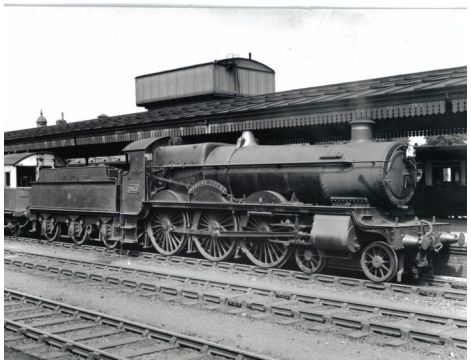
The History of Standard Five 73082 Camelot
By
Stephen Loeber

The history of Camelot is interesting and in some ways surprising in regards to design and construction.

It all started in 1902 when George Jackson Churchward, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Great Western Railway Works at Swindon, developed and introduced the Saint class, the first modern 4-6-0 passenger express locomotive with two outside cylinders and connecting rods and inside Stephenson link motion with a taper boiler and a Belpaire firebox.



Great Western Railway 4-6-0 Saint class - 2933 Bibury Court

Churchward was a very forward thinking CME as he introduced several refinements from American and French locomotive designs. The taper boiler and the outside cylinders were not standard practice at this time. Plus, he was an early advocate of superheating in boilers.

Churchward retired in 1922 and Charles Benjamin Collett was appointed new CME at Swindon. He carried on Churchward's work and developed the Hall class in 1928, a 4-6-0 mixed traffic engine that could work passenger and freight traffic over the GWR network. The prototype 4900 Saint Martin was a rebuild of Saint 2925, the difference being the driving wheels: where the Saints were 6 foot 8 inches the Halls were 6 foot. Plus, with the Churchward designed locomotives boilers, frames, wheels and other items could be interchanged, an early form of standardisation.

Great Western Railway 4-6-0 Hall class - 4905 Astley Hall

William Stanier, who was Works Manager and assistant to Charles Collett, was headhunted by the London Midland & Scottish Railway to become their CME. He was appointed to the position in 1931 and took a number of Swindon ideas with him. His early experience was with the 4-6-0 Jubilee class, a three cylinder passenger locomotive for the LMS, found that high superheat was more appropriate than the low superheat utilised by the GWR. Stanier's next development was the 4-6-0 Black Five mixed traffic locomotive for the LMS, like the Hall but with some modifications such as outside Walschaerts valve gear and high superheat in the boiler. These engines become the mainstay of the LMS network; a maid of all work.

London Midland & Scotish 4-6-0 Black Five - 5041

After the Second World War ended in 1945 the four main railway companies, the Great Western, London Midland & Scottish, London & North Eastern & Southern were all in a bad way in regards locomotives, rolling stock and track, with some companies in financial difficulties. In 1948 the Labour Government nationalised the railways and they came under the authority of the British Transport Commission with a section set up called the Railway Executive: of course, to all concerned the brand name was British Railways. The justification for this move was so that major investment could be carried out. The Railway Executive broke the network into regions: Western, London Midland, Eastern, North Eastern and Southern.

The British Transport Commission wanted to modernise the railway network utilising new motive power with dieselisation and electrification of some routes, however the Railway Executive was more cautious and considered that maintaining steam as a stopgap measure would be more cost effective, because the infrastructure was already in place. With this decision, Robert Riddles was appointed to the Executive to oversee Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, along with Ernest Stewart Cox and Roland Curling Bond to assist him, so the Standard locomotive project was set up.

In 1948 locomotive exchange trails took place to determine which were the best features of the Big Four companies' locomotives that could be incorporated into the new designs of Standard engines. However, the Standard locomotive had more LMS practices incorporated because the company had done more in introducing locomotive that could cope with post-War conditions, plus Riddles, Cox and Bond had all worked for that organisation.

The Standard Five mixed traffic 4-6-0s were developed around the LMS Stanier Black Five with the 3B type boiler with different fittings and details to bring it into line with the other Standard classes, also the driving wheels were bigger - where the Black Five was 6 foot the Standard Five was 6 foot 2 inches. The Standard Five boiler pressure was set at 225lb/sq in giving a tractive effort of 26120 lb.

Doncaster Works were responsible for the design of the class and built 42 examples (73100 – 73124 and 73155 - 73171). But the other 130 (73000 -73099 and 73125 -73154) were built at Derby Works. Building started in 1951 and was completed in 1957. 73125 - 73154 differed from the rest of the class in that they were not fitted with the Walschaerts (piston) valve gear but British Caprotti (poppet) valve gear.

73082 was constructed in 1955 at Derby Works within the group 73080 - 73089, for which the Works Order number was N8241 and BR lot number 241. These locomotives were destined for the Southern Region. Because there were no water troughs on the Southern Region they were paired with BR1B tenders that had capacity for 7 tons of coal and 4,725 gallons of water.

British Railways Standard Class 5 MT
73082 Camelot

One thing that was different with the Standard Fives was where the whistle was positioned: some had the tri-tone chime mounted behind the chimney, others had the bell type mounted on the steam manifold in front of the cab. 73080 - 73089 had their tri-tone whistles located behind the chimney. However, there was occasionally a problem with the tri-tone whistle as it had a tendency to jam open, owing to the operating cable sticking on its long run from the cab to the smokebox. In the end the chime whistles were replaced with the bell type, but still located behind the chimney on 73080 - 73089.

73082 was allocated first to Stewarts Lane shed on 7th July 1955, here the engine worked the expresses from Victoria down to Margate and Ramsgate on the north Kent coast, however, in 1959 electrification using the third rail system was extended to Margate and Ramsgate from Faversham, in so doing removing the locomotives rostered work. On 14th June 1959 73082 was transferred to Nine Elms shed and worked trains on the south western route from Waterloo to Bournemouth, Weymouth and Exeter: at this time she was allocated the name Camelot. This was the result of a Staff Suggestion that names from withdrawn Urie King Arthur 4-6-0s numbers 30736 - 55 be transferred to the Nine Elms Standard Fives 73080 - 89 and 73110 - 119, and so in August 1959 73082 had the Camelot nameplates fitted at Eastleigh Works. One summer Camelot visited the famous Somerset & Dorset line that ran from Bath to Bournemouth to work holiday specials and was photographed on shed at Bath Green Park.

With the British Transport Commission`s Modernisation Plan of 1955 steam was under threat with all new diesel traction being developed. Camelot was transferred to Guildford shed on 8th June 1965 and this was her swansong as by June 1966 73082 was withdrawn from British Railways service and sold to Woodham Brothers at Barry (in south Wales) for scrapping.

However, Woodham Brothers did not immediately scrap all the steam locomotives sold to them, so in 1974 two steam enthusiasts visited the famous scrapyard and, because 73082 was the only named Standard Five to have survived, the 73082 Camelot Locomotive Society was set up. The locomotive was purchased in 1979 and moved to the Bluebell Railway in East Sussex. Here restoration to working order took place and the locomotive was put back into traffic in 1995. In 2005 Camelot was withdrawn for a major 10 year overhaul, returned to traffic in 2015 and is still going strong!

I wish to thank Peter Gibbs and Francis Dowley of the 73082 Camelot Locomotive Society for their help with this article.

Stephen Loeber is Secretary of the 73082 Camelot Locomotive Society, a professional railwayman and a member of the RMT Union. This article originally appeared in RMT News in January 2020 and is republished here with acknowledgement.

The Author, on Camelot on Friday 11th September 2018