

MEMORIES OF 7051

John Whelan

The **7051** was the first Diesel to be shown in the L.M.S. Allocation Book. It was placed at Chester for working in the Lightfoot Street Warehouse Yard. The drivers were all 'Clause 8' men. The only one I can remember by name is Driver Knott, who was a notable pigeon fancier and would enthrall me with accounts of races at any time I was lucky enough to be sent to Lightfoot Street.

The two fitters, trained locally by young Jack Alcock, were Bill Challinor and George Crowe. Bill Challinor later became Mechanical Foreman at Upperby. The Mechanical Inspector was, I think, a gentleman named Sparrow who had been the Foreman Fitter at Stoke. Jack Alcock of Hunslet spent a great deal of time at Chester and became very friendly with my father and would spend two or three evenings a week at my home. I worked on the loco with Mr. Challinor (in those days an apprentice was expected to use formal address).

On a couple of occasions I was lucky enough to accompany Mr. Challinor to Hunslet where I met Jack Alcock Senior, who was boss of the Erecting Shop. All the managers at Hunslet were very keen supporters of Hunslet Rugby League Club, and after lunch it was practice to re-enact various moves of the last match and plan the 'slaughter' for the next, the salt and pepper pots being used as players. We found this most confusing as neither Mr. Challinor or myself had ever heard of Rugby League.

The **7051** was fitted with a 150H.P. MAN six cylinder, four stroke engine. It was absolutely simple with a single exhaust and inlet valve to each cylinder. Bosch atomisers set at 150 atmospheres fed from a Bosch fuel pump were used. In 1935, the part description 'injector' was not used. Some of the features of this early engine I note in the present day MAN engines.

The starting engine was a JAP 2CV, which drove through a flat clutch plate to the main engine. The JAP was a terror to start, despite the combined efforts and threats of Mr. Alcock and Mr. Challinor to retard it sufficiently to cut out the kickback. To get to the starting handle, two floorboards had to be lifted to give sufficient leg room. Even so, the unfortunate person starting the engine was at a great disadvantage as a sitting or kneeling position had to be adopted, making any evasive action difficult. It was well said by all that when kneeling, they were praying for the 'b . . . y' thing to start. During the normal working hours, if the drivers could not start the JAP they would invariably call for attention on some other pretence, and then get the 'fall guy' to risk their thumb or wrist. The practice was always referred to as the 'Lightfoot Street Shunt whistling for a Banker'.

The gearbox was of Hunslet design, and had four pre-selective gears. It was a good box, the only trouble was the P41 oil which leaked past the seals in the selector cylinders. The drive from the engine was through a multi plate friction clutch with the clutch pedal fitted at a convenient position to act as a footrest for the driver. This resulted in the clutch requiring adjustment practically every day, and the plates being renewed every six weeks to two months. Adjusting the clutch was a simple job, and consisted of slackening a lock nut and screwing in a set bolt to give the actuating fingers the correct clearance. This job was usually undertaken with the loco in traffic. It was much enjoyed by the fitters as it meant a period away from the shed, a true breath of fresh air.

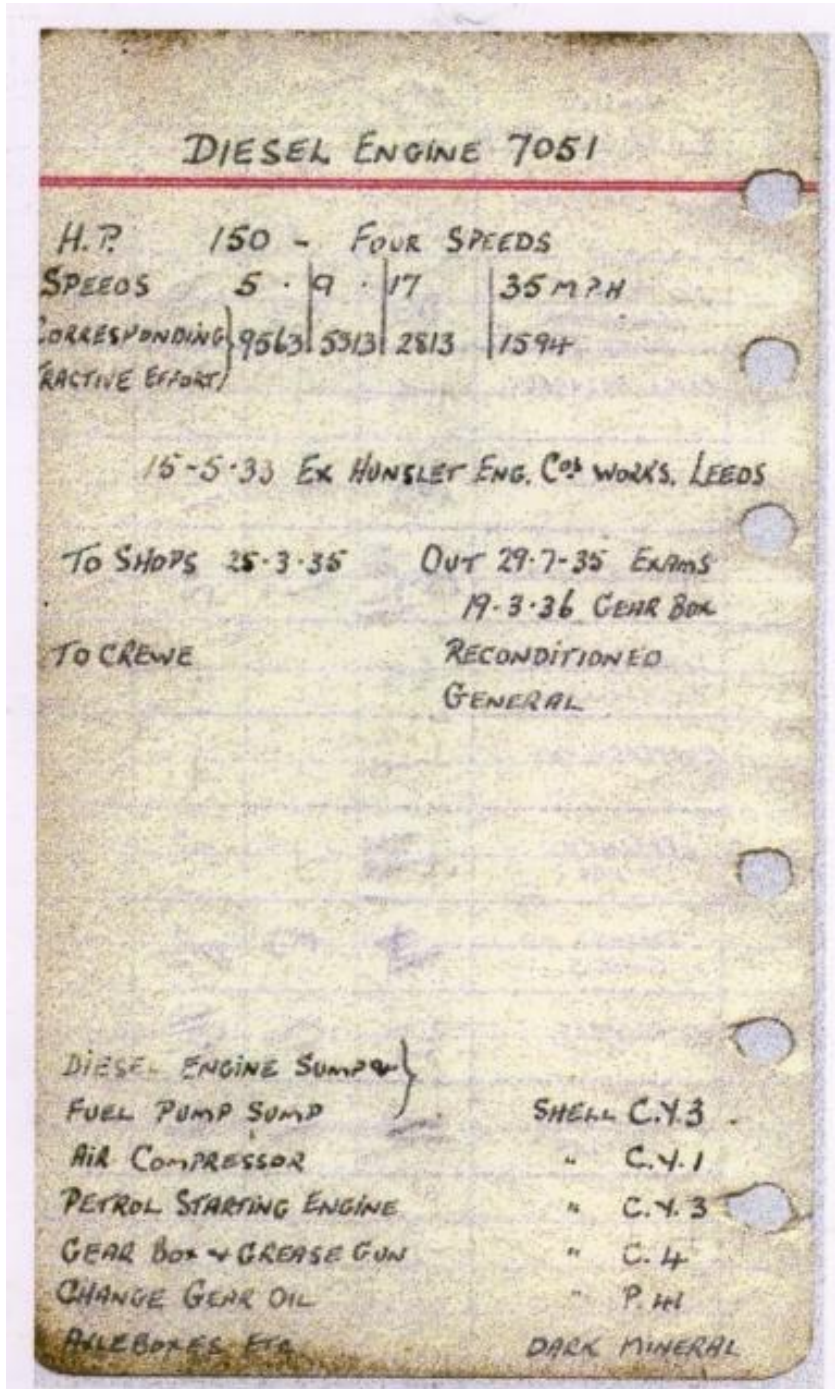
Everything about shed life was primitive and one can only ponder how we existed. The smoke, the water lying in the bottom of the pits, the filth and the lack of amenities is beyond conception in the modern world of industry. '728' men were not welcome in the Driver's Cabin, (the title of Engineman had not yet become practice), so took their meal time either on the footplate or clustered around the sand furnace. There was only one cold water tap situated in a corner over a zinc lined wooden trough. This had to provide for the needs of the whole staff of the shed. A tin of soft soap was put out daily for

washing purposes and one sponge cloth per week was the issue for towelling. The lavatories were just as primitive, and if you were unfortunate enough to have to use them you would be accommodated in a lean-to shed with the choice of one of four of a line of holes, and an old Weekly Notice to use as toilet paper. The urinal trough was behind a cast iron screen sited in front of the 'bogs' and offered some privacy to the two middle holes.

There was no issue of uniform to artisan staff, and bump helmets had not been invented. The general practice was to fold a newspaper and wear it inside a flat cap to offer the head some protection. It was thought that the *Times* was the best paper to use, not because of its news value, but on the supposition that the paper was tougher. There was many a witty exchange between the staff of different political persuasions regarding the use of this newspaper. Cuts to the head were very common as it was difficult to avoid the legs of taper pins in the bottom links of the motion. I think that 'Crabs', which were rarely seen, were the only locos without inside motion. These were only occasionally shedded at Chester, so head bumping was always present, especially with the Mold Junction 'Super Ds', which came in for No.4 and No.6 examinations.

There is little to look back on with pleasure, only interest, and marvel that it could have happened. It certainly didn't happen from choice, but was a case of tradition passing from father to son in what was considered a secure job for life.

Back to **7051**. The loco was, perhaps, the first to be left out, stabled away from the depot; it being left M-F on the spur at the Cattle Dock. This proved very advantageous on more than one occasion when the radiator elements started leaking and a supply of dung was readily available. In those early days, there was little or no thought given to treated water or cavitation. The load was, I think, about seven to nine vans or wagons, which was less than the shunters would have liked as it meant that most roads had to be drawn twice. I always thought that this was balanced with the improved braking compared with its predecessors, the L.N.W. Saddlebacks No.2790 and 2793. The Saddleback braking was so poor it was practice to stop by reversing and applying the handbrake. A most



difficult task when working into a warehouse!

Lightfoot Street was at that time quite a heavy yard, and due to the loading of **7051** some traffic was missing its booked service, causing heavy loading of the 01.10a.m. Crewe, which was booked to clear the yard. The specially selected 'Super C' working this train could be heard for miles around as it gasped its way up the bank to Christleton Tunnel.

I was surprised at the way the drivers accepted **7051**. There were complaints regarding the noise, but the clean enclosed cab and good braking more than compensated. The loco was, in the main, light on repairs and showed up well on the Analysis.

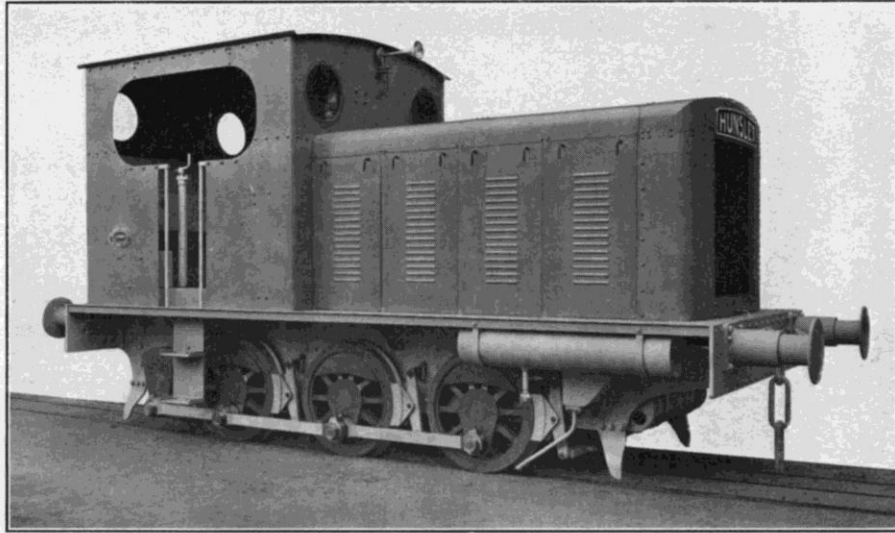
One turn it did lose was on a Monday, and was caused by a fireman named Jones, (which of the many I can't recall - they were so numerous they were referred to as Jones One, Jones Two, etc.). This particular Jones, whose job was to help with the preparation, then ride with the loco down to the yard, mistook the engine lubricating oil filler, which protruded into the cab, for a sand box. An unfortunate mistake as the filler was a three inch pipe surmounted with a screwed brass cap. Jones realised something was amiss when he had difficulty in replacing the cap. Mr. Crowe was sent for from home, and proceeded to remove the sump and wash the lot out with paraffin. He replaced the pieces, filled up with lub. oil and started the engine. To everyone's surprise and delight it ran without a hitch and the loco was able to take up its afternoon working. Good for George Crowe and MAN. This was a marvellous piece of work considering the lighting comprised of an occasional two mantle gas lamp in the shed roof. The dreaded thick yellow smoke which would be at its thickest on Monday morning would obliterate any chance of illumination from this source. The taste of this sulphurous smoke still lingers with every chest cold sixty years down the line. The other illumination was from a duck lamp.

Of course, all this was before the age of socket spanners and the like. The tool kit in those days was near enough, using shed jargon, a hammer, chisel, a couple of set pins and a 108. The 108 was the most important piece of L.N.W. equipment and no self respecting driver would be without one in his basket as well as the one in the bucket. I wonder how many of us remember the 'one-ought-eight', its role and its importance?

When it was decided that the **7051** was under powered for Lightfoot Street, it was transferred to the Sleeper Yard at Ditton Junction. Mr. Crowe travelled with it early on a Sunday morning, and thought his last day had arrived when he looked over the panel whilst crossing Frodsham Viaduct. He stayed for two weeks giving instruction to fitters at Speke. As it was deemed necessary to get the feel of the clutch after the plates had been changed, both Mr. Challinor and Mr. Crowe were authorised to move the loco within shed limits, and became the only drivers outside the line of promotion. It was later agreed with the L.D.C. that they would be accompanied by a Driver or Passed Fireman, and that they should not pass over points. **7051** was followed at Chester by **7054**, **7052** and one other, I think it was the **7055**. One of these locos was powered by a Ricardo engine, but it would be bigger than 132HP. I recollect that one, I think **7054**, had a Harland and Wolfe engine which was very interesting as it had exhaust pistons in the heads driven by eccentrics on the main shaft. Another had a Two Stroke engine. The Diesels were followed by a Sentinel, which I considered to be the only true locomotive development since the *Rocket*. It was the only steam loco that didn't 'progress' by being made bigger, and of course it didn't need a fireman. It had a water tube flash boiler with a working pressure of, I think, 220lbs.p.s.i. The condenser was so efficient it was only necessary to top up with three or four pints of water each week. When one of the outer coils in the boiler required changing and Mr. Crowe and myself pulled and strained at the union, which was well hidden, it was a couple of days before we realised it was a left hand thread. It was subsequently withdrawn because of the difficulty encountered with the steam leaking past the glands into the oil casing.

Jack Alcock remained a family friend, and would visit our home whenever he was near or was passing through Chester. Many years later, after I had been 'adopted' by 'God's Wonderful Railway' and I came into contact with 'Castles', some numbered **70XX**, especially **7051** - which was in my allocation, my mind would invariably flit back to that other **7051**.

THE HUNSLET ENGINE CO. LTD *Engineers* LEEDS ENGLAND



0-6-0 TYPE
150 H.P. "HUNSLET" DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

LEADING DIMENSIONS etc. when made for a Rail Gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in.

Diameter of Wheels	...	3 ft. 0 in.
Wheelbase	...	8 " 0 "
Weight—In working order	...	21 tons 0 cwts.
Fuel Capacity	...	60 gallons.
Weight of Lightest Rail	...	35 lbs.
Radius of Sharpest Curve	... 100 ft. is the minimum, double this if an easy curve is wanted.	
Number of Speeds	...	4 forward and 4 reverse.
Speeds	...	5, 9, 17 and 30 miles per hour.
Tractive Effort at 5 miles per hour	...	9,563 lbs.
" " " 9 " "	...	5,313 "
" " " 17 " "	...	2,813 "
" " " 30 " "	...	1,594 "

NOTE—The Locomotive is capable of delivering 165 h.p. for short periods

Approximate Loads (in tons of 2,240 lbs.) hauled in addition to Locomotive, based on Wagons with a Rolling Resistance of 18 lbs. per 2,240 lbs.

Speed, m.p.h.	Level	1 in 200	1 in 100	1 in 75	1 in 50	1 in 30
5	512	308	218	180	133	84
9	276	163	113	92	66	38
17	137	77	51	39	26	11
30	70	35	20	14	6	—

Ratio of Adhesive Weight to Tractive Effort	...	4.9 to 1
Height Overall	...	11 ft. 4½ in.
Width Overall	...	8 " 2 "
Length over Buffer Beams	...	19 " 8 "

NOTE—When sending inquiries please state Rail Gauge and Modifications (if any) required

Code Word—ONEFY