topped up the batteries, replaced the dodgy bodyside door catch with one I'd got off the internet somewhere, and topped up the turbos with oil. She started with considerable reluctance but at least she'd be warm for the next cold night. Dom did a top job checking and fixing the cab heaters. It transpired that when Barrow Hill had installed the windscreen washers, which we hadn't asked for anyway, they'd wired them by filching the heaters power supply!

On Tuesday 7th February Trev received the excellent and exciting news that GBRF had given Michael 30 days notice to provide six locos for the S-stock moves for one year. Time to make sure 20.227 was up to the job! Three urgent issues were: our auxiliary generator brushes were indeed at scrap level which was a bit naughty and we needed replacements (1 month delivery) before the engine could be started to do the B-exam; we needed the extra engine oil; and the OTMR box had to go back to Arrowvale for updating (1 month as well). We also wanted Neil to fix a dodgy headlight, grease the bogies, have a look at the leaky turbo and dodgy fan, and also the electrical issues, but he wouldn't have time for all those. We agreed to do what was possible in the time, start the contract paired with 20.142, and to return in the Spring when 20.189 was ready for action and could swap with 227.

Dom made a high speed early morning dash (after special early-morning-dash lessons from Trev) to take the OTMR box from 227 down to Arrowvale at Redditch. Since it wouldn't be back in time, the Class 40 Preservation Soc kindly hired us theirs from out of 40.145 which is dormant at Barrow Hill. Another headache was the auxiliary generator brushes from Morganite which would take 3 weeks – too long. Bowers Electrical in Heanor offered us some, then Lester got hold of a set as well, so that was a relief. Finally the engine oil turned up the next day at Bodens. Three show-stopping problems solved by the usual great teamwork!

Lester took the auxiliary generator brushes over to Boden's on Friday 17th, and Neil started work on the B exam. Michael offered to collect the OTMR box from Barrow Hill, with Mandy Sharpe fitting it the day before 227 was due to leave. As it turned out she managed to get there the previous week so all was now looking surprisingly positive! 20.142 was down to a sliver of metal on her tyres but Michael somehow convinced Boden's to sign it off assuming that a visit to Tyseley with 227 was successful in skimming a bit off the flanges which needed reprofiling. Once that was done off they went to Derby. The intention was for 227 to return to Washwood in April for a few extra jobs to be done, and a possible return in August for the top side of her power unit to be refurbished – cylinder heads, pumps, valves, etc. The S-stock delivery would be interrupted for a couple of months while the Olympics were on. Another welcome piece of news was that GBRF wanted to extend our contract to 18 months, with an option after that to three years if all went well. Discussions were had about refurbishing loads of spares but in the end we decided that we could raid 20.205 and even D8001 in an emergency if we had to!

16

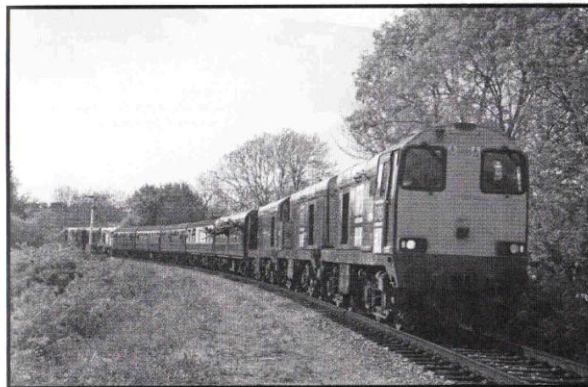
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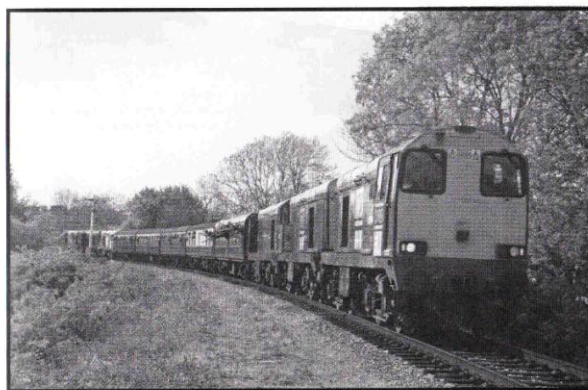


Above: super-power! 6 x Class 20s at "Chopperfest!"

Below: triumphant return of Class 20s to Derby Etches Park.....



17



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17

Final contract negotiations took place at the beginning of March, involving where maintenance would be carried out (us favouring Derby Etches Park and GB favouring anywhere the locos might happen to be at the time!), and various other details. Once again Trev and Michael did a sterling job keeping things on the straight and narrow. The S-stock contract is the largest delivery of new trains ever made in the UK!

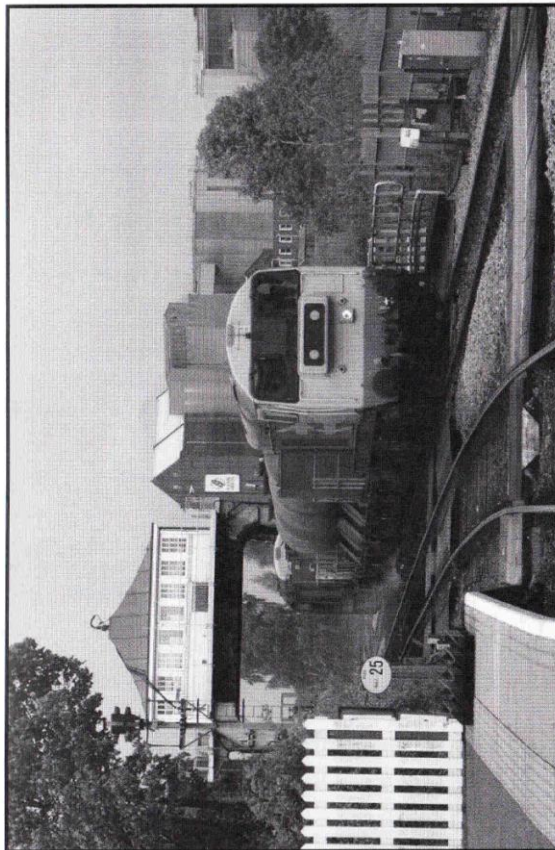
A couple of my favourite films of the recent workings for your delectation!
 20.227 returns to Ruislip through Dorridge nose first!! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRwi0LILRLU>
 20.227/142 blast through Thame: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDn5FGWdV88>. In fact here's a photo of the same train, to convince you to go and view the youtube clip!



The saga of "the sheds" is still continuing in the background! 20.205 is permanently under cover at Butterley in the shed we paid for part of. There's a plan for other groups at Butterley to build another shed next to it leaving us in peace in the original one, since Class 20's are the only type which can get into the shed via a very sharp curve! Wirksworth now also have a plan to build a shed extension, possibly starting this Autumn, and we've said we want "in" for D8001. So those of you chipping into the Shed Fund (Including me) rest assured it's being put to good use. Obviously 20.227's "shed" is provided courtesy of LUL/DBS/GBRT/BodenEngineering etc etc!!

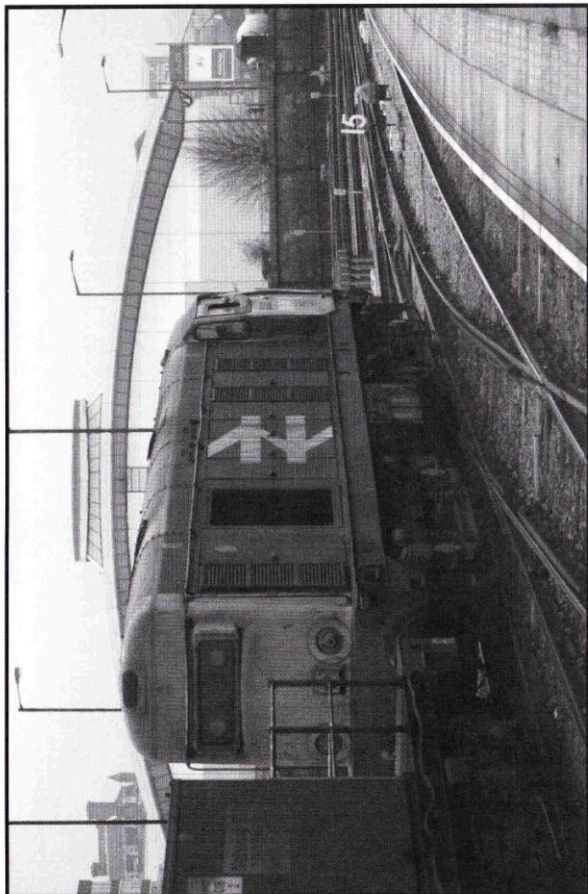
Answer to Front Page Mystery Photo: well obviously you all spotted straightaway that it's Doncaster station. Yes, correct, the Down Platform line. And equally obviously the tomato variety was "Brandywine".

2012 promises to be equally action-packed – the ongoing GB/LUL contract; D8001 driver experience days and galas; LUL heritage days for 227; and even looking as far ahead as 2013 LUL will be having a mega celebration of the Metropolitan Line as part of which some quite interesting ideas are being mooted for 20.227 ☺



20.227 and 20.096 at Goole

20.227 and 20.142 at Melton Mowbray



Just like the old days! A filthy 20.227 pulls out of Sheffield on RH11



Notes from Annual General Meeting 14th January 2012.

Attended by: - Chris Deeth (MRC), Brian Lees, Paul Mee, Dominic Davidson, Lester French, CJS, Lester French, Paul Warden, Tony Spencer & Will Fry. Apologies for absence from Dave Beecham & Rob Ambler.

The meeting opened with an overview of the current situation at the Midland Railway by Chris Deeth. The centre reported a profit last year, but increasing costs for electricity and coal were becoming a problem and payment rents were required. Manpower is also required to assist with projects such as tracklaying adjacent to the diesel shed which will benefit all operators at the centre. A greater commitment and organisation is also required from diesel operators to ensure the success of running days. There is a focus on the training and competence of staff working at the centre to ensure safe operation, this is thought to be a significant problem with some other operators. Security and metal theft continues to be a significant problem, the centre has bought in a security guard and is improving CCTV and liaising with Derbyshire Police. Chris thanked the CTLS for their support at their events over the past year, particularly efforts with the Railex and stewarding at Indietracks.

Overview of CTLS Year

The main success of 2011 was completion of the power unit overhaul of D8001; 20.227 has been on hire to DB Schenker on the RHTT trains and successfully covered 8000 miles, thanks to Lester for this efforts maintaining the loco and Trev for contract management. Thanks to Paul Warden and Steve Smith for arranging the Railex event at Butterley, which was the second most popular event at the MRC last year.

D8001 remains at Wirksworth and whilst opportunities for commercial work there have reduced the loco remains popular for driver experience courses. 20.227 will probably return to London Transport where secure shed space is provided and there remain opportunities for hire. It is planned for 20.205 to remain at the Midland Railway Trust, the loco requires further work which has not been possible with hiring commitments and the overhaul of D8001.

With increasing costs for rent, running costs, upkeep and long term work, it was decided to increase membership fees to £50 per annum for standard members and £25 for concessions, the arrangement of free membership for people contributing £10 per month to the '20 Club' would continue. This was proposed by Brian Lees and seconded by Tony Spencer, having been discussed at length and agreed by all attending. Please find an enclosed membership renewal form with this magazine.

The future of the magazine was then discussed, with costs for copying and postage the idea of making it on-line was discussed and agreed. This would be in the form of a 'Blog' which would be for members only and kept up to date with latest news and events, along with a "public" side for anyone to view. The intention would be to issue one last issue of the paper magazine before going on-line.

It was also agreed that the web-site needs to be made more up to date, over time the current one would be shut down and transferred across to 'Class20locomotivesociety.co.uk' and the new site is developed. All ideas would be welcomed to develop the new website.

Brian Lees then gave the Treasurers report, giving thanks to Theresa Langston for her help with the accounts. A considerable amount of money had been spent on the much needed overhaul of D8001's power unit, which was seen as a good investment for the future and would not have been possible without income from hiring.

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The Chairman and Committee as standing were then proposed for re-election by Trevor Rolfe and seconded by Will Fry before being voted in unanimously with the addition of Paul Warden as Events Organiser.

The status of our locos and stock was discussed. It was agreed to keep D8001 at Wirksworth, where it continues to be used for driver experience days and has a running weekend on the 17th & 18th March and another in August. Following the March working weekend it is planned re-skin the outside of the cab and remove any rust over a couple of months and renew the body roof seals, then replace the cab floor, then after that to deal with the underfloor corrosion.

There is also an opportunity to buy in to the new shed being built at Wirksworth which will give us a secure location and get the loco out of the bad weather.

With the work required on D8001, we will need to keep 20.205 on the back burner until later in the summer, with only minor work planned in the short term. There may be scope for using money from the contracts to pay for external contractor work on 20.205.

20.227 will either start a new contract [she has!] or return to Ruislip [she won't!] where it is secure and will generate income from hire to LT for shunting. Other than replacing the fan clutch and renewing some wiring the loco is in pretty good operating condition considering the RHTT efforts. As part of the "LT150" celebrations in the future there will be opportunities to haul passenger trains again on LUL lines. Work will be required over the summer to make our support coach weather tight and repair damage to the body work, along with a full repaint and repair to the access steps. We would also like to prepare the spare power unit and lowmac for display.

There were very few Any Other Business items, other than a discussion regarding sales - with there being very few good events around the new website will have a sales section to hopefully generate income and a stand is planned at this year's Butterley Railex. Tony continues to do much appreciated work on the sales side.

The meeting was then closed, with a follow up general meeting planned for the summer.

Recent "20 Club" results are as follows:

August 1st £19.00 R. Mears, 2nd £9.00 R. Ambler, 3rd £6.50 A. Spencer, 4th £5.00 J. Warner
September 1st £19.00 P. Mee, 2nd £9.00 R. Parr, 3rd £6.50 C. Stevenson, 4th £5.00 D. Davidson
October 1st £19.00 T. Dawe, 2nd £9.00 R. Ambler, 3rd £6.50 A. Spencer, 4th £5.00 B. Lees
November 1st £19.00 A. Spencer, 2nd £9.00 A. Spencer, 3rd £6.50 D. Davidson, 4th £5.00 R. Parr
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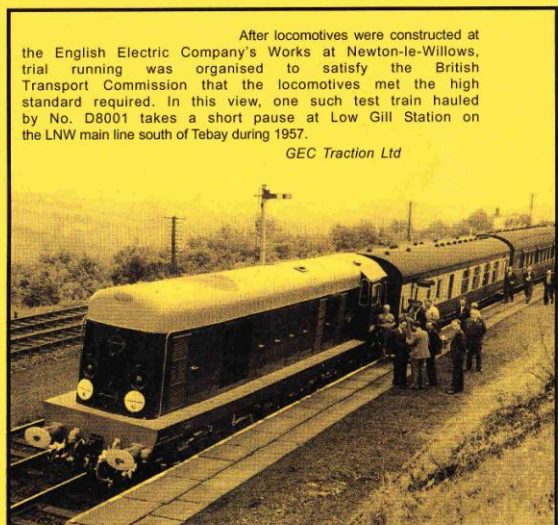
OK, we now move into the brave new world of the online universe! After almost 30 years of editing this illustrious organ I shall now be sharing blogging with the rest of the lads. Looking back over all those magazines I see some incredible events, achievements, setbacks, recoveries, milestones, great people, cracking teamwork, and a few beers. If anybody had told me in 1981 what would happen over the next 30 years I would not have believed them. I need a rest!

LAST REMINDER to contact Dom (his contact details are on page 2) to get set up with the new website and blog - "class20locomotivesociety.blogspot.com".
See you over there! We'll gradually upload loads of info, the full set of past magazines, upcoming working dates, photos of Brian's hamster etc etc.

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Let's finish up with another interesting "blast from the past" from Uncle Mel Thorley's archives: On a visit to Willesden on 7th September 1958 (not by me, I was -6 months old!) there were eighty-eight steam locos in residence and five diesel shunters, plus some very strange new animals called "diesel locomotives". Picture yourself viewing the following live and in the flesh: EE Co-Co 10001, BTH Type 1 D8207, D8001 (hurrah! Only a year old too!), D8003, D8011, D8014. On the same day, over to the east at Devons Road in Bow (or Irite my darlins) enjoying a rest on the Sabbath were: D2901, D2903, D2904, D2907; D8004, D8006, D8010, D8012, D8013, D8015, D8016, D8017, D8018, D8019; D8200, D8201, D8202, D8203, D8204, D8205, D8206, D8208.

While we're in a nostalgic mood, check out this absolutely cracking photo of D8001 on her first test train at Low Gill, 55, yes FIFTY FIVE, years ago! Spot the pipes and pencil moustaches ☺. Would those old codgers have thought their handiwork would still be hauling trains today I wonder? Thanks to YOUR help and enthusiasm obviously SHE IS!



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