

NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Professor Dugald Cameron OBE

May 2020 Newsletter



ELECTRIC LOAD

(photo : David Gray)

And now for something different ! David's striking photo above shows former NB / GEC Electric loco No 84009 (NB 27801) carrying Departmental Number ADB968021 at Ilford Car Sheds in Nov 1980. The Shenfield line from Liverpool Street was being converted from 6.25kV to 25kV and the loco was being used to load test the new power supply.

The AL4's were NBL's only electric locomotives for British Railways and ten were built at Hyde Park Works with GEC power equipment under Order No L91. They were originally numbered E3036 – E3045 but later became 84001 – 10 under the TOPS renumbering scheme. As prototype locomotives the class had a relatively short life and all were withdrawn in the 1970's and early 1980's.

Nos 84003 and 84009 survived for a while with the Research Division and 84001 was loaned to the National Railway Museum at York for temporary display. No 84009 finally succumbed after the Crewe Works Open Day in 1995 but one of the cabs has been privately preserved. No 84001 (NB 27793) led a charmed life and fortunately became part of the National Collection. It is currently on display at the Museum of Scottish Railways at Bo'ness.

Full details of the class can be found at : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Rail_Class_84

THE OLD ORDER(photos : www.colourrail.com)

In British Railways days, pre-grouping steam locomotives could be found in all parts of the system. When BR came into being in 1948 the London Midland Region alone inherited no less than 32 different classes that had been built by NBL and its constituents. We have covered some of their more famous types such as Jubilees, Royal Scots and 8F's before, so this time around we will take a brief look at some of the incredible variety of older locomotives to be found around the Midland Region in steam days.



No 43645 was a Dubs 3F locomotive dating from 1900, seen here at Upton on Severn in June 1956. Vast numbers of 0-6-0's of many types came British Railways stock in 1948 and this example lasted until 1963.

Crewe Works was famous for the antiquity of its shunters and many of them carried their old LMS numbers into the 1960's. These three former Lancashire & Yorkshire saddle tanks were built by Sharp Stewart in 1877 with No 11305 prominent. No 11456 of this type has survived and has been returned to steam in 2020.



The Midland Railway often relied on Neilson & Co (the forerunner of Neilson Reid) for their motive power and many of their engines were long lived. No 43219 was built in 1890 and is seen approaching Chinley North Junction with a coal drag in 1952, it lasted in service until July 1960.

Neilson & Co also built several batches of 0-4-4 Tank locomotives for the Midland from 1875 onwards for suburban and branch line working. No 58071, seen here at Ashchurch in 1954 was retired in July 1956.



The Johnson 2F's were introduced in 1878 and were exceptionally long lived. No 58271 was one of the last members of its class when pictured on railtour duty at Birmingham New Street in 1961.

Seen running into Bromsgrove station in 1955, 4P Class 4-4-0 No 41140 was built by NBL in 1925 to the pre-grouping Midland Compound design. It continued in service until replaced by BR Standard locomotives in May 1957. No 41000 of this type has been preserved as part of the National Collection.

The Benguela Railway (Portuguese : *Caminho de Ferro de Benguela (CFB)*), is a Cape Gauge line that runs through Angola from west to east from the Port at Lobito to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1899, the Portuguese government initiated the construction of the railway to give access to the central Angolan plateau and the mineral wealth of the then Congo Free State. A concession, running for 99 years, was granted to Sir Robert Williams in November 1902 and his *Benguela Railway Company* took over construction the following year. The line roughly follows the old trade routes from the ancient trading centre of Benguela and in its heyday, it was the shortest way to transport minerals from the Congo to Europe.



North British received several orders for locomotives from the CFB between 1910 and 1960 and until the early 1970s, the railway was operated entirely by steam, oil-fired from the coast to Cubal, and then wood-fired from Cubal to the interior. Wood was supplied by eucalyptus trees grown on company-owned tree plantations. Steam locomotives outnumbered diesels as late as 1987.



Many CFB locomotives were maintained in superb external condition and our photos show three North British examples in the latter days of steam : 9C Class 4-8-0 No 231 with a passenger train at Luso, 11th Class 4-8-2 No 405 with another passenger train at Luso and 9A No 208 gleaming in the sun at Luso in April 1970. **(Dick Manton Collection)**

The railway was under constant attack during the devastating Angolan civil war, which lasted for 27 years, with tracks torn up, bridges destroyed and locomotives wrecked. Much of the line reopened in August 2014 however, and it is believed that some steam locomotives have survived for a proposed museum. Very few visitors have ventured to Angola recently so any additional information would be greatly appreciated.

CERES SPECIAL

(notes & photos Rodney Towers)

In September 2019, NBLPG Member Rodney Towers joined a 3-day steam train round trip of 420 miles, operated by Ceres Rail from Cape Town up the South African West Coast. The purpose of what has become an annual Steam Special to Klaver to see the spring flowers. It turned out that the trip was two weeks too late to see the best flowers in that region as the actual dates depend upon the winter's rainfall and are always a bit different, but the weather was real sunny South Africa, and photographically the light was brilliant.

Ceres Rail's, 1948 NBL built, SAR Class 19D No. 3321 'Jessica' (NB 26041) hauled the train throughout without incident. depicting a preserved NBL loco really working in some magnificent South African environments. Photo 1 shows the West Coast Special crossing the Berg River northbound at Moravia Bridge



Next we see the locomotive working hard up Olifants Mountain Pass, northbound to Klaver and then 'Navigating a Yellow Sea' on the section through Canola lands south of Malmesbury.



Finally, we see No 3321 rounding the tight reverse curves at Rondomskrik and working through the Piketberg foothills in the Swartland region. **Many thanks to Rodney, for this superb selection of photos.**

In August 1975, a Grand Cavalcade was held at Shildon in County Durham to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the famous Stockton & Darlington Railway, the first railway ever to use steam locomotives. Of the 30 odd locomotives taking part, a surprising number had been built by North British but unfortunately on the big day, the public viewing gallery was sighted on the wrong side for the sun ! After a mad car chase, I managed to capture most of the engines running light back to Darlington after the event.



Several unusual pairings ran past including WD 2-10-0 No 600 'Gordon' (NB 24537) hauling Metropolitan electric locomotive 'Sarah Siddons'. Next came the LNER design 'twins' 62005 (NB 26601) and 61306 'Mayflower' (NB 26207) followed by GWR Pannier No 7752 (NB 24040) and the globe-trotting 8F (NB 24607) at that time in LMS livery. The day was concluded by the last built 9F No 92220 'Evening Star'.





We are very grateful to NBL Member Mark Meyts for sending in this superb photograph of Western Railway of India H Class 4-6-0 No 24306 at Baroda shed in 1976. The engine was built at Hyde Park Works in 1922 (NB 22911) and was one of 20 4-6-0's built for the Bombay & Baroda Railway on Order L763. North British received no less than 274 orders for locomotives from India including 90 batches of 4-6-0's !

Good news from the Southwold Railway is that replica 3ft gauge Sharp Stewart 2-4-0T 'Blyth' is to get a sister. A scheme has been launched by the Halesworth & Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society to build a replica of classmate No 2 'Halesworth'. It will be a genuine 'Sharpie' as the HSNGRS co-Chairman owns the rights to the Sharp Stewart Company name. The two original locomotives were SS Works Nos 2849 & 2850 of 1879 but both were withdrawn in 1929 when the line closed and were scrapped in 1941.

And finally : we are very grateful to Steve Frost for pointing that Sir William Gray (NBL B1 61189) was far from being a 'man named after an engine'. He was a director of the LNER and head of a major ship building company with two yards in the Hartlepool area and their own marine engine works. In the early 20th Century the firm held the Blue Riband for the largest tonnage of shipping built of any UK yard. One of his LNER vessels, the paddle steamer 'Wingfield Castle' is preserved in original condition at the Museum of Hartlepool. We are very grateful to Steve for this important information.



**Thank you all once again for your continued support, stay safe out there !
More news to follow next month, Best Regards, Ken**

MEMBERSHIP & INFORMATION

If you would like to comment on our preservation activities or would like further information on any of our projects, please contact our Secretary Ken Livermore by letter or by e:mail. NBL related Photos can be uploaded direct to our Facebook page at : <https://www.facebook.com/NorthBritishLocomotives>

New Members and Supporters are always welcome and funds are urgently needed for all our projects. Please join us and help to preserve North British locomotives from around the World. Our Website Address is : www.nbloco.co.uk Please send items for the website to Dave Fox at : webmaster@nbloco.co.uk

Remember, **there is no annual Membership Fee**, just a one-off joining fee of £10 which will give you regular news updates and the option to participate in our locomotive preservation projects. All donations and membership fees will be acknowledged in writing. For further details, please email our Hon. Secretary : ken.livermore@btinternet.com

If you would like to join us or make a donation, please complete the form below and send it to : Ken Livermore, **Hon. Secretary, NBL Preservation Group, 4 Porchfield Close, Earley, Reading, Berks, RG6 5YZ.** Alternatively, you can make a direct Bank Transfer to the NBL Preservation Group, Barclays Bank, **Account Number 03113302 Sort Code 20-71-03** (please email to advise if you use this option)

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