

# **SYPHON!**

**The Official Magazine of the Class 37 Locomotive Group**



**ISSUE 118**  
**January - March 2004**

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### The Class 37 Locomotive Group

#### Committee and contact addresses

This committee was co-opted by the groups previous officials and not by an election of the membership. This was due to exceptional circumstances as many of the previous committee members resigned or 'took a back seat' due to personal commitments. Only Michael Ratledge (Sales rep at the time) remained active. The following committee positions are therefore provisional and will all become vacant at the next Annual General Meeting. It is worth noting though that we intend to put ourselves forward for re-election in our current positions at the next AGM and that without our continued efforts, the group might never have got back on its feet after over a year in oblivion. It would not be fair to apportion blame to any individual for their lack of activity in the last year or so as all those involved are unpaid volunteers with their own lives outside the group.

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Subscriptions, general enquiries and any 'gen' for inclusion on our website [www.c37lg.co.uk](http://www.c37lg.co.uk) should be sent to Mick Parker.

If you have any submissions for 'SYPHON!', send them to Michael Ratledge. Articles sent via email should be sent in MS Word format and pictures as JPEG's. Bigger files of 1Mb or higher should be copied onto CD or Zip Disk and sent in the post. Include a S.A.E. if you would like your submissions returned.

If you wish get 'hands on' and play a part in the restoration of the groups locomotive, 37003, get in touch with our techy bloke, Phil. No skills are required and Phil is bound to come up with something you can do.



COVER PHOTO:  
**37402 'Bont Y Bermo' storms away  
from Rhymney on 6th July 2002  
with the 1715 to Cardiff Central.**

*Michael Ratledge*



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## **Editorial and Group News**

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Welcome to my first issue of SYPHON! as Editor. This issue comes to you after a gap of almost 18 months since our last publication. Hopefully the previous page will go some way to explaining the lack of information dropping through your letterboxes since then. We had hoped to get this issue to you by the end of November 2003 but the following information had to be kept under wraps until now.

By the time you read this, the groups locomotive, 37003, will have arrived at its new home at Leeming Bar on the Wensleydale Line in the Yorkshire Dales. The C37LG signed an agreement with the Wensleydale Railway Association on 4th January 2004 laying the foundation for the groups long term future. 37003 will see regular use on the line including timetabled passenger workings along the 21 mile stretch between Castlehills Junction and Redmire, from Easter 2004. In the meantime, '003 will be used on engineers trains and further use on revenue earning freight is also a possibility.

This has been no easy task as I will now explain. The decision to move from the East Anglian Railway Museum in the early hours of 27th January 2004 was a tricky one in the circumstances but the officials and advisors of the C37LG felt that it was the only way out of a worsening situation.

The fortunes of both the C37LG and the EARM had changed since the loco was purchased and moved to the museum in 1998. As part of our agreement, half the rent for housing the 37 at Chappel has been held in abeyance, repayable once the loco is earning money in service. According to the EARM, this debt stood at over £2000 when we moved. The EARM had lost out on the opportunity to run services outside the station limits at Chappel due to dramatic changes in the railway industry. One of the major incentives for bringing '003 to Chappel was that we would be hauling trains between Marks Tey and Sudbury. Whilst we understand that this is not the EARM's fault, it is extremely unlikely that our loco would ever make enough money there to pay off our debt's at the museum unless we moved her.

Difficulties within our committee meant that

membership renewals suffered and we stopped taking on new members as we felt we could not justify the fee. This meant we did not have enough money to pay the rent. We advised the museum that we wished to move and came up with a reasonable payment plan. This was rejected. At one point, a museum official suggested the loco might be seized and that this had happened with another groups rolling stock in the past. We were given the impression that the EARM would not settle for anything less than this. We decided that we would have to move the loco without telling the museum. Our agreement lapsed in April 2003 so the museum had no hold on our property and had we advised them of our intentions to move before settling our debts we felt certain that our loco would be blocked in and we would be unable to recover it.

Whilst we accept that this was slightly underhand from the EARM's point of view, we saw no other way of securing the future of our locomotive, which past and current members and committee officials have worked so hard to save. Had we conducted a poll of the membership on this issue, the EARM would certainly have been alerted of our intentions. In simple terms, we had to remove our own loco or risk losing it. The current committee hope that you, the members of the C37LG will accept this unfortunate situation and continue to support the committee in this difficult decision. We stand by this decision and are adamant that our constitution does not rule it out.

We are now in a much better position to raise funds through use of the locomotive to settle our debt and invest in the loco using membership fees and through other fundraising events. All this means that we now hope to get the next issue of this magazine out to you at the end of March.

In this issue, you will notice that most of the articles and photographs are by myself but now the group membership is almost back to full strength we hope more contributions will come to us and add a bit more variety to the next magazine. See you all out on the bash!

**MICHAEL RATLEDGE**

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## Restoration Update

During the last 6 months work on 37003 has concentrated on getting the diesel engine up and running.

Our volunteers included Andy Easom, Tim Easter, Dean Gibbs, Stuart Gray, David Lugg, Phil Lynch, John Pinion, Steve Pizzey, Mick Ratledge, Jon Sharkey, Tim Snowball and Chris Thorne. Further valuable assistance was received from Peter Martin of the EARM and staff at Thornaby TMD.

**37003 in Chappel shed on 4th January 2004**  
*Michael Ratledge*



Our first jobs were to source and fit all the missing pipe work for the power unit cooling and oil systems. This was no easy task as whilst cataloguing what was required we discovered several pipes were cut or damaged. After a lengthy search and several days of hard work, we acquired all the necessary pipes. These were fitted over the course of several working parties and new gaskets and hoses were fitted where necessary. We then proceeded to fill the cooling system with water to check for any leaks and also to ascertain if any liner seals were faulty. Liner seals keep the jacket of water that goes around the cylinder liners from entering the oil and the engine sump. Bar one or two leaks on the hoses and a fractured pipe which subsequently gave way almost drowning one of the volunteers, no further problems on the cooling side could be found.

Our attention next turned to installing 120 gal-

lons of new oil into the sump; this was done by means of a hired electric oil transfer pump. The oil system was primed up using the on board electric priming pump in order to provide lubrication to one of the ceased pistons, it transpired that the piston in question was stuck more solidly than what was originally thought, so it was decided to try to unseat it using fuel oil (red diesel), this entailed filling the turbo's with the fuel continuously until we were sure that the fuel was contained in the bore which had seized. It was left for a little over a week to penetrate and on our return we started the long hard task of baring the engine backwards and forwards until eventually it could be barred over fully in one direction. Once we had successfully unseized the piston we felt it necessary to continually bar the engine over a dozen revolutions in order to ensure the piston was able to move freely in the liner.

After the saga with the diesel fuel, it was found that it had passed behind the piston rings and into the oil, this was a disaster as it meant the oil had to be changed yet again and the system had to be thoroughly cleaned before refilling with fresh oil. With the oil changed, water in the system, a freely moving engine and some fuel in the tanks an attempt to start the engine was made.

Although the charge that we had put into the original batteries was sustained, it did not provide enough amps to turn the engine over, so we bowed to the inevitable and ordered a new set of batteries and although a really good deal was struck with monthly payments the batteries still cost over £2,000.00. Whilst awaiting the delivery of the batteries, attention was turned to other areas. The whole loco was tidied out and all surplus items that were not perishable were cast outside of the loco. The cabs received a clean and number 2 end had some missing items returned to it. The locomotive lighting circuits are proving to be a pain owing to the light switch panels being cut out prior to purchase. Identifying cables is a momentous task without the proper equipment.

The electrical cubical has received some atten-

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tion from Stuart Gray where all the contact tips and auxiliary contacts have been cleaned. During this operation it was found that the generator field contactor (GFC) was missing one of its auxiliary contacts, which in turn enabled transfer of power to the motor contactors. Owing to the lack of this type of contactor in our spares being a scratch built set of contacts were made up from strips of copper sheet.

The main generator, which was filthy with oil and carbon deposits, had all the accessible surfaces cleaned toughly and a coat of anti track pain applied. The brush boxes were removed and cleaned, and all the brushes checked for freedom of movement.

The batteries duly arrived on the 18<sup>th</sup> October and the two battery fitters and Phil spent the day swapping the cells over. A few quick tests were carried out to ensure all was well, then the oil and fuel systems were primed and finally over five years since the loco was purchased, the start button pressed. After several revolutions, 37003's power unit (ex 37073) spluttered and then sprang into a life. This was witnessed by the driver of the incoming Marks Tey - Sudbury shuttle who passed his joyful congratulations to one of the Museums regular volunteers.

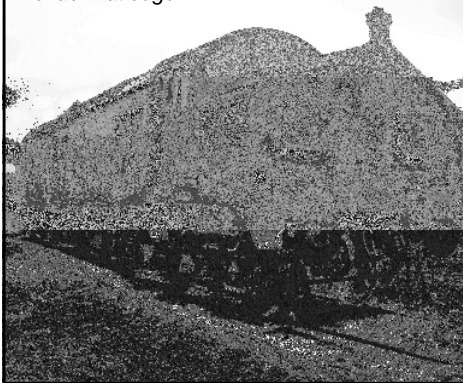
The power unit was subsequently shut down, checks were made and it was restarted several more times during which time a list of tasks of items to be rectified were drawn up. On this list of tasks the engine run solenoid (an electrical solenoid which sets the fuel rack to idle when starting the engine up) was found to be seized as the engine would not continue to run without manual intervention on the fuel rack. This item was removed, cleaned and tested and then refitted, the engine now successfully runs unaided.

Several of the brake air pipes were cut to make way for the buffer beam skirts which were refitted a few years ago by Mike Millward. These pipes were reinstated courtesy of our plumbing expert, Chris Thorne. Attention was turned to adjusting the brakes, which were found to be so slack that the brake rigging had to be partially dismantled and rebuilt and a broken stretcher bar was also changed. A team of three people removed, stripped down, cleaned

and rebuilt the brake cylinders; No 2 end cab has received a new roof hardboard headlining courtesy of David Lugg's carpentry skills. The engine was again started up, the air was built up successfully, and an attempt to obtain power was made. A nominal 300 amps was successfully achieved, however, it was apparent that the engine was not running up as it should do under load, this was traced to a stuck air speed valve on the governor which was worked free cleaned and lubricated. A further attempt for power proved a success. Both master controllers have subsequently been set up to factory settings.

**37003 prior to entering the shed at Chappel for a repaint.**

*Michael Ratledge*



Work over the weeks following the Christmas break concentrated on finishing the rewiring of the light switch panel, refitting of the brush boxes after a much needed clean and the sourcing and fitting of the few outstanding items for the radiator fan drive. Once this work was complete all the rotten areas of bodywork were cut out and replaced with new sheet steel and just before our departure from Chappel '003 received a full repaint into BR Corporate Blue. A full set of headcode blinds, donated by Chris Guntripp, will soon be fitted.

Once we are settled in at our new home we will be able to thoroughly test our locomotives ability and find out exactly where her strengths and weaknesses lie. This is where the difficult part starts.

**PHIL LYNCH**

**Its time for the welcome return of.....**

## **My Top Ten!** **(And a bit)**

### **Words and pictures Michael Ratledge**

Looking through my old issues of SYPHON! for inspiration was a very enjoyable experience. I have to admit though that my favourite regular feature was always 'My Top Ten'. I submitted a top ten to the Editor back in 1992 but, alas, it was never published. I never did keep a copy of it so I've scanned my old movesbooks all over again and now I'm editing SYPHON! I figured there was nothing stopping me this time (cue maniacal laughter!). So then, here is 'My Top Ten'.

I have selected the following workings not just for the performance but also for the memories that they evoke. I have listed them in date order bar the last entry which sort of beats the rest as my all time favourite 37 bash but all of them are particularly memorable in their own special way.

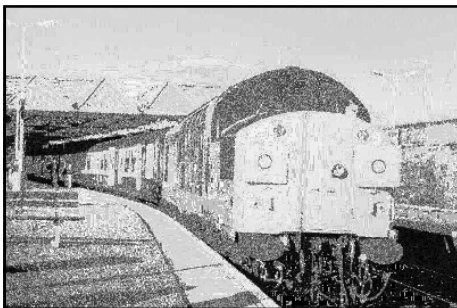
#### 37227 2024 Wolverhampton - Euston. 6<sup>th</sup> February 1988

I'll start with this one-off drag which occurred after overhead problems forced a diversion via Nuneaton. Luckily '227 was the only loco available when the pan came down on 87010 at New Street. What polished this off though was that on arrival at Nuneaton, with no shunter available and a green light at the end of platform 4, the driver opened her up and we were RA down the Trent Valley to Rugby. Many cranks appeared at Rugby for a potential return working but 37227 went light to Saltley and normal service was resumed.

#### 37088 1808 Montrose - Perth. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1990.

(Photograph below at Dundee)

Not noted for its performance, I picked this working for personal reasons. Late running saw the need to shunt this train into the bay at Dundee and whilst most punters were detained while this happened, I remained on the train for reasons which I couldn't possibly print here!



#### 37156 1530 Inverness - Wick & 1944 Wick - Inverness. 6<sup>th</sup> July 1990.

(photograph above at Helmsdale)

In the morning, nothing much was happening except that 37416 had worked the 0655 Inverness - Kyle vice sprinter. 37152 did a return trip across the top but this was flagged when we were told

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that '416 had failed at Kyle. The only loco available for the 1135 from Kyle was 37156 which was at Tain on a ballast working. A phone call to the station chargeman at Kyle confirmed this and by the time we knew about it, all we could do was a plastic to Garve for 156 back. Afterwards, we managed to get to Forres for '152 back into Inverness and to our amazement, there was no sprinter available for the 1530 to Wick so 37156 was used for that too. This was an excellent present for what was my 17th Birthday.

37174 1612 Hereford - Paddington & 1812 Paddington - Hereford. 15<sup>th</sup> July 1990.

(photograph below at Hereford)

The NSE 47 for this train seemed to burst on prep' on a startlingly regular basis! With a failure booked for the day in question I made my way to Hereford. Even the rescue didn't go smoothly though. At Hereford it was learned that 47598 had indeed expired on start-up (funny that!) and standby loco 37712 would be working the train. Alas, this was not to be! 37712 failed to start and a second rescue engine was despatched from Newport in the form of Large Logo Blue 37174. There were fifteen 37's and one 47 at Newport to choose from so no flap was necessary when '712 'combusted'. On arrival at Oxford, a replacement 47 was found to take the train forward and 37174 made its way to the north end of the station to go back to Hereford. Suddenly the driver changed ends and left Oxford in the other direction, following the train it had just brought in. It turned out that the 1812 Paddington - Hereford had also failed at Reading and after an hour or so '174 arrived with the errant train in tow. I had her back to Great Malvern and went home to avoid the rancid overnight in Hereford.



37101 0611 Stonehaven - Inverness. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1990.

Memorable because several people were on their way north on the Inverness beds for this as it was allocated to work the 1030 Inverness - Aberdeen afterwards. It did do the train but it was dead in tow, thus withering those who'd turned up for it.

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37128 0750 Inverness - Kings Cross. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1990.

After overdossing on the first train from Aberdeen (37421) and missing 37261 on the first train in the other direction, I arrived at Inverness to be greeted by the sight of 37128 on the front of the Highland Chieftain HST. An odd working due to the fact that both power cars appeared to be working. 37128 was detached at Perth and 37261 was bashed on the 1423 Inverness - Aberdeen later that day.

37407 & 37423 0010 Inverness - Glasgow. 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1990.

The internal overnights occasionally dropped a tractor in 1990 and 37407 was attached to the train at Inverness. To my surprise, '423 was added at Perth and the pair were had via Ladybank, over the Forth Bridge and then via Dalmeny and Winchburgh Junction and along the E&G mainline, down to Cumbernauld and ending up at Cowlairs facing east again! 47644 was attached to the rear and took us down the bank into Queen Street.

37425 1648 Manchester Victoria - Barrow in Furness & 1909 Barrow in Furness - Manchester Victoria. 20<sup>th</sup> October 1990.

Although this was the 'North West Farce Day', service trains were used to offer haulage behind classic traction. Having had 37422 to Barrow earlier in the day, 37425 took up the duty in the afternoon. Somewhere out there is a video of this engine leaving Barrow with a 'V' of flame emitting from the exhausts. Hellfire!

37146 0855 Plymouth - Manchester. 7<sup>th</sup> July 1991.

Notable for the fact that I dropped onto it out of nowhere. I was on my way home from Scotland and as I sat in my train at Stafford, 37146 pulled in with a HST in tow. I leapt off and ran across the footbridge, only just making it. Once on board I was told that the train would be terminating at Crewe. I only recently found out what the service was and that the 37 came on at Gloucester. As with my move on 37227 mentioned earlier, a couple of people rushed across to witness the 37's arrival at Crewe only to watch the shunter detaching it from the train.

And finally.....

37176 & 37428 0940 Euston - Aberystwyth & 1505 Aberystwyth - Euston. 6<sup>th</sup> August 1988.

Simply the best all round experience of travel behind 37's in my humble opinion. Although '428 was on the train, you wouldn't have thought so as 37176 was drowning it out quite severely. Always one for spewing out masses of thick black clag, it was as if 37427 had been renumbered '176 just for the day. I was stunned in disbelief when some bashers got of at Mach' on the return to go for the 1505 Pwllheli - Euston which was 37185 & 37278, the same pair that had worked it the week before. This was the last working of 37176 prior to it entering Crewe Works for refurbishment. It emerged a few months later as 37883 and is currently on hire in Spain.

So that's the ten that made it. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your point of view), I like writing so much that I felt like sharing with you a few more bashes that narrowly missed my top ten. Here we go again.

37008 & 37095 0740 Euston - Pwllheli & 1505 Pwllheli - Euston. 28<sup>th</sup> May 1988.

This was notable for the huge seminar at Dovey Junction on the return as a sprinter failure near Machynlleth caused the usual weekly Cambrian farce.

37230 New St - Nuneaton drags. 9<sup>th</sup> October 1988.

I believe 37230 worked ten trains on this day including the Euston - Fort William sleeper. I had her on six drags, three each way.

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37427 2203 Euston - Pwllheli. 18<sup>th</sup> May 1990.

In the early hours of the 19<sup>th</sup> this train stood on the curve at Abbey Forge outside Shrewsbury as booked to wait for the Cambrian line to open at 4am. A few cranks got board and did a ballast leap for pizza's but when they returned to the train found five police cars at the bottom of the embankment. They still managed to get back on and the best the 'feds' could come up with was "Stop picking your nose!".

37170 1712 Dundee - Montrose. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1990.

I enjoyed leaping down from Aberdeen for this train. It involved a brisk walk along the seaside between Carnoustie and Golf Street stations.

37410 1035 Fort William - Mallaig & 1245 Mallaig - Fort William. 1<sup>st</sup> September 1990.

A 37 vice a sprinter for the last few Summer Saturdays in 1990. I also had '410 on this diagram later that month. The LNER Tourist Green and Cream Mk1 set were used.

37425 1400 Manchester Piccadilly - New St. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1990.

The day after its top ten appearance, 'Bob' was rostered to this service with 87101 replacing it at Stafford. It didn't join the previous days performance simply for the fact that memories of the three fat naked people in a Mk2a toilet will haunt other cranks on board forever!

37219 0942 Leeds - Yarmouth. 29<sup>th</sup> June 1991.

Always a good performer on these services. It's a shame I never had 37140 which I'm told was a clag monster.

37156 & 37408 0650 Kyle - Inverness. 6<sup>th</sup> July 1991.

Having been woken up by a heavily pregnant woman in a strange B&B I don't remember booking into and remembering nothing about the previous night, I waddled down to the station to find two 37's on the 0650, when only one had worked the last nights train into Kyle. Another bizarre birthday treat.

37013, 37023, 37114, 37116 & 37165 Mercia Charters 'The Tiberius Kirk' Railtour. Northampton - Fort William & Oban - Rugby. 23 - 24<sup>th</sup> July 1999. (Photograph below at Tulloch)

A truly preposterous two days! I was a steward in the leading coach on the outward trip. Amongst other duties, this involved changing the headboard and standing around in Mossend Yard waiting for the second pair to turn up at 3am. The loco of the day had to be 37114 with its performance out of Oban on load 12. As it turned out, the failure of 37023 outside Tulloch was the best thing that could have happened. This failed to make the top ten because it was a Railtour.



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37503 0450 Edinburgh - Fort William. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2000.

Whilst on a normal holiday, I was making my way home on the 0735 Fort William - Glasgow plastic when we passed the very late running northbound Sleeper at Tyndrum Upper. 37419 had failed at Springburn and had been topped by 37503. My holiday was extended by some 5 or 6 hours as I leapt off and went back to The Fort.

**Failures & Disappointments** - just three of them.37421 2305 Aberystwyth - Machynlleth ECS. 10<sup>th</sup> May 1991.

Having been able to travel on the above ECS all week to avoid a crap bedless overnight in Aberystwyth, our hopes to get on this train that night were scuppered by a desperate guard. We couldn't find a taxi to share so we decided to walk to Borth where we did find a taxi to take us onto Mach'. No doss, and six hours and several blisters later, we arrived just in time to have 421 back to Aber' on the 0620.

37405 0450 Edinburgh - Fort William. 10<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

(Photograph right approaching Corroul)

I managed to sleep through the former 'Strathclyde Region slipping to a stand before reaching Helensburgh Upper that morning. When I woke, the train was already setting back towards Craigendoran Junction where we stood for four and a half hours waiting for 37427 to come and rescue us. The traincrews inability to multi the locos up properly meant '427 struggled up the bank alone, with '405 dead in tow. It was only failed due to lack of sand and was still running. 37427 managed about 300 slips going up to Glen Douglas at walking pace and on arrival at Fort Bill, a little interference from me meant the control air pipes were connected properly and the following night's southbound beds had twice the power as normal.

37401 0450 Edinburgh - Fort William. 25<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

(Photograph right at Eastfield)

I managed two firsts for myself on the above train. A TPWS fault on 37401 lead to us become the first passenger carrying train to stop at the new Edinburgh Park station and after many other faults were uncovered, we ended up being shunted off the mainline at Eastfield and into one of the old loops where we equalled the fester above of four and a half hours. As a member of staff I offered my assistance which enabled me to take the accompanying picture.

**At Work: The ones I got paid for!**

Here are five moves that don't count in the conventional sense but are still worthy of mention. I am yet to sign 37's as a driver - Wensleydale pending.

37422 & 37676 1906 Bletchley - Peak Forest. 11<sup>th</sup> November 1989.

Whilst on a Railway Training Scheme placement at Northampton, I saw my mate, a Crewe driver who was travelling passenger to Bletchley to work the above train. I asked him to pick me up on the way back for the ride home to Rugby. Lots of bellowing from the cab with '422 leading.

37197 Lickey Banker. 12 - 13<sup>th</sup> September 1990.

Another RTS job, this time riding out with Saltley men. We managed to bank 7 freights in as many hours - wide open! I also rode out with traincrews on 37201 & 37203 working this job.

37075 0930 Saltley - Langley Green trip. 21<sup>st</sup> September 1990.

This was the first loco I actually did anything but ride on. Enough said!

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37413 0918 New St - Tyseley ECS & 1020 Tyseley - New St ECS. 5<sup>th</sup> October 1995.

Shortly after passing out as a driver at New Street, I had to learn the road to Tyseley. 37413 was a regular on the Cardiff - Birmingham turn at the time and had to go to Tyseley to run round.

37413 Stud Farm - Northampton Castle Yard ballast. 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1996.

By this time I was renting a flat in Northampton. I did the can from New Street to Rugby to have a chat with my old work mates there and intended to catch the following unit forward to Northampton. Anyway, due to excessive gibbering I missed the unit and Driver Alan Finch offered me a lift on his ballast train. With my flat being situated close to the yard, I had '413 right to my doorstep.



# SYPHON! PICTORIAL

*Fots - just for the hell of it!*







## Upstairs, downstairs



Here are two views of 37409 at Glasgow Queen Street. Above, we see her waiting to depart from the High Level station with the 1810 Fort William - London Euston on 8th March 1988. Below is a more unusual picture of the loco in the Low Level platforms with the 0900 from Fort William on 8th July 1992.

*Al Pulford and Michael Ratledge*



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## **Membership Drive and Fundraising**

If you know someone you think would like to join the Class 37 Locomotive Group why not invite them to join by filling in this form and sending it to the address at the bottom. Alternatively, a subscription would make an ideal birthday present. Membership rates are on the form.

If you don't want to spoil your copy of SYPHON! a photocopy will be sufficient or you can download and print the form on our website at [www.c37lg.co.uk/form.htm](http://www.c37lg.co.uk/form.htm) .

Other forms of fundraising are being looked into by the committee at present including competitions and a raffle prize draw such as the ones operated by other groups.

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### **Class 37 Locomotive Group Membership Application Form**

NAME  
ADDRESS

POSTCODE

EMAIL ADDRESS (required for online members area)

HOME PHONE NUMBER

MOBILE PHONE NUMBER

MEMBERSHIP FEES (Please tick as appropriate)

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ADULT (16yrs or older)          | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year £15.00   |
|                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years £60.00  |
| JUNIOR                          | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year £10.00   |
|                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years £40.00  |
| FAMILY (2 Adults and 2 Juniors) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year £40.00   |
|                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years £160.00 |

SIGNED:

DATE:

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Please send this form to:

Membership Secretary

Class 37 Locomotive Group  
60 Babylon Lane  
Anderton  
Nr Chorley  
Lancashire PR6 9NW

#### **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

As part of the Data Protection Act, Please be advised that some of the information given on this form will be held on computer file. The information is for group purposes ONLY and no details will be given to any third parties.

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## **Class 37's on the Cambrian Coast – Summer 1988**

**By Michael Ratledge**

**All photographs by John Dawson**

**37682 & 37683 prepare to leave Aberystwyth with the 1010 to London Euston on 28th May 1988.**



Wales. We English are always giving the place a bit of stick. If it weren't for good old Cymru, however, many of us wouldn't have fond memories of spending endless Summer Saturdays bashing 37's on the Marches Line and of course, the Cambrian Coast. Believe me, when you're only 15 years old and you've only got a paper round that pays peanuts (sorry Mr Pywell), Scottish Tractors are a very long way away.

Affectionately called 'The Toilet' by my colleagues, The Cambrian stretches across Mid – Wales from Sutton Bridge Junction, outside Shrewsbury, to Machynlleth. Just beyond 'Mach' is Dovey Junction – or Tubby Junction, according to my better half – where the line splits – going south along cardigan Bay to Aberystwyth, and to Pwllheli in the North.

A Class 37 first ventured onto the Cambrian on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1978 when 37223 worked an excursion to Pwllheli from Stroud. It was not until the summer of 1985 that the class gained regular work, and then only to Aberystwyth when they took over from the Class 25's. A pair and two singles were diagrammed. In 1986, 37/4's arrived on the line with the occasional early '5' appearing in 1987.

Personally, my fondest memories of the Cambrian are the twenty Summer Saturdays of 1988. This was the final year of no heat operation on the line.

Saturday diagrams from 21<sup>st</sup> May were as follows:

2x37/5	1J18	0620 Birmingham New St – Aberystwyth
	1A44	1010 Aberystwyth – Euston (to Wolverhampton)
2x37/0	1J19	0740 Euston – Pwllheli (from Shrewsbury)
	1A34	1505 Pwllheli – Euston (to Wolverhampton)
2x37/4	1J32	0940 Euston – Aberystwyth (from Shrewsbury)
	1A74	1525 Aberystwyth – Euston (to Shrewsbury)

The two 37/4's came off the morning Aberystwyth / Pwllheli – Euston services and one of them returned West with the 1540 Euston – Aberystwyth. The Saturdays excepted 1048

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Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth and 1309 return were hauled for a few weeks during the middle of the summer too.

Most weekends started with everything where it was meant to be. A few people would set out from their homes on a Friday evening and converge on New St. The move was to do the last Euston – Wolves and Fester in New St concourse buffet, only to get chucked out at 2am when the cleaners arrived. One week, 24<sup>th</sup> September, there was - how should I put it? – a 'riot' involving a full 2 litre bottle of Coke and a game of two halves on the concourse. We all got thrown out of the station at 4 O'clock. Oh no! Had we endured a rancid overnight for nothing? How would we get back on the station for the 0620?

There was only one solution. We hurried back to Moor St car park, took a fast car to Wolverhampton and caught the 0554 Euston back into New St. All this just to avoid the barrier. We had a 'plus 5' onto the 0620 so there was nothing to worry about. In the end it didn't matter anyway because everyone else managed to trickle onto the station one by one. A lot of flapping for nothing.

That particular morning I had 37676 & 37688 to Newtown and 37430 back to Salop on the first Aber – Euston. The second pair were 37015 & 37174. '174 had worked this train on the previous two weekends with 37101 but '015 was a newey. These locos were booked to come light engine from Worcester after spending Friday banking on the Lickey. It was quite normal to know what was going to work this diagram early in the week, you just had to keep an eye on the Lickey bankers.

Throughout the summer many of the 37/0's appeared more than once. Of particular note was 37215, now in the capable hands of the Growler Group. It went to Pwllheli for five consecutive weeks. On 25<sup>th</sup> June, it was paired with another now preserved loco – 37029. It then had two weeks with 37185, followed by 37062, an early withdrawal. Finally, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, it was paired with 37251, 'The Seaside Engine', so-called because it had been to all corners of the Country during 1988.





**37062 & 37215 at Shrewsbury with the 0740  
London Euston - Pwllheli on 16th July 1988.**

Three other locos to appear that summer were scrapped relatively early. The first two were 37008 & 37096. On 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the latter was paired with 37372, which had worked part of the Cardiff – Manchester diagram seven days earlier. This was a relief to those who missed it. I'd scooped 37084 on the first Manchester but that didn't appear on the toilet. 37008 worked to Pwllheli with 37095 on the second weekend. This was the only split-box pair that year.

The third was Buxtons' 37681 which did the first Aber with 37686. All but one of the Buxton 37/5's turned up on this turn, 37676 – 686/8; the exception being 37687 which eventually worked a 'farce day' about a year later. 37013 was out of place with 37676 on 2<sup>nd</sup> July while 37380 turned up on three separate occasions. 37684 was undoubtedly the winner with seven appearances.

The best move, for maximum mileage, was to do the 0620 to Aberystwyth and back on the 1010 to Newtown. This is where you were booked to pass the other NB pair on 1J19. You could then go to Pwllheli and back to Wolves on this pair, totally flagging the ETH diagram, for a colossal 811 engine miles. Over twenty days that's more than 16000 miles! I only did this move for six of the twenty weekends because at the time, I was a bit partial to 37/4's.

As far as I am aware, only one person managed the maximum. There would've been another but he was extremely unlucky at Newtown one week. More about that later.

When I didn't have the energy (or the money) to do the overnight for the 0620, which was usually the case, I would stick to the following moves. I would leave my home station of Rugby on the 0724 to Coventry, which was a 310 or 317. At Coventry I would usually bump into some mates from my days of bashing 50's. They would be there to view the 0603 Paddington – Manchester. This was a 50 as far as Cov. It was then booked to go light engine to New St and they would have it on the 0835 Liverpool – Penzance from New St later in the morning.

When we'd had our weekly gossip I would get on the Pwllheli here and spread out in a compo at the back of the train. My mates usually got on at New St and we would be in pole position at Shrewsbury when the Tractors came on.

The Euston – Pwllheli was booked an 86 as far as Wolverhampton and a 47/4 to Salop. Things didn't always go to plan however. On three occasions the 47 was a no heat example. 47052, 47226 & 47327 all worked the train. The 86 was fairly solid, with the odd 'roaring device' appearing now and then.

At Shrewsbury the train would be met by scores of enthusiasts waiting to see if they were going to scoop some new engines. A majority of them would travel as far as Welshpool and bail out for the Buxton pair to Wolves. On the first weekend the Metro Enterprises lads were out in force at Welshpool with copies of the new Diagram Book 'Loco-Hauled Travel 1988'. They must have made a packet that morning.

A few brave soldiers would risk the 'plus 0' at Newtown for the extra mileage. I did this a few times and after a lot of flapping, I actually made it every time. This mad rush quickly became known as the 'Newtown Grab'. I haven't got a clue why.

Leaving the 37/0's behind for now, we would do the 5's back to Shrewsbury where one of our gang would regularly 'get the teas in'. The next move was to Aberystwyth on 1J32, departing at 1300. As with most trains on the Cambrian, it was late more often than not.

The second Aberystwyth produced the booked pair of 37/4's on all but one occasion. This occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> August when 37428 was partnered by the absolute monster that is – or was – 37176. I have to say that this was the best loco all summer for sheer thrash. It was easily on a par with 37427 which was well known for chucking out a lot of clag. I remember looking out of the window for the climb up Talerdigg Bank on 1J32. 176 was leading but there was so much rubbish coming out of the top, you couldn't see the locos or the first few coaches.

The only Cardiff ETH example not to work this train that year was 37426. 426 spent most Saturdays on the Cardiff – Liverpool / Manchester diagrams. It did go to Aber on the overnight train though. 37177 also worked the overnight with 427 on the evening of 28<sup>th</sup> May.

Most weekends we would go to Aberystwyth and back on the ETH pair. Sometimes, when the engines were good enough, we would leap off the return service at Machynlleth and do the 'plastic' to Aberdovey to rejoin the 'real' pair on the 1505 from Pwllheli. Some people did this move on 6<sup>th</sup> August. I'm sorry, but you don't get off 37176 when it's behaving like that.

When we got off the Sprinter at Aberdovey, which strangely, was always 150145, we would have our weekly visit to Aberdovey Petrol Station for supplies and proceed to annoy the local population on the bowling green. There was a sign on the railway crossing that read 'to the beach'. Every week we would turn the sign around so it pointed the wrong way, even though there was a bloody great beach by the side of the railway. You do things like that when you're a kid.

After a while we would hear the sound of the 37's approaching. I reckon you could here them leaving Tywyn (another dodgy plus 0). We would then board for the 100.51 mile journey to Wolverhampton. I remember once we festered for hours at Aberdovey because an earlier Sprinter had failed further up the coast, messing up the whole line.

At Shrewsbury, the whole world would get on again; these were mostly people who had been to Wolves on the 37/5's and stayed in the Midlands all day. With everyone together at the end of the day, we'd probably have a huge game of 'Compo Rugby' or 'How Many People Can You Get In A Mark 1 Compo?'.

Wolverhampton; 2010hrs. Sadly it was time for our valiant steeds to leave us. The booked 86/4 was duly coupled onto the rake of NSE mark 1's here. Again, this was sometimes an 85, or even an 81. The train was often up to an hour late and we often got a stop order for Rugby.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988, the last summer Saturday, the 0740 Euston – Pwllheli was worked forward from Shrewsbury by 37198 & 37142. The day did not run smoothly for everyone. A large group of us did the 0620 to Aberystwyth and the 1010 back to Machynlleth. We decided to wave the mileage to Newtown for a game of footy. A few people continued on. Later, when 142 & 198 arrived, only one of those few was on board. Apparently, he had leapt at Caersws.

The 1010 had been held outside the station at Newtown while exchanging Tokens with the signalman and 1J19 had been allowed to leave. The 'plus 0' factor had struck again.

I will always remember this day for the huge 'seminar' at Machynlleth on the way back. Many friends were made that year on the Cambrian. I could have sat on 50's all summer but I think I made the better choice. "It's the last time", my mate kept proclaiming all day. It was the last time that NB 37's worked a passenger train to Pwllheli. After 1988, the 37/4's took the tourists to Wales for three more years. It was good to have 37418 & 37421 on the line in 1991, but it all ended abruptly on 24<sup>th</sup> August that year when 37421 derailed on the river bridge at Dovey Junction. 37's were deemed to be too heavy to go to Pwllheli thereafter.

Class 31's were used on the Cambrian for a few years and it was not until the late 1990's that a 37's was used on the line again. 37114 visited Tywyn to pick up some ballast wagons. 37407 went to Porthmadog with an observation saloon soon after.

In late 2002 and early 2003, 37042, 37114, 37410, 37411 & 37428 all worked engineers trains to various locations on the line. 37421 worked the first passenger carrying run by a 37 on the line for 11 years in August 2002, working from Wolverhampton to Aberystwyth and back with a charter in connection with a Jewish convention. Several other charters have reached Aberystwyth since then, mostly worked by 37042 & 37114. 37410 shared this duty with 37042 on one occasion. A planned trip to Pwllheli in 2003 was cancelled but Barmouth Bridge has since been passed for 37's so hopefully we'll all be able to take a ride 'down the toilet' once more.

Finally, I'd like to thank some members of the Cambrian Formation Flying Club for a stunning display at Shrewsbury on 37176. You know who you are!

This article previously appeared in the Class 37/4 Project magazine 'Little Orange Box' and is published here in an edited and updated format.

**37676 leads Railfreight Construction liveried 37688 'Great Rocks' into Welshpool with the 1010 Aberystwyth - London Euston on 20th August 1988.**



## **Before They Were Famous - Part 1**

**Andrew Bald** presents a small selection of 37's in mainline passenger service, all of which are now in preservation. This is the first in what we hope will be a regular feature.

37003

First up is the C37LG's very own loco, '003, pictured here at Blackburn with 37223 on 9th July 1994 on its last passenger working before going into store, 'The Trans Pennine Freighter' tour. The tour originated from London Euston and the pair had worked had been attached at Bradford Interchange. 37003's passenger workings in its final years in BR service were few and far between so when it appears in regular service on the Wensleydale Railway, many people will be pleased to fill that gap in their 'scoop book'.



37009

Now under restoration at the Churnet Valley Railway in Staffordshire, 37009 is seen at the head of the Network South East 'Solent and Wessex Wanderer' tour at Waterloo on 19th January 1992. Behind '009 is 33050 which was providing heat and limited power. This tour was one of a succession of similar outings arranged by NSE. 37107, now cut up, and 37215, owned by The Growler Group, also appeared on this train.



37032

This loco has a reputation for being the most reliable 37 in preservation and justifiably too. A favourite among many, 032 spent almost a week in June/July 1992 working Club Trains in the North West of England. It is seen here entering Huyton on such a working on 3rd July 1992. This was its final day in mainline passenger service.



In the next issue we will feature 37025, 37097 and 37240.

## Mick Parkers Excellent C37LG Website

**[www.c37lg.co.uk](http://www.c37lg.co.uk)**

Those with access to the internet will no doubt have seen the groups extremely popular web-site at <http://www.c37lg.co.uk>. Now as a member of the C37LG you will be able to access our new password protected Members Only area. This section is still under development and once 37003 is running regularly, your committee will turn more of its attention to developing it fully.

Now our members will be able to receive up to date news about the group exclusively as soon as it happens.

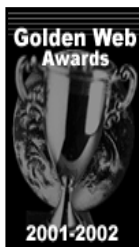
Part of this area we are particularly keen to encourage use of is the discussion forum and chat room. Your ID in the chat room will be your membership number. With a bit of planning we will be able to set up chat sessions where members can ask the committee questions about the group.

Aside from the protected area, many parts of the original site are still accessible to non-members but some of these are likely to be moved into the members area soon. The site contains detailed histories of every class 37 and news of freight and passenger workings. These are updated daily with regular contributions from individuals and 'genlists'. We also have a photo of the day feature which is posted on the homepage.

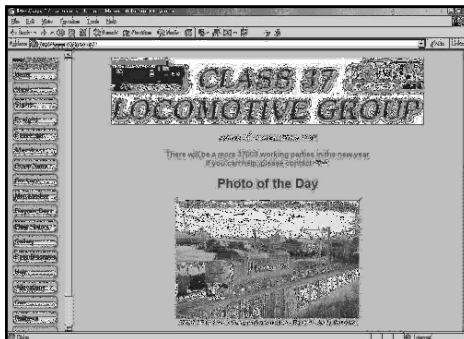
All this is painstakingly maintained by our Website Manager, Mick Parker, who created the site more than 5 years ago. Mick recently took over the groups membership processing too.



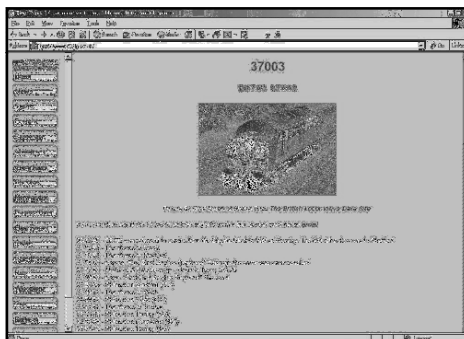
**GOLDEN  
WEB  
AWARD  
WINNER!**



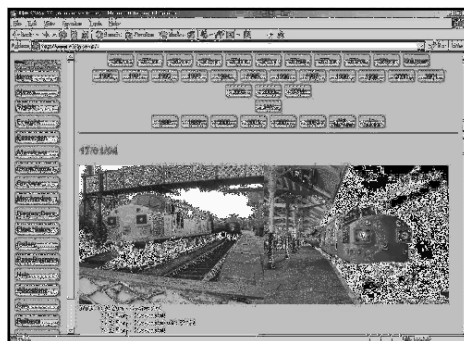
### Homepage - PHOTO OF THE DAY



### INDIVIDUAL LOCOMOTIVE HISTORIES



### CLASS 37 WORKINGS - UPDATED DAILY



## Model Behaviour

### A selection of Class 37's in miniature



One of Nick Gurneys many Bachmann 37's is 37411 in EWS livery.



37890 & 37416 also owned by Nick Gurney and 37670 & 37408 owned by Trevor Smith.





37003 inches its way up the ramp onto the low loader shortly before leaving the East Anglian Railway Museum for its new home at Leeming Bar on The Wensleydale Railway on 27th January 2004.

Michael Ratledge

