

## **BR DIESEL TYPE 3 No. 37706 (ex-D 6716/37016)**

As part of large scale dieselisation undertaken in the British Railways modernisation plan a need was identified for a number of type 3 locomotives having a power output of between 1,500 bhp and 1,999 bhp. English Electric Co had already been successful with orders for type 1 and type 4 diesels as well as producing locos of similar power for railways in East Africa. A design based on the exported locomotives was put forward and accepted for a general purpose locomotive which found service initially in BR's Eastern Region.

Class 37s became familiar sights on many parts of BR, in particular powering InterCity services in East Anglia and Scotland. They also performed well on secondary and inter-regional services for many years.

In fact, many are still in use today on freight, maintenance, and empty stock movements. Class 37s are known to some railway enthusiasts as "tractors", a nickname bestowed apparently due to the similarities between their sound and that of a tractor.

There was no prototype produced for this Type 3. British Railways placed an order for forty-two Class 37 locomotives in January 1959 straight off the English Electric drawing board. The first was delivered in November 1960 entering service on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. BR ordered more Class 37s before the original batch had been completed in mid-1962. The final locomotive was delivered to Western Region on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1965.

English Electric split construction between Vulcan Foundry at Newton-le-Willows, and Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns of Darlington. A total of 309 locos were produced and numbered in two series D6700–D6999 and D6600–D6608. The bodywork bore a strong family resemblance to other English Electric designs such as the Class 40 and Class 23 'Baby Deltic' used on suburban services out of Kings Cross. Locos from D6819 onwards were built without nose-end doors and the headcode display was changed from a split pair of boxes to a panel on the centre of the nose.

D6716 was outshopped from EE's Vulcan Foundry with Works Number EE/VF2879/D595. It had vacuum train braking equipment installed as well as a Clayton RO2500/03 steam generator for train heating. It was painted all-over BR Green livery with a Grey roof plus BR's Blue Star multiple working facilities.

It went new to Stratford depot in East London and stayed there for around 7 years. Whilst there, it suffered a minor damage on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1964. It is believed that when braking some sparks started a fire on oil impregnated dirt or waste material.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1966, D6716 was apparently noted hauling the 10:08 service from York to Bournemouth – but only on the Nottingham to Banbury section. On 28<sup>th</sup> August it was also used on part of the 07:20 Harwich Parkeston Quay to Manchester Piccadilly service. On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1967 D6716 headed the 09:45 from Liverpool Street to Harwich P.Q.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1968, the loco was spotted in Doncaster Works undergoing attention. Around the middle of May 1968 the loco moved to Tinsley depot near Sheffield in South Yorkshire. On 5<sup>th</sup> February 1969 it hauled two return workings between Nottingham and Sheffield.

By June 1969 it had received full yellow ends as an aid to track worker safety. Between 1970 and 1972 it moved Healey Mills, Nottingham Division and Gateshead. During October 1973 it came back to East Anglia workings by transfer to March depot in Cambridgeshire.

By February 1974 however it had been reallocated to Thornaby near Stockton-on-Tees although it journeyed again to Doncaster Works as it was noted there in February 1975. It's possible that this visit saw its boiler isolated as much (all?) of its work would now be freight haulage. As a result its number under TOPS became 37016.

Another visit to these Works occurred a few months later as it was seen there in August. Presumably to have its boiler and water tank removed and air braking installed to make it dual braked. In July 1978 it hauled the 07:30 Birmingham New Street air-braked service all the way to Newcastle.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1978, 37016 headed the 1F56 06:50 Saltburn - Edinburgh Waverley charter. However, when it got to Newcastle the loco hauling the scheduled 1S42 0857 Newcastle - Edinburgh Waverley had failed. The two trains were combined and 37016 hauled all 16 vehicles to Edinburgh apparently!

24<sup>th</sup> July 1979 saw 37016 haul a series of three return shuttles between Peterborough and Norwich clocking up almost 500 miles in the day. On 18<sup>th</sup> August it operated two similar shuttles amounting to over 325 miles. On 14<sup>th</sup> January 1980 37016 hauled a special working of C02 tank wagons from Haverton Hill sidings to Bow in East London. Later it double headed, with an unknown Class 31, the 20:23 Temple Mills Yard to Dringhouses Yard just south of York.

During March 1980 it was in Doncaster Works again. On 14<sup>th</sup> June it was hauling a Scottish Railway Preservation Society (SRPS) charter. It involved haulage to Arbroath, Gourock and Edinburgh Waverley. On 25<sup>th</sup> July 1980 it took over 1E51 22:05 Inverness – York Motorail service. This heavy train had been hauled by 40050 but it failed at Spennymoor so 37016 took over to York. On 26<sup>th</sup> October Deltic 55016 failed on 1A01 08:30 Hull to Kings Cross somewhere near Hessle. 37016 took over to Doncaster where another loco continued the run to Kings Cross.

In November 1987 it was changed to 37706, which it retains to this day. This renumbering indicates that it had additional ballast weights added as well as modified gearing. Also, it was refurbished, rewired and its original English Electric generator replaced with GEC G564AZ or Brush alternator. For a time it was painted in Trainload Petroleum livery and carried the name "Conidae". No official withdrawal date for 37706 has yet been found.

Eurostar initially purchased a fleet of modified Class 37/6 locomotives, including 37706, to haul its "Nightstar" services over non-electrified sections of their routes. However, these services were never fully implemented, and the locomotives were eventually sold off. Their purchase of 37706 is likely to have occurred before 1997.

Direct Rail Services (DRS) purchased 37706 from Eurostar, along with other Class 37/6 locomotives, in 2007. This occurred after all Eurostar's Class 37 locomotives became redundant following the move from their Old Oak Common/North Pole depot to a new one at Temple Mills just north of Stratford.

West Coast Railway Company (WCRC) obtained loco 37706 from Direct Rail Services (DRS) in September 2005. They soon removed its DRS livery repainting it in WCRC's

distinctive maroon livery.

37706 has visited Swanage on several occasions, most notably in May 2009, when it hauled 34070 "Manston", 34028 "Eddystone", Drummond M7 Class 30053, 'Queen Mary' bogie goods brake van S 56289 for depot rides and BR Mk1 BSK 35464 as support coach for the three locos. This was in relation to the commemoration of 'Eastleigh 100'.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<https://www.class37.co.uk/fleet.aspx?strnumber=37706>  
<https://www.brdatabase.info/locoqry.php?action=locodata&type=D&id=6716&loco=6716>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Unofficial.WCRCGroup/posts/3869853060001825/>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Rail\\_Class\\_37](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Rail_Class_37)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Rail\\_Class\\_37#See\\_also](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Rail_Class_37#See_also)  
<https://www.rmweb.co.uk/forums/topic/81248-how-many-class-37s-still-survive/>

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