



Midland Miscellany

CD - 1

Birmingham International

1 - As an announcement is made about a London Euston service 37 407 "Blackpool Tower" starts up, sounding as if it is a little unwilling to do more work (28/4/95).

Birmingham New Street

2 - Later on from Track 1 , 37407 on a service to Holyhead is held at Proof House Junction whilst a NE/SW HST passes. Once on the move the train enters the short south tunnel and in no time arrives at New Street.

3 - D6593, which would normally have been seen on the BR Southern Region, pulls away with the diesel portion of a tour from Guildford to Crewe (22/11/97).

4 - Also "off region", "Deltic", D9000 "Royal Scots Grey" with it's twin Napier engines booming in the confined space departs on a seasonal rail tour to the Lindum Fair at Lincoln (9/12/00).

5 - Finally, on board with 37 407, an adjacent HST departs as the guard lists the station stops. After another HST departure, 37407 moves off and cautiously threads the pointwork before entering New Street North Tunnel and erupting in the confined space as she powers up the steep 1 in 77 gradient. On exiting, speed is picked up as the train passes the site of the old Monument Lane loco shed, Soho carriage sidings along with Smethwick Rolfe Street and Galton Bridge stations after which it eases off (28/4/95).

Oakham

6 - 31 135 and 31 268 amble through towards Peterborough with an engineers train (9/90).

7 - In complete contrast with the previous track, A4 pacific 60009 "Union of South Africa" accelerates hard through the station on a charter from Kettering to York (10/5/03).

8 - Alongside the busy A6003 to the south of Oakham, 4965 "Rood Ashton Hall" passes with one of the "Harringworth 125 Shuttles" which would traverse the impressive viaduct and then terminate at Kettering (25/8/03).

9 - On board a special hauled by 47 459 as it comes off the Corby line and surges through Manton tunnel, past Rutland Water and heads towards Oakham with a 'Corbyrail' special bound for Llandudno (15/9/85).

Burton - on - Trent

10 - V2, 60800 "Green Arrow" clanks it's way through and then accelerates away towards Derby with "The White Rose" from Finsbury Park to York (24/2/01).

11 - 66031 ambles along the down goods line with a loaded rake of old style (HAA) MGR coal wagons bound for nearby Drakelow Power Station (2/3/02).

12 - 6233 "Duchess of Sutherland" bursts through from under the long station bridge like a rocket as she passes with VSOE stock en route from Derby to Gloucester (29/3/03).

13 - 66044 passes northbound with a different variety of freight, this time a freightliner (24/2/01).

14 - A HST bound for the north east roars through as one on a service for Birmingham and the south west arrives. Following a brief pause, power car no. 43178 departs with her Paxman Valenta engine deployed to maximum effect (2/3/02).

15 - After coming off the freight only Coalville line, two ex- GWR Pannier tanks, 7760 and 9600 hurry "The Ivanhoe" rail tour away from Burton towards Stenson Junction where it branched off towards the Midland Main Line and Leicester (2/3/02).

The Lickey Incline

16 - Easy does it, as first one HST and then another romp up the steep gradient as they pass Vigo bridge, which is about 2/3rds of the way up. 47 854 follows next, also with apparent ease. Finally, but certainly not least, D9000 powers up the grade in true "Deltic" fashion with "The Weymouth Wanderer" heading back to Lancaster after a visit to Dorset (16/6/01).

17 - On a warm early Autumn afternoon in the field next to Vigo Bridge, 4965 "Rood Ashton Hall" and 4953 "Pitchford Hall" are heard make good progress up the climb with a Newport to Barnt Green working (9/9/06).

18 - Unseasonably warm weather for March ensured hundreds of enthusiasts gathered in the field at Vigo all eager to witness the spectacle of steam working really hard. So many had turned up that many roads in the vicinity were blocked by parked cars and the local farmer deemed it worthwhile to go round his occupied fields with a bucket collecting money for charity ! The crowds were not disappointed as 6201 "Princess Elizabeth" made steady, majestic, progress up the grade with "The Double Lickey Banker" from Bristol to Solihull. Two pannier tanks, 7752 and 9600, are heard scurrying along at the rear towards the summit which was reached at just after 5pm (24/3/12).

19 - By way of contrast, just after 6 pm on 18/2/06, at the same location as the previous track, the freezing mist rises out of the waterlogged field on a cloudless but very cold night as 6201 is heard from afar attacking the climb. A class 170 dmu passes down the grade, horn blaring after which 6201's powerful exhaust becomes almost deafening in the cold darkness as she storms by with "The Midlander" rail tour and on towards the summit at Blackwell. 66175 brings up the rear.

Barnt Green

20 - An ailing 47634 rushes towards the Lickey Incline and Cheltenham with an express. It was a good job it was about to go down the Lickey rather than up ! (11/12/99).

Dorridge

21 - 34067 "Tangmere" sounds her distinctive Bullied / Southern Region whistle as she passes through with "The Excalibur Express" from Derby to Paddington (22/3/03).

Hartlebury

22 - A gardener is busy nearby with a strimmer as 4936 "Kinlet Hall" and 5029 "Nunney Castle" on "The Three Choirs Express" have been unexpectedly brought to a stand at the home signal protecting the level crossing, even though there was a clear way ahead through the station. After a very cursory stop the duo accelerate hard towards Droitwich Spa, Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester in true GWR fashion (4/10/08).

Kidderminster

23 - A Churchward designed Prairie tank no.4566 makes a sedate departure from Kidderminster (SVR) with a train for Bridgnorth (4/11/08).

24 - BR Standard 2-10-0 no. 92212 (double chimney) moves off onto Kidderminster (SVR) shed recreating a common sound of over 50 years ago (25/8/11).

Kettering

25 - Green liveried D6700 pulls up and after a brief pause departs light engine towards Leicester with a flourish of power (5/9/98).

26 - With platforms 1 and 2 packed full of enthusiasts, Royal Scot no. 46115 "Scots Guardsman" departs towards Corby after making history as the first of it's class to visit Kettering since the mid 1960's (9/11/14).

Rugby

27 - At 04.30 am on a cold platform 2 at Rugby a plane can be heard droning above before the compressor of a nearby AM10 / class 310 emu ticks over whilst waiting for the call to duty later in the day. "The Night Limited" sleeping car train from Glasgow rushes southbound after which "The Irish Mail" hauled by 86312 rolls into the characterful station. With the clock showing 04.53 86312 departs, quickly picking up speed as it heads southwards and later passes under the A5 and plunges into the icy cold Kilsby Tunnel. At over a mile in length it is an impressive structure with two massive ventilation shafts which give the impression of going through three separate tunnels. After exiting there would only be just over a mile before the nearby Watford Gap M1 motorway service station would be passed and the train would be "officially" in the south of England ! (29/12/83).

28 - Arrival on board a Blackpool North express hauled by 85019. As the driver waits for the "off" the well spoken station announcer's voice almost echoes under the cavernous roof in the cold night air. Eventually the 85 springs to life and departs into the night (29/12/83).

29 - A Rugby run through, on board a Birmingham New Street to Ramsgate train hauled by D9000 as it comes off the viaduct over the Trent Valley main line and negotiates the pointwork at both the north and south ends of Rugby station as it used to be. Listen carefully for the sound of the train passing the stanchions for the overall roof, now since removed. Later, as the "Deltic" passes through Kilsby Tunnel the ventilation shafts create gaps in the crescendo of sound (29/8/98).

Interlude

30 - On board an AM10 / Class 310 emu as it speeds away from Rugby on mostly double jointed track towards Northampton (10/5/86).

CD - 2

Nottingham

1 - HST power car , 43 073 , erupts into life ready to power a morning service to London, with only one scheduled stop, at Leicester. On board, the express glides out of Nottingham under Carrington Street and accelerates towards Trent Junction (25/1/03).

Stratford - upon - Avon

2 - With whistles sounding and swirling steam, two ex -GWR pannier tanks, 9600 and 7752 depart from Stratford on the next leg of "The Pannier Rambler" tour to Worcester Shrub Hill (3/11/12).

3 - "Deltic", D9000 arrives with the stock for the "East Coast Giants" rail tour and for a moment it sounds as if it could be Doncaster or Peterborough 30 years previously but this is Warwickshire in 2001. D9000 uncouples and passes by in order to back onto the front of the train for departure to York (7/4/01).

4 - In pouring rain, pannier tanks 9600 and 7752 create clouds of smoke as they cautiously depart up the grade to Wilmcote with another "Pannier Rambler" bound for Worcester (8/11/14).

Wilmcote

5 - Birds sing just before a class 150 "Sprinter" arrives and departs down the grade towards Stratford. As the sound fades into the distance, D9000 hauling a special to York (the same tour as in track 3) can be heard roaring up the 1 in 75 gradient and eventually powers through, shattering the peace of the halt after which the birdsong returns (7/4/01).

6 - Definitely in keeping with the station's GWR origins is this re-processed mono recording of pannier tank, 7752, accelerating out of Wilmcote past a platelayers hut and on towards Birmingham with a rail tour shuttle. As the train passes it sets off a donkey braying and it encountered more animals later in the form of cows on the line which caused the inevitable delay (13/5/73).

Nuneaton

7 - A first generation AC electric loco, 81010, roars into Nuneaton with a rake of Pullman coaches from Liverpool carrying well heeled supporters from Liverpool FC to Wembley where they met their local rivals Everton in the FA Cup Final and beat them 3-1. No sooner had the luxurious train departed the scene than 25265 and 25058 move off and then pass through the station (10/5/86).

8 - Pannier tanks, 9600 and 7752, depart from the new Birmingham and Leicester platforms with a tour from Tyseley to Leicester via the Coalville goods only line (19/11/11).

9 - On a cold March day, 6201 "Princess Elizabeth" stirs memories of many years ago as she storms through southbound with "The Doric Olympian" to Kensington Olympia. Within seconds, two Pendalinos tear through in opposite directions providing a timely comparison between old and new (6/3/10).

Corby

10 - On a windy August Bank Holiday Monday afternoon an ice cream van's chimes can be heard trying to tempt the residents of the nearby Pen Green estate before 37 197 is heard accelerating hard up the grade towards the Corby station site with the last of the day's "Harringworth Viaduct Shuttles" with 4965 "Rood Ashton Hall" on the rear (30/8/04).

11 - On a June evening next to the foreman's office inside the steel works, 37 077 "British Steel Shelton" and 37 095 "British Steel Teesside" are heard arriving on a coil train from Lackenby in Teesside. The driver leaves his charges for a well earned break and in a north eastern accent gives the small gathering of WEA students permission to "do what you like with them as long as you bring e'm back ready for going" (12/6/86).

12 - A quick peep inside the pipe works (1/5/86).

13 - Old BR Swindon built D9500 type 0-6-0 diesel hydraulic locos nicknamed "teddy bears" were used by the steel works and one is heard manoeuvring on the outskirts of Corby - a re-processed mono recording - (March 1978).

14 - On a Summer's evening in a garden in Gretton near Corby with a glorious view of the Welland Valley, a class 56 can be heard in the distance accelerating a freight towards Corby (12/6/86).

15 - The two 37's that arrived at Corby in track 11 are heard again later disturbing the birdsong as they leave Corby Tunnel and head past Gretton near Corby with the empties on their way back to Teesside (12/6/86).

Stafford

16 - 37407 "Blackpool Tower" makes a typically spirited departure from platform 5 with a Birmingham International to Holyhead service. 31 327 then glides south with a short freight (28/4/95).

17 - 56093 throbs her way south with a train load of tankers (30/11/96).

18 - 50031 "Hood" departs northwards for Blackpool with a special from Cardiff. A few minutes later, 66501 surges south with a freightliner (3/11/01).

19 - Thanks to the late Michael Timms and supporters, including engineer Chris Wayman, the use of preserved "Deltics" on the main line commenced in 1997 and heralded almost a second "Deltic" era. A significant part of this second period entailed D9000 "Royal Scots Grey" working normal service trains for Virgin Trains one of which is featured here arriving at platform 4 with the 09.10 from Edinburgh. Under the control of driver Alan Bun-Clark, D9000 departs with gusto and can be heard hard at work heading towards its next stop at Wolverhampton. Not long afterwards another English Electric machine, this time a class 37, powers through with a freight bound for the West Midlands (15/11/97).

20 - One of the most exciting days on the WCML in recent times occurred on Saturday 30/11/96 when 46229 "Duchess of Hamilton" ran from Euston to Glasgow. After being switched to the down fast south of Stafford 46229 positively roars through the centre road on her way northwards, to the delight of onlookers.

Loughborough

A place that could almost be called a "railway town" with a busy station on the Midland Main Line and the only double track preserved line in the country at the old Great Central station just up the road.

Midland

21 - Stanier pacific, 6233 "Duchess of Sutherland" arrives on the slow line at the back of the station. Amidst the sound of swirling steam a HST rushes through after which 6233 departs at a gentle pace. Despite the arrival of a northbound class 170 dmu and the sounds of enthusiasts the Duchess can then be heard for quite some time picking up speed as she heads southwards (8/12/01).

22 - Heavy freight has always been a feature of the MML and it is here exemplified by 60001 "Steadfast" as it powers northbound with a train of tanks. Soon afterwards, 60532 "Blue Peter" chased by a HST (!) makes good use of its whistle as it glides effortlessly along the slow line whilst working "The Midlander" from Crewe to Leicester and Peterborough (19/4/97).

Loughborough GC

23 - About half a mile away from the modern reality of the Network Rail tracks, it could almost be the early 1960's as 7821 "Ditchford Hall" makes a sure footed departure from Central station with a train to Leicester North (1/9/01).

Birmingham International

24 - A Virgin Voyager departs from platform 3 as A4 pacific, 60009 "Union of South Africa" brews up in the background ready to power "The Liver Bird" to Chester and Liverpool (2/3/02).

25 - On board a service to Holyhead hauled by 37407 "Blackpool Tower" prior to departure at Birmingham International. Although it is late April, the driver asks if the ETH is needed and after being assured it was not required he opens up 37407. It then proceeds through Marston Green and Lea Hall station on its way towards the first stop at New Street (28/4/95).

Marston Green

26 - 60009 powers through on "The Liver Bird" which was heard previously on track 24 at Birmingham International followed by an express passing through at caution and a plane taking off possibly for some exotic clime (2/3/02).

27 - An 87 whirrs through southwards and certainly does not appear to be intending to stop at nearby Birmingham International (2/3/02).

28 - It sounds as if it could be Surbiton in the mid 1960's as Merchant Navy, 35005 "Canadian Pacific" uses it's distinctive Bulleid whistle and accelerates northbound whilst standing in for A4 60009 on "The White Rose" to York (2/12/00).

29 - King class, 6024 "King Edward 1" runs through south with a whistle and just a support coach (9/12/00).

30 - After a King, an A4 and a Merchant Navy, it made a nice change to see a class of engine, a Black 5, which was an everyday sight at Marston Green up to the mid 1960's. The example of the class was 45407 and it is heard passing northwards on it's way to Crewe, Chester and Wrexham with a seasonal special (18/12/04).

Old Hill

31 - A4, 60009 "Union of South Africa" makes steady progress after coming round the bend and attacking the gradient through Old Hill station, whistling just as she enters the 896 yards tunnel on her way to Crewe with a rail tour (27/4/96).