

Fleet Profiles

33 109

Released to traffic on the 8th of October 1960 as D6525, part of a new class of 1550hp 'Type 3' mixed traffic locomotives built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Company (BRCW) for the Southern Region and bearing the works number DEL 117. The initial order was placed by the British Railways Board in 1957 with the first example delivered in 1960. D6525 was first posted to Hither Green (73C), later transferring to Eastleigh (71A) in July 1963.

Originally a standard class 33/0, D6525 became one of the 19 locomotives modified to become Class 33/1 having both internal and external work carried out to allow 'push-pull' usage with Southern Region EMU and TC sets. The front end of the 33/1's were equipped with buckeye couplers and '3rd buffer', high level air pipes and control system jumpers, earning them the nickname 'Bagpipes'. Classmate D6580 acted as the test bed for the modifications during 1966 and production conversion work began at Eastleigh in 1967, 109 being completed in October. The 'new' 33/1's were released in BR Blue still carrying 'D' numbers, 6525 assumed its new TOPS identity of 33 109 in February 1974.

Transferred to Stewarts Lane, Battersea (SL) in May 1993, 33109 was named "Captain Bill Smith RNR" in a special ceremony at Kensington Olympia on the 3rd July 1993 to commemorate Captain Smith who bought GNR No.1247 in 1959 which was the first locomotive to be bought privately from British Rail for preservation and since donated to the National Railway Museum (NRM) at York.

Bill Smith played a significant part in the international field of railway preservation and in 1982 was made the first honorary life member of the Friends of the NRM. In September 1993, additional plaques were fitted under the nameplates with an explanation of the dedication. The nameplates were removed in October 1996 and the locomotive officially withdrawn on the 13th of February 1997.

Sold for preservation in March 1997, 33109 moved to the Mid Hants Railway in September that year. The 'Captain Bill' nameplates, along with the plaques, were refitted and subsequently re-dedicated at Alresford station on the 1st of August 1999, carrying the identity of D6525. The loco was moved to LNWR at Crewe in 2003 under the 'Heritage Traction' leasing banner for a bogie overhaul however work didn't start until 2004.

This work never got to completion and following much time languishing at Crewe, the loco was sold to several members of the ELR Diesel Group for a second spell of preservation at the East Lancashire Railway, moving to the ELR in 2007 and returning to service in February 2008.

Related Links:

www.nrm.org.uk

www.watercressline.co.uk

www.class33crompton.co.uk