

Peak Accidents – 46036

46036 was built at Derby Works and introduced to traffic as D173 in July 1962, being one of a batch of 27 BR/Sulzer Type 4 locos allocated to Gateshead for use on NE/SW and Trans-Pennine services. When new it was loaned to Edge Hill for crew training and was regularly added to Trans-Pennine trains, piloting an EE Type 4 (Class 40). In winter 1962 the 46s took over a number of Trans-Pennine diagrams, sometimes taking as much as 10 minutes off the Leeds to Manchester section timings. However D173 also ventured onto other workings, such as the 07.50 Newcastle – Kings Cross on November 15th that year, presumably due to a shortage of Deltics.

173 was renumbered into the TOPS system as 46036 at Gateshead depot in November 1973 and remained a fairly anonymous loco for the next few years, earning its keep on a variety of secondary passenger work and freight traffic over many parts of the country. It was on 1st March 1979 that 46036 was diagrammed to work one of its regular turns, the 07.40 Cardiff – Newcastle. However this particular day was about to enter the history books – the following text is extracted from the Website www.derbysulzers.com....

'March 1st 1979 started like many other days, just routine, the humdrum of daily life caught up in the details, with many things swiftly forgotten as time rolled on by. For three railwaymen assigned to Cardiff depot it was just routine, for the guard it was that of booking on at 6.00am to prepare the stock for the 07.40 Cardiff - Newcastle, a total of ten coaches including a restaurant vehicle and a BG. This day the train locomotive, 46036 arrived about 6.45am and a brake continuity test was carried out. This tested satisfactory and the guard joined the two railmen in the locomotive cab for the short run up to Cardiff General station.

The train departed on time at 7.40am, with the guard having taken up his regular duties in the train. The train remained on time at Newport and was routed along the north bank of the Severn Estuary towards Chepstow and Gloucester. Approaching Chepstow the guard moved to the front of the train to begin collecting tickets and had worked back as far as the third vehicle, the buffet car when the normality of this day came to a sudden and dramatic halt.

A sudden and violent impact threw the guard to the floor, briefly disorientating him and requesting a passenger to look out of the window of the now stationary train to see what might be amiss. In the second coach were two railmen riding 'on the cushions' to Gloucester, once the train had stopped they ran forward to the locomotive. All was quiet, the engine had shut down, no doubt a result of the severe damage sustained to the leading cab of 46036, tragically it was obvious to the two railmen that they could be of no assistance to the crew of 46036. From the rear cab protection equipment was obtained to isolate the track circuit on the down line whilst the locomotive's battery was isolated.

Calls were made from the signal telephone to notify Newport powerbox of the disabled train, which itself was not derailed, but whatever it had hit at Naas Crossing was now fouling the down line. Other rail staff also travelling on the train provided protection to the rear and assistance to the guard.

What had appeared to be just another routine run ended when the train hit an eight-wheel Scammell Routeman lorry equipped with a specially designed body used for hauling waste in either 30 cubic yard or 40 cubic yard skips. In this case it was the smaller but fully loaded skip, with a combined weight of about 12.50 tons. It was this part of the lorry that caused so much damage to the locomotive, during the collision the skip parted company from the lorry cab & chassis, the latter were tossed clear of the tracks about thirty yards down from the crossing, the skip ended up on the down line about one hundred yards from the crossing, beyond this point the train coasted for a further third of a mile before stopping. Regrettably the lorry driver also perished in the collision.

The Department of Transport accident report placed the cause of the accident to be the failure of the lorry driver driver to follow the operating procedures for the use of Naas crossing.'



The badly damaged 46036 was noted at Gloucester on 22nd March 1979 sheeted over and awaiting despatch to Derby Works for evaluation. It arrived at Derby on 24th April where it spent another few weeks on decision.

Surprisingly, as several class members had already been withdrawn for lesser reasons, 46036 was authorised to receive a full repair and light overhaul at a cost of £45000. It entered the works in June 1979 and was released back to traffic in pristine condition in January 1980.

After only another two years in service, ironically 46036 was to meet its demise on another NE/SW service. This time it caught fire at Rotherham whilst hauling a Newcastle – Poole service on April 23rd 1982. A week later it had reached Stratford DRS where it was condemned on May 2nd. After surrendering its power unit to 46025 and bogies to 46018, it was despatched to Swindon Works on November 9th 1982 for final disposal.

By January 1983, 46036 had been finally broken up and the career of another BR Type 4 had come to an end.

Steve Dexter, March 2007