

45135 Story

(Some information is from an article by Steve Cole that appeared in Rail Magazine in 1992)



A brand new D99 at Leeds City station in 1961. Photo: Brian Townsley

45135 was built at Crewe Works and entered traffic as D99 on 6th May 1961, allocated to Derby (17A). As built, it was fitted with split headcode boxes either side of the nose ends and was painted in all over green livery with grey roof and off-white engine room grilles and bodyside stripes. The first allocation was to Derby (17A), followed by Midland, Western Lines Division and then Toton.

The locomotive was named '3rd Carabinier' whilst undergoing a classified overhaul in December 1965.

In September 1974, by now painted in BR blue livery, the loco entered Derby Works for ETH conversion and emerged with its new number 45135. By the time the loco went into works for its next overhaul in 1977, the nameplate on the second man side had gone missing. When the loco was released back to traffic on 19/03/78 the headcode boxes had been removed and replaced with a flush front end end marker lights.

The locomotive's last works overhaul visit was also to Derby, when it was outshopped in October 1981 after receiving a Heavy General Overhaul as part of the life extension plan for the class.

The loco received high intensity headlights on the nose ends in late 1985, but in January 1986, the future for 45135 became uncertain after it suffered a major power unit failure and was placed 'on decision', along with 45109, which had suffered collision damage at Allerton and then Newton Heath, damaging the segmental bearings. 45135 was the lucky one and received the power unit from 45109, with 45109 being subsequently condemned. The engine change was to be done at Derby Works, but in the end was completed at Toton and a top end overhaul carried out at the same time.

In March 1986, the remaining nameplate and crest was removed at Toton Depot in line with the policy to remove all surviving Class 45 nameplates for 'safekeeping'.

On 23rd November 1986 the loco broke its long association with the London Midland Region when it was transferred, along with all the other surviving 45/1s to Tinsley on the Eastern Region.

In February 1987, Tinsley fitters reinstated the '3rd Carabinier' name in painted form on both sides, along with Tinsley Depot snail symbols and painted 41A shed plates.

In the last few weeks of service 45135 started suffering several failures, mainly connected with low oil pressure. After a final fling on Trans-Pennine services at the end of February, its last working turned out to be 7M63 Beighton – Mountsorrel on 4th March 1987, suffering low power and subsequently being failed. It was returned home to Tinsley for repair, where it was found that the turbo charger had seized, a common failure on Sulzer engines. Repair was not authorised however and the loco was condemned on 9th March 1987.

Still technically a runner, the loco was moved to Derby Etches Park on March 26th 1987 to be used for ETH testing at Litchurch Lane. However, it was never really used for this purpose, as the engine kept shutting down.

45135 languished at Derby until late 1988 when it was placed on tender after repeated requests to the Department of Procurement. The Pioneer Diesel Loco Group (PDLG) carried out an inspection and put in a bid, which was accepted. Once the paperwork was completed it was arranged for 45135 to be hauled to its new home at Peak Rail, Matlock, to where it was moved on 23rd March 1989.

Once at Matlock, the restoration of the loco started. Luckily, whilst it had been at Derby the loco had not been too badly robbed and missing parts were soon replaced in preparation for a start-up. Prior to this, the loco was thoroughly checked



45135 just after arrival at Matlock (Peak Rail), waiting for restoration to start on 26/03/89. Photo: UK Rail Pics

out both mechanically and electrically. The engine was barred over manually and missing rocker gear and fuel pipes replaced. The electrical control and ETH

cubicles were thoroughly cleaned and all electrical machines and main generator checked over and cleaned. Once these checks were completed, the coolant system was filled and the batteries charged.

On Sunday 28th May 1989, 45135 was run up for the first time in over two years and the engine fired and ran on the first attempt. Whilst running, several faults were noted which would require attention, mainly on the engine and these were rectified over the following 18 months. Repairs included the re-sealing of three cylinder head to liner joints, overhaul of the exhaust system, external engine coolant pipes, heat exchanger, fuel system and injectors, renewal of a sheared cylinder head stud and several crankshaft bearings and exchange of the defective turbo charger for an operable one (from 45051).

The loco bodywork was stripped both internally and externally back to bare metal, thus exposing any areas of corrosion that could then be treated or replaced as required. In all, six bodyside panel sections had to be renewed, these being under the driver's droplight side windows at both ends, under the boiler room grilles and section under the radiator grilles. The bodywork was then wire brushed and filler added to smooth out any distortions. The bodywork was then painted with a coat of self-etching primer, then a coat of red oxide. This was followed by the appropriate undercoats and finally a top finishing coat of BR blue.

Further work was completed on the electrical system, with the main generator, compressors, exhauster, rad fan motor, traction motors and traction motor blowers all being thoroughly cleaned and all contactors and relays checked for correct operation. Any defective components were repaired or replaced. The batteries were in good condition for a loco that had been out of traffic for over two years, with only one cell having to be renewed.

Restoration work was eventually finished just in time for the loco to attend the Tinsley Depot Silver Jubilee Open Day on 29th September 1990, which was the first public appearance for the loco since withdrawal. The loco went on to attend Open Days at Worksop (01/09/91) and Cambridge (13/09/91).

Following test runs between Darley Dale and Matlock on 5th September 1992, the loco returned to public service at the Peak Rail Diesel Gala on 17th/18th October, working alongside D100 (45060) 'Sherwood Forester'.

After 10 years at Peak Rail, 45135 moved to the East Lancs Railway in June 1999, first working at the July Diesel Gala that year.



45135 runs into Bury Bolton Street (ELR) on 25th September 1999. Photo: Steve Thorpe

45135 was withdrawn from traffic in 2007 due to dwindling oil pressure on its high hours power unit, which is currently undergoing a full overhaul. The main generator has also been removed for cleaning and inspection before the loco returns to service.