

BR CLASS 33 Bo-Bo DIESEL 33 111 (D6528)

The British Railways Class 33 were produced as a more powerful Type 3 (1,550 bhp) development of the Type 2 Class 26. This was achieved by removing the steam heating boiler and fitting a larger 8 cylinder engine. This was possible because of the traffic requirements of the Southern Region which entailed seasonal tourist traffic heavier in the summer, when carriage heating was not needed, changing to freight use in the winter.

A total of 98 (numbered D6500–D6597) were built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company (BRCW) and known as "Cromptons" after the Crompton Parkinson electrical equipment installed in them. Bodywork and cab ends were of all steel construction and, generally, very similar in appearance to Class 26 locos, but carrying Southern Region two-digit headcode blinds between the cab windows. The underframe and bodysides formed an integral superstructure with cabs being double skinned and having driving controls on both sides to make shunting easier. The roof was of glass reinforced plastic and the bogies were identical to those used on the Sulzer Type 2 with SKF roller bearings and brakes on all wheels.

The engine was a Sulzer 8LDA28 diesel engine, built by Vickers Armstrong at their Barrow-in-Furness workshops in Lancashire. It had eight cylinders of 280mm bore by 360 mm stroke developing 1,550 hp at 750rpm with a Sulzer de Havilland LAG 37-17 turbocharger. A Crompton Parkinson CG391-B1 main generator was fitted. All locos had dual air and vacuum brakes and could work in multiple with any other "blue star" locomotives.

D6528 was built by the BRCW at Smethwick being given Works Number DEL 120 and was introduced to traffic on 29th October 1960 being first allocated to Hither Green depot [HG]. Avoiding the weight of the boiler and its related water and fuel supplies allowed the diesel fuel capacity to be increased from 500 gallons to 800 gallons.

All 86 of the first delivery were built as standard locomotives, numbered D6500 to D6585. Under TOPS they became class 33/0 and the surviving locomotives, excluding the 19 that were converted for push-pull operation, were renumbered 33 001–33 065. The locos were built to Restriction 4, which was the normal standard and equivalent to British Railways standard C1 restriction. On introduction, all Class 33's were BR Route Availability (RA) 5.

On Saturday 25th November 1961, D6528 was pictured on the Hundred of Hoo Railway, at Stoke Junction Halt, hauling a short train of somewhat ancient oil tank wagons. This halt only lasted another few days before being closed officially on Monday 4th December.

D6528's depot allocation was changed to Eastleigh depot [EH] during December 1964 and, on Tuesday 28th December 1965, was seen passing through Woking with a freight working and displaying the headcode 7A.

While third rail electrification was expanding on the Southern Region, it was not then considered justifiable to extend it beyond Bournemouth. In 1965, D6580 was fitted with experimental push-pull apparatus, high-level brake pipes and jumper cables to make it compatible with existing Multiple Unit stock.

Commencing on 21st July 1965 tests were carried out between Wimbledon Park and Basingstoke and then, from 17th January 1966, on the Oxted Line, using a 6-coach rake of

unpowered multiple unit coaches (designated TC which stood for Trailer Control). The use of this equipment removed the necessity for the loco to run around its train at each terminus, as it could be controlled from the driving position of a TC unit and, hence, could propel its train from the rear.

Following successful completion of trials, D6580 and a further eighteen class 33's (D6511, D6513, D6514, D6516, D6517, D6519, D6520, D6521, D6525, D6527, **D6528**, D6529, D6531, D6532, D6533, D6535, D6536 and D6538) entered Eastleigh Works, to be fitted with a modified version of the push-pull apparatus. This was fully compatible with Class 73 and Class 74 electro-diesels and all electro-pneumatic controlled (EP) multiple unit stock. They emerged, painted in the new BR corporate blue with full yellow ends. BR classified this Class 33/1 sub-section as RA 6.

D6521 had re-entered service by November 1966, so equipped, and by November 1967 the remainder had returned to traffic fitted for push-pull working. With the advent of TOPS, Class 34 was originally reserved for these modified locos but they were grouped, instead, into class 33/1 and the nineteen locos were sequentially renumbered in the range 33101–33119. D6528 eventually outshopped from Eastleigh on 3rd November 1967 being painted in all over Blue livery, given the number of 33111 and was the last Class 33 to be converted.

The mainstay of push-pull operations was the operation over the then non-electrified track from Bournemouth to Weymouth and the service continued over three decades. Weymouth trains started at London Waterloo powered by third-rail electric traction via Winchester and Southampton to Bournemouth. The consist was normally twelve cars made up of a powerful 3,200 hp 4REP electric multiple unit on the rear with two leading units of unpowered 4TC's. At Bournemouth the train would be divided with the 4REP remaining at the station and the 4TC's hauled onward to Poole and Weymouth by Class 33/1. On the return leg, the locomotive propelled the train back to Bournemouth where it would be attached to a waiting London-bound 4REP and the locomotive detached to await the next Weymouth-bound service.

On Saturday 2nd November 1974, 33111 powered the South Western Division's sponsored Crosstown rail tour. Stock involved were 4TC's 416 and 424 with through-wired RMB 1872 coupled between them. It was advertised as the last passenger train to traverse the Merton Abbey branch.

On 7th July 1979, the 05:55(SO) Weymouth - Birmingham arrived at its destination with 33111 pushing 4-TC sets 420 & 425. 33111 returned on the 11:05 to Weymouth. Two months later, on 8th September, it was noted arriving at Bristol Temple Meads but no headcode was displayed although the train may possibly have come from Portsmouth.

The Class 33/1 with one or two 4TC sets were also the mainstay of Waterloo – Salisbury services from their introduction. Some of 33111's duties observed, included arriving at Weymouth Quay working the Channel Islands Boat Train, made up of Mk1 coaches, from London Waterloo on 31st July 1983. It was noted on the same duty, less than a month later, on 23rd August. On Saturday 13th August 1983, 33111 was paired with 33009 to double head a lengthy Freightliner service from Southampton Docks through Basingstoke towards the Midlands.

It received an Intermediate Overhaul at Eastleigh Works re-entering traffic on 15th March 1984. On 25th July it was noted on 1074 calling at Leamington Spa en-route to the south

coast. On 27th March 1985 33111 was seen leaving Southampton up yard with the 6B86 Speedlink freight service to Eastleigh. In July 1985 it received a replacement Main Generator at Eastleigh and a new power unit (from 33054) in March 1986.

On 19th June 1986, 33111 was photographed on a Channel Islands boat train pushing 4TC sets 403 & 421 towards London at the end of the Weymouth station end of the Tramway. On 20th September 1987, 33111 was photographed propelling a 4TC departing Basingstoke on the 15:08 from Portsmouth to Reading.

During January 1988 it received another Main Generator change. On 8th October 1988, 33111 was out and about the Southern again with a 4TC and some of its workings included 06:35 Salisbury - Eastleigh - Southampton, then 0827 Southampton - Portsmouth & Southsea followed by the 11:13 Portsmouth - Waterloo (via Pompey Direct & Woking) and then 14:10 Waterloo - Salisbury. On 28th December 1988, 33115 and 33111 propelled a 4TC forming the 08:39 Yeovil Junction - Waterloo. 33111 was then pictured later in the day at Gillingham (Dorset) on the 12:10 from Waterloo ending up returning to Waterloo at 14:35.

On 17th December 1988, 33111 propelled 4TC set 8001 on a special train from Salisbury to Bristol Temple Meads. It has not yet been possible to ascertain the reason for this special.

On Sunday 7th May 1989 there must have been engineering works somewhere between Worting Junction and Northam Junction as the 5WES ('Plastic Pigs') electric units needed diesel haulage over the diversionary route via Grateley, Laverstock Junction and Romsey. 33111, coupled to 33053, double-heading units 442405 and 442420 from Basingstoke to Southampton where the units could resume electric traction towards Bournemouth and Weymouth.

On Thursday 11th May 1989, 33111 worked 08:03 Salisbury - London Waterloo, then 10:10 London Waterloo - Salisbury followed by the 13:12 Salisbury - London Waterloo, then it was photographed departing from Clapham Yard with empty stock to London Waterloo to form the 16:32 Waterloo to Salisbury. It then continued with a 'shuttle' departing on the 19:20 from Salisbury to Tisbury returning on the 20:15 Tisbury to Salisbury.

On Friday 1st June 1990, 33111(D6528) was pictured leading 33110 (6527) through Salisbury station hauling a varied rake of ballast wagons. It is believed they were being shunted into one of the yards in readiness for a weekend's track work somewhere.

Final BR passenger working occurred on 7th July 1990 when it rescued IC40 which was the 13.35 from Paddington to Penzance having been 'scrambled' from either Exeter or Westbury. Following the failure of the Class 47, 33111 took the service from Castle Cary to Exeter St Davids.

It became out of service at 13.00 at Eastleigh on 17th March 1991 being switched off with no defects. Official condemnation occurred at 09.00 in the stabling sidings on 24th June. The locomotive was stored at Eastleigh Depot during which time it 'donated' its turbocharger to 33048 then lying at Stewarts Lane depot. It was then towed into Eastleigh Yard on 10th February 1992 and then to the top of East Yard in March 1992.

BR put 33111 out to tender during the same month and it was sold for preservation to the Class 33/1 Preservation Company Ltd. On 31st May 1992, initial restoration and cosmetic painting took place in Eastleigh Yard including the application of D6528 numbers on the

bodysides. The locomotive was towed to St Leonards by 33012 (currently D6515 *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* also now based at Swanage) on 19th February 1993. Train 5Z33 09.45 Eastleigh - St Leonards followed a successful ultrasonic test of the axles on D6528.

Restoration commenced at St Leonards but, in July 2001, 33111 donated its power unit to 33108. The locomotive then moved from St Leonards by road on 30th January 2002, arriving at its new home at Barrow Hill on 31st January 2002. The loco was repainted into BR Blue in September 2003. A replacement power unit was started for the first time in preservation on 15th November 2003. It then moved under its own power for the first time in preservation on 27th June 2004 operating a successful test run at Barrow Hill to Springwell sidings.

33 111 was moved by road on the 5th June 2008 to Allelys yard, and then on to the Swanage Railway, arriving on Monday 9th June. Its first passenger working was the 18.10 Swanage - Norden on Friday 13th June 2008. In February 2010 it received the unofficial name "Hot Dog" - not from the owning group but from members of the Railway's Operating Department. A set of magnetic 'nameplates' were created and attached to the loco for a time and ran in that guise during the 2010 Diesel Gala.

33111 hauled 4VEP "Gordon Pettitt" at the Swanage Railway Diesel Gala during May 2013 with the SR 27 way cabling proving very useful. On Saturday 11th May, 33111 double headed with 33108 on the 11:05 Norden-Swanage service. Both locos are owned by the Class 33/1 Preservation Company Ltd.

During May 2015, 33111 underwent major body work attention and a repaint in Swanage Goods Shed. The cab roof at No 2 end of the loco was repaired and refitted although the roof leak investigation work still needed to be completed as at 6th September. As at 5th December the cab windows were back in and the bodywork was ready for the final coat of blue so that it could be back in traffic before year end. On 31st January 2016, a B Exam was undertaken ahead of its return to service.

During the 2016 Diesel Gala 33111 was seen double heading with 33201. Ahead of the 2017 Swanage Diesel Gala, however, new batteries had to be fitted. By 15th May 2021, 33111 had undergone a B5 exam at Swanage.

It was reported that a BRCW works plate from 33111 (DEL 120) was sold through the Ebay auction site for £370 during June 2020 and another (the other?) was sold at Crewe Railway Auctions for £1,050 during 2021.

On Monday, 11th July 2022, 33111 was driven to Arne Road RRI sidings ready to be taken by road to Alresford so it could attend the two day Mid-Hants Railway Diesel Gala (15th to 17th July). Whilst there, 33111 was, on occasions, coupled to the LU 4-car 4TC unit being used in classic push-pull mode. It was also coupled to Class 419 Motor Luggage Vans (MLV) number S68001 (9001) and 9002 plus Class 416 2EPB (2 Electro Pneumatic Brake) number 5759. After its efforts over the MHR 'Alps' 33111 was returned to a more mundane life at Swanage on Thursday 21st July 2022.

On 2nd May 2024, 33111 was noted back in passenger service again (Blue Timetable) instead of the advertised steam service. The rostered steam loco had failed so 33111 hauled 6 return trips from Swanage Station during the day. There were plenty of chances to enjoy some Class 33 'thrash' pulling 5 coaches up 1 in 76 gradients.

Later in 2024 it was requested to operate at the Bluebell Railway's Diesel Gala between

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th September. It worked to Norden where it was readied for road transport to East Sussex during the week before the event.

For most of the Gala, 33111 was coupled to Southern Region Class 423 (4VEP) unit No. 3417 'Gordon Pettitt' - painted in BR Blue/Grey livery – and used in full push-pull mode on many occasions. This helped recreate the days of Blue Class 33/1 diesels and Blue/Grey 4TC units between Bournemouth and Weymouth. Following this, 33111 was used in a private filming event and then took part in the railway's Beer Festival long weekend (20th - 22nd September) timetable.

33111 was then stopped for essential bodywork repairs plus a few other jobs that could, conveniently, be undertaken at the same time. To facilitate this, the loco was transported back to the group's long term base at Barrow Hill. The work list was quite lengthy, however, and was expected to take some time.

33111's return to Swanage was anticipated to be sometime later in 2025. This all depended on how well finance was available and how quickly the work could be completed by the dedicated band of volunteers in Class 33/1 Preservation Company Ltd.

Help Class 33/1 Preservation Company Ltd (volunteer and/or finance): <https://33pres.com/>

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 7th December 2021

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