



steamsounds Riding behind steam Flying Scotsman

Ask almost anyone to name a steam locomotive and, Thomas aside, most will answer, *Flying Scotsman*. However, if you ask them why this particular loco became so well known, only a few will be able to give the correct answer.

Flying Scotsman was built at Doncaster by the London & North Eastern Railway in 1923, initially carrying the number 1472 as a member of Class A1, it was renumbered and reclassified as an A3 and acquired its name in 1924. 4472 was among the locos designed for express passenger trains between London and Edinburgh including the 10AM non-stop to Edinburgh, 'The Flying Scotsman', and indeed 4472 worked the inaugural train on 1st May 1928. However, 4472's claim to fame is that on 30th November 1934 whilst working a test train it became the first steam locomotive to be recorded at 100 mph.

The locomotive continued in service with the LNER then with British Railways until 1963 when it was withdrawn and purchased by Doncaster businessman Alan Pegler.

Pegler had the loco restored to LNER condition at Doncaster Works with its double chimney replaced with the single chimney as originally built and the German style smoke deflectors removed then the loco began working enthusiast railtours on the main line.

When BR steam finished in 1968, Pegler continued to run 4472 as he had a contract with BR which allowed the loco's use until 1972, However, in 1969 the loco was sent to the USA for a promotional tour which, while initially a success, soon got into financial difficulties and eventually bankrupted Pegler.

With the loco impounded by creditors in San Francisco things looked grim until in 1973 William McAlpine stepped in, bought the loco and arranged for its return to the UK.

As Pegler had already discovered, *Flying Scotsman* has always been something of a money pit and in 1995 when the loco required a complete overhaul, it was sold to Dr. Tony Marchington who had a remarkably optimistic business plan for it. Marchington ran 4472 for some years but his plans proved overly optimistic so, having made heavy losses in running the locomotive, in 2004 it had to be put up for sale.

Following some speculation that it would be sold overseas, after a national campaign, the locomotive was eventually purchased by the National Railway Museum and is now part of the national collection.

Under the NRM's ownership the loco has had something of a chequered career and, at the time of writing, *Flying Scotsman* is under a very protracted and expensive overhaul; it seems that the NRM are finding, as others did before them, that the loco burns money as well as coal.

As originally built, A3s had a single blast pipe and chimney but under BR ownership in an attempt to improve efficiency they were fitted with double chimneys, a change which proved successful but due to the softer blast at the chimney, lead to smoke often blowing down and obscuring the driver's view; this was solved by fitting the German style smoke deflectors.

Another side effect of the double chimney was that the locos made less noise. Fortunately all the recordings on this disk are from the time when *Flying Scotsman* ran with a single chimney...

1. In the early 1980's, as *Flying Scotsman* was based at Steamtown, Carnforth, it was often employed on SLOA's Cumbrian Mountain Expresses which, at that time, used two steam locos, one to work



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the train from Carnforth to either Skipton or Hellifield and another to work over the Settle to Carlisle line.

In late February 1984, 4472 was the loco for the so-called bottom leg; the run from Carnforth to Hellifield and is heard in this recording departing from Wennington after a photostop.

2. As well as working Cumbrian Mountain Expresses, the loco also saw plenty of use on the Cumbrian Coast line and on the 28th December 1982 *Flying Scotsman* had a post Christmas outing with a run to Ravenglass and Seascale.

The steepest climb on this route comes after the train crosses the Leven Estuary and as this recording begins, we are just rattling off the speed restricted Leven Viaduct. Once clear our driver begins to take advantage of the easy grades past the site of Plumpton Junction then making a noisy climb through Ulverston. The recording ends on easier gradients at the top of Lindal Bank.

3. Back in the 1980's steam was restricted to run on only a limited number of routes so it came as something of a shock to see that the early 1983 programme included an opportunity to ride behind *Flying Scotsman* on the East Coast Main Line north from Peterborough, the train being intended to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the building of the locomotive.

Initially only one train was planned on Sunday 27th March but so popular was it that two more runs followed on the next two Sundays.

This recording comes from the third and final run and, while on the previous two runs 4472 had been put onto the slow line for the climb to Stoke Summit, on this occasion, despite being booked to go on the slow, thanks to a late running service from Kings Cross we stayed on the fast.

As the recording begins the A3 is heard with 13 coaches behind the tender passing Tallington. At first the loco's exhaust is only just audible but as the climb progresses the driver opens the loco up more and more so a fine climb is the result and we reached Stoke Summit, where the recording ends, at only a little under 50 mph.

4. During November 1984 4472 spent some time in London where it was employed to haul a train conveying no lesser person than HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother from Stratford to North Woolwich where she opened the North Woolwich Station Museum.

Having completed its Royal duties the loco returned north on 24th November with 'The Fenman' running from Spalding via Nottingham to Sheffield and Manchester before continuing over Sough to Blackburn. At least, that was the plan.

There wasn't much scope for noise until steeper gradients were encountered west of Sheffield.

This recording is of 4472 departing from Sheffield and making plenty of noise on the 1 in 100 gradient through Dore & Totley and entering Totley Tunnel.

Soon after emerging from Totley Tunnel we were substantially delayed by a failed service train and 4472 got no further than Manchester.

5. While in Alan Pegler's ownership *Flying Scotsman* worked enthusiast tours in most parts of the country including the Southern Region. Indeed, I seem to recall a Blue Peter episode illustrating a run with the engine from London to Brighton.

In the 1980's steam was banned from the former Southern Region's electrified lines but 4472 was able to return to Southern metals in June that year when it took part in working trains over the non-electrified route from Salisbury to Yeovil Junction.

During the afternoon of 6th June *Flying Scotsman* was in the hands of one of Salisbury's more



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enthusiastic drivers and he gave us some very good (and noisy!) running as you can hear in this recording made departing from Templecombe after a photostop on the outward journey to Yeovil.

6. In an earlier track we heard *Flying Scotsman* working a Cumbrian Mountain Express from Carnforth. In the early 80s these trains used two locos but in later years only one loco was employed and they ceased running to and from Carnforth. Instead they ran through Blackburn to and from the West Coast main Line which, on a southbound train, gave us the added bonus of climbing Whalley Bank between Clitheroe and Blackburn.

This recording, made in April 1991, begins as 4472 has just crossed the speed restricted Whalley Viaduct at the foot of the climb and, as you can hear, produces some fine sounds on the 1 in 81 gradient through Langho to the summit not far beyond Wilpshire.

7. The northbound Cumbrian Mountain Express on 10th August 1991 was hauled from Farrington Jc. to Appleby by *Flying Scotsman* and the driver that damp day, soon after leaving Blackburn, quickly discovered that the loco would not keep its feet and was slipping badly on the climb from Daisyfield Jc. Although there was more trouble with slipping later, some skilful handling got us to Hellifield without too much loss of time but our driver must have been wondering, after what had gone before, what conditions on the Long Drag were going to be like!

After leaving Hellifield our driver did his best and gained as much speed as possible on the falling gradient down to Settle Jc. which we passed at a little over 60 mph and that is where this recording begins.

Once on the 1 in 100 gradient, at first all seems to be going well but above Settle the loco begins slipping again and has to be eased but although our speed falls, some good enginemanship saw us reach Helwith Bridge at a little over 30 mph rising to almost 40 on the level section there.

Above Helwith Bridge rail conditions improved, we had no further slipping and speed remained in the mid 30's.

This recording ends approaching Ribblehead where, due to the earlier problems we were running late and had lost our path on the single line over Ribblehead Viaduct which meant that we had a signal stop to await a southbound passenger train.

Despite the difficulties encountered, this was a fine performance with a heavy train.

