

## 45128 – defiant to the end!

Following withdrawal from service on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1988, 45128 'Centaur' spent a period of storage in the yard at Tinsley, along with numerous classmates. When celebrity railtour loco 45106 was prematurely withdrawn due to fire damage in February 1989, 45128 was selected to be resurrected back into service as a replacement. The loco was brought back up to the depot for a 'D exam' and during March was hauled to Doncaster depot for tyre turning. Once back at Tinsley it was required to undertake static load bank testing, followed by two 90mph test runs before being accepted into traffic. Unfortunately the loco suffered a main generator failure on the load bank and the project was abandoned, with 45128 being officially withdrawn for a second time at 11:00 on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1989.

After another couple of years of storage in Tinsley Yard, 45128 was sold with all the other withdrawn Peaks at Tinsley to MC Metals in Glasgow for scrapping. Movement from Tinsley started with a trip working to Toton yard in early March 1992. Then on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1992, 45128 started out in the formation of 9Z79 18:10 Toton to Mossend, along with 45141 and 20166, en-route to MC Metals.

Friday the March 13 proved to be a jinxed day for BR in the Warrington area. Condemned 'Peaks' Nos. 45128/41 and 20166 forming a Class 9 special from Toton to Glasgow, brought down the overhead wires as they passed Warrington in the early hours, reportedly due to a loose roof hatch. Overnight sleepers were diverted to Manchester Piccadilly and then forward to Preston with diesel haulage. The errant 'Peaks' are pictured recessed in the old NCL sidings just north of Bank Quay station two days later waiting to continue their journey to MC Metals. No. 45128 unofficially named *Centaur* was, of course, the last member of the class to remain in BR service.

*Photo. Eddie Bellass.*



The incident involving 45128 at Warrington featured in 'Rail' Magazine, as seen above.

The locos were 'top and tailed' between Class 31s 31308 and 31327 and the movement, running at a maximum speed of 35mph, was timed to run overnight, so as not to cause delay.

However, 45128 had other ideas, as when 9Z79 was approaching Warrington in the early hours of Friday 13<sup>th</sup>, an unsecured engine room roof access door came open and caused the overhead line electricity to trip. This brought all other services in the area to a stop, including the down West Coast Main Line overnight sleeper trains, which were diverted to Manchester and then forward to Preston with diesel haulage. 9Z79 was diverted into sidings north of Warrington Bank Quay station, where 45128 and 45141 were shunted out of the formation, leaving the Class 31s to continue with just 20166. Following attention to the errant roof panel, the two 45/1s are believed to have continued on their journey to Scotland around three days later.

45128 was cut up on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1992, but the cabs lay relatively untouched in the yard for some time afterwards. No.2 cab was eventually purchased by Richard Benyon and taken to a farm in Llantrisant for repainting in BR blue.



The No.2 end cab from 45128 awaiting restoration in Richard Benyon's 'Cab Yard'.

After a few years, Richard decided to part with the cab and ownership passed to the Cotswold Mainline Diesel Group (CMDG), based at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. The CMDG progressively stripped the cab, as it was a valuable source of spare parts for the restoration of their loco, 45149. In 2012, the CMDG decided to dispose of the remains of the cab and it passed back to Richard Benyon, who moved it to his Cab Yard in South Wales. It is now awaiting cosmetic restoration, along with a surviving cab from 45140. The only other Class 45 cab known to be preserved is one from 45104, which resides in a garden in Derbyshire.

**Steve Dexter**