

45125 (D123) Story

D123 was built at Crewe Works in 1961 and was released into traffic on 28th October 1961, painted in lined green livery and fitted with split centre headcode panels. Based at Derby, the loco was used on a variety of passenger and freight duties throughout the 1960's. The loco was repainted in 'economy' all over green livery (without grey roof and lining) in April 1966 and then received blue livery with fully yellow ends on 7th July 1968. 6th January 1970 saw the boiler isolated and D123 was fitted with dual brakes on 7th February 1971, with its boiler re-instated in April 1971.

With newer types of coaching stock introduced in the early 1970's requiring locomotives to be fitted with electric train heating generators (ETH) to heat the coaches and provide air conditioning rather than heating by a steam heat boiler. D123 was one of 50 class 45s selected for conversion to ETH.



45125 at Gateshead on 12/05/74, shortly after ETH conversion. Photo: Tony Casey

D123 emerged from Derby Works following ETH fitting on 10th April 1974, renumbered as 45125 and was allocated to Toton depot. The locomotive could then be seen hauling express passenger services between Sheffield and London St.

Pancras as well as Cross Country services between the North East and the West Country. 45125 was released from Derby Works on 25th March 1981, following its final refurbishment, where it had its headcode boxes removed and replaced with marker lights. High intensity headlights were fitted at Toton on 22nd October 1985. By this time the loco was a regular performer on the Trans-Pennine services between North Wales/Liverpool and Scarborough/Newcastle.

The locomotive remained allocated to Toton until November 1986 when all of the remaining class 45/1 locos were reallocated to Tinsley Depot, Sheffield. 45125 hauled its last service, 1M26 12:53 Scarborough – Bangor on 24th April 1987 and was taken out of traffic at Tinsley on 1st May 1987. 45125 was condemned at 14:43

on 7th May 1987 due to requiring an expensive 'D' exam and traction motor repairs at a time when many members of the class were being withdrawn as surplus.

The loco was moved from Tinsley for storage on 20th May 1987, initially to Whitemoor Yard, March until 26th January 1989 and then with 45111/126/136/146/148 to the Mickleover test track, near Derby on 12th February 1989, where it was used a dead weight for class 60 locomotives to haul on test.



Withdrawn 45125 in storage at Whitemoor Yard, March, on 20/06/87

The loco appeared on a tender list in early 1991 along with many other class 45s and was examined and found to be in good condition. A successful bid was then placed by the Hull Locomotive Preservation Group. The group had hoped to purchase 45111, this being a named member of the class, but examination revealed 45125 to be in a far better condition than 'Grenadier Guardsman'.



45125 under restoration at Hull Dairycoates on 08/08/93

The loco was moved to Hull Dairycoates depot on 23rd March 1992 where an overhaul was begun. The overhaul of 45125 progressed to the point where

the loco was started up for the first time in preservation on 10th October 1993.

The loco was then moved to Botanic Gardens depot at Hull in early 1994 due to the redevelopment of the Dairycoates site. The privatisation of the railways meant that 45125 needed to find a new home and once Railtrack had registered the loco on TOPS as 89423, it was moved on 31st March 1998 from Hull to Brush Loughborough for onward movement by road to the Great Central Railway, where restoration work continued following the locos arrival on 2nd April 1998.

The loco was repainted into original green livery and returned to service on the 11th June 2000 following a naming ceremony where it was unveiled as “Leicestershire and Derbyshire Yeomanry” by Lt. Colonel Ridley Thompson (retired) at Loughborough Central. While D123/45125 had never carried a name while in British Rail service, the name selected for the loco to carry was one carried by another peak (46026) and was the locally based regiment to the Great Central Railway. Following the naming ceremony D123 hauled its first passenger service in preservation, the 15:45 Loughborough Central to Leicester North.

In 2001 all 12 cylinder heads were removed for attention to the valve guides, transition water seals, and repairs were carried out to the fuel and water header tanks, injectors and the exhaust pipework. Small yellow panels were also applied to the nose ends. A new lubricating oil heat exchanger was fitted in 2003 and a combined pump set fitted in the same year.

The locomotive has been used extensively at the Great Central Railway since June 2000 and on 9th February 2009 was examined and passed fit to haul test trains at the Great Central Railway at speeds of up to 60mph. On 1st July 2009 the loco was more rigorously examined and allowed to haul test trains at speeds of up to 75mph. The loco has been used on many occasions since 2009 for high speed contract work, testing a variety of new wagon types, Freightliner class 70s, as well as being used to train Army and RDG (formerly ATOC) graduate engineers to drive at high speeds. The most well-known occasion where D123 was used at high speed being the Top Gear filming at the railway, where D123 was used to destroy a caravan on the line at Swithland on Thursday 16th June 2010, as the spectacular final section of filming for the program.

Following the Top Gear filming, D123 was taken out of traffic for planned bodywork repairs and a full repaint into economy green, a livery that the loco had not carried since April 1966. The loco ran carrying this livery without nameplates until 1st August 2014 when the nameplates were re-fitted.

On 24th September 2012 D123 was used for a German Film company’s version of the Great Train Robbery using the railway’s TPO coaches. While hauling Bonfire Night services on Thursday 5th November 2015 D123 unexpectedly shutdown approaching Quorn heading to Loughborough. The loco was coaxed back into life, but following arrival at Loughborough ran to shed for

examination, where low oil pressure was discovered. An oil and filter change was undertaken over the winter but with continued low oil pressure exhibited after this, further examination revealed that the engine oil pump had seared several of its gearwheel cogs. D123's power unit and generator set were lifted from the loco on 14th September 2017 and removal of the end cover confirmed the failure of the engine oil pump. While the engine and generator were removed from the loco the engine room was repainted and the silencer repaired. With a further high speed contract requiring D123 to be available at short notice, the planned top end engine overhaul had to be postponed and the engine oil pump from the group's spare engine was fitted to enable the power unit to be craned back into the loco on 19th October. Once everything was reconnected a successful restart of the loco was completed on 1st November, before the silencer had been refitted. By 7th November D123 was back hauling high speed services at the GCR as if the major failure had not happened.



45125's repaired power unit is lifted back in at Loughborough on 19/10/17

On 5th March 2018, D123 was moved into the shed at Loughborough to allow a repaint to take place with the loco emerging on 12th April in ex-works condition, carrying the original lined green livery again.

Since preservation the loco has covered almost 27000 miles, with



D123 (45125) working at the Great Central Railway, Loughborough, on 14/04/18.

some 4000 miles worked at speeds way above the 25mph maximum speed on all heritage railways; a not inconsiderable distance covered at what is currently a 7¾ mile long railway.

(thanks to Neil Burden for providing these notes)