



The Class 58 Freight Locomotive

“ simpler, cheaper to build and run ... ”

On Thursday 9th December 1982 the first new freight locomotive for British Rail was unveiled to the press at Doncaster Works - it was strikingly different, and yet built on the needs, then current technology and anticipated expansion of growth in traffic. It was - according to the press releases issued at the time:



“ ...capable of hauling the equivalent of 50 heavy lorry loads. ”

Rodger Bradley

Its appearance coincided with the proposal to increase HGV capacity with 38 tonne lorries hauling loads up and down the motorways but was overshadowed by the Falklands War too. The Class 58 was the first completely new locomotive design to be handed over at Doncaster Works for 10 years, and provided the opportunity to demonstrate the capability

The assembly of press and other invited guests also included a tour of the BREL workshops, which proved an interesting and enlightening experience.

Fortunately for the organisers the weather was extraordinarily kind, with a wintry sun breaking through the clouds at just the right moment. By 12:30 a large crowd had gathered on the lawn outside the Works Manager's Office, including many of the people who had put 58001 together. Philip Norman, BREL's Managing Director handed the locomotive over to Henry Sanderson, BR's Director, Freight who, in addition to accepting what he saw as a boost the freight business needed, was presented with a memento of the occasion, comprising a small oval numberplate cast in brass, and numbered 58001. Mr Sanderson in a short speech stated that he saw the class becoming THE heavy freight loco for years to come, with its low initial cost and reduced maintenance costs from greater reliability would help Railfreight compete with the heavy lorry.

Interestingly the new locomotives were to carry the name "Railfreight" on the cab sides and were turned out in the then new freight livery of red and grey. Apart from the fact that according to British Rail the 58's haulage capacity is equivalent to 50 heavily laden lorries, Railfreight's other Christmas present was a new 29 tonnes capacity van, some 42ft long and 250 in number, for such as the "Speedlink" services. The first two 58's were



despatched to Toton and set to work initially on coal trains.

Three years later - in Parliament - the Government had made a decision to close Swindon Works, and considerably reduce the workforces at Doncaster, Eastleigh and Springburn. One opposition member of the House of Lords the former Labour MP Neil Carmichael had asked about the impact on BREL's ability to build new locos and stock:

"With regard to the freight loco replacement plan—I raised this earlier with the Minister in another context—the British Rail Board are believed to have put out tenders for prototype models of the new freight locos. I understand that tender offers have gone to seven companies, mainly foreign. Applications are expected back in the winter, and the models should arrive by 1987. Although there are only small batches up for tender just now, the company which wins the tender will have entry into a large market, producing a large number of locomotives, about 750 over the next 25 years."

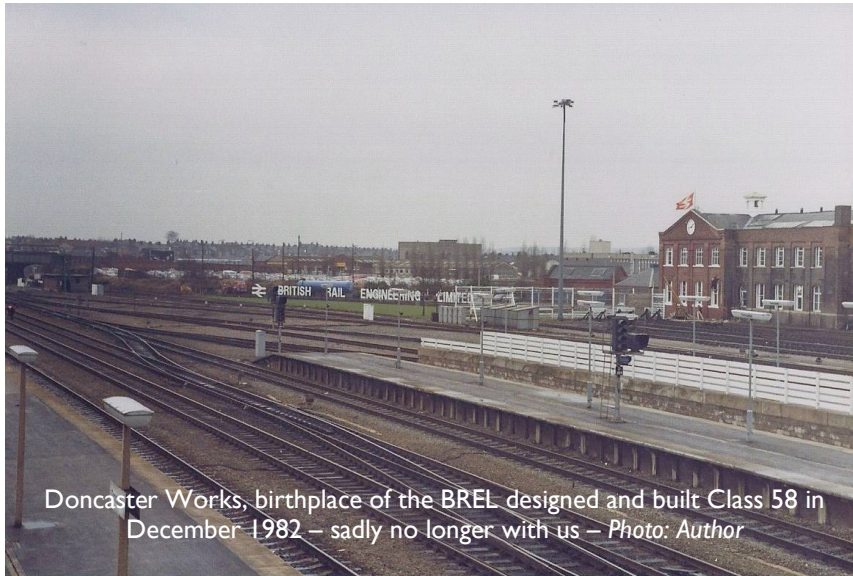
But that is another story perhaps. At the time the Class 58 arrived properly, in early 1983, there was still a drive towards "privatising" BREL, and the new loco was seen as the start of a new phase of success for the railway workshops. The design dates from 1977, when BREL commissioned BRB's Locomotive Design Office to prepare a report and design feasibility study on a low-cost Co-Co locomotive of 2500 hp (1864.25 kW) for export purposes. So, in essence, British Rail was asked to produce a design that could be built in BREL workshops and generate income from export orders. Sadly, no export orders were ever received, and this locomotive also marked the end of locomotive construction at Doncaster Works.

The outline of that brief was for a simple, modular construction, with an underframe of rolled steel joists, and non load bearing superstructure. The building costs when compared with more traditional monocoque style used on the Class 56 being built at Doncaster offered major savings on building. The principles used were:

- *minimum construction cost,*
- *minimum overall maintenance costs and*
- *suitability for adaptation to export applications with minimum modifications.*

British Rail's locomotive policy at the time was for building specialised passenger and freight motive power, as opposed to mixed traffic locomotives that had been the case previously. The Class 58 was built solely for freight haulage with slow speed

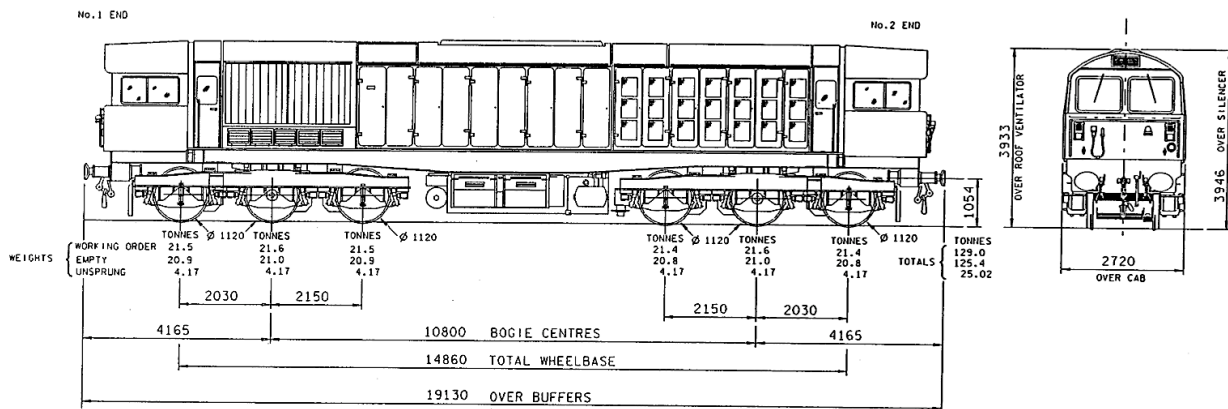
control equipment for merry-go-round coal train duties, and of course there was no need for train heating facilities.



Core Components

The underframe was a pair of rolled steel joists, with a flat top, and no load bearing member above floor level, with this arrangement the superstructure could be easily removed to provide easy access for maintenance and servicing. This was a simple approach, with the welded steel underframe running the length of the loco, with

holes and location pads machined for location of the fabricated cab assembly. The underframe was designed to take an end load of 200 tons at buffer height and to allow lifting of the complete locomotive at the bogie pivot centres without permanent deformation of the members.



This underframe assembly and the component location pads fixed to the platform could then be machined together on a single large machine tool. In fact the idea was a CNC portal type machine with a bed length that could accommodate a loco underframe and a bogie assembly.

Rotary manipulators allowed the machine to turn both assemblies, and they could be removed from the machine upside down. This was another

time/cost saving idea which allowed cabling and pipework to be fitted from above, without working from underneath to install bulky or awkward components such as battery boxes and fuel tanks. These might in the past have been fitted when the underframe sub-assembly was transferred to the erecting shop, but time and cost savings were achieved in this repeatable process – a little like mass production in the car industry.

You could argue that the overall approach was broadly in line with the fabricated designs of the early pilot scheme diesel locos of the 1950s, but it offered the benefit of a cost effective and simple construction process.

This approach ensured that no load bearing member was above floor level, and the superstructure components would include the two cabs, and central power unit cover, in the “hood” style. In this way the superstructure could be easily removed to provide easy access for maintenance and servicing.

The cabs at both ends of the loco were officially described as fabricated ‘modular construction’, and

insulated against heat and sound. The driver was positioned on the left, with the secondman on the right, and according to BR, the cab “*Particular attention has been paid to the general layout of the cab in terms of comfort and convenience for the operating crew.*” The driver’s side of course was equipped with a console desk to house the switches, warning lights and controls, whilst the cab also featured upholstered seats, heating, and cooking facilities (described as a “boiling ring”).

The flat panel windscreen split into two was provided with built in heating elements, along with air-operated windscreen wipers, and high-pressure washers – an obvious necessity for coal trains perhaps.

Bogies & Running Gear

The 3-axle bogie was designated CP3 and developed from the experimental CPI bogie fitted to a Doncaster built Class 56 – No. 56042. The main bogie frame is welded from two main box section longitudinals, linked by cast and fabricated cross members. In the centre of each bogie, the central pivot pin transmits traction and braking forces, as well as rotational guidance.

The three driven axles were each fitted with monobloc wheels, with the outer axle of each bogie fitted with roller bearing axleboxes, and the middle axle was fitted with cylindrical roller bearings to allow for lateral movement. The six axle hung motors from Brush were axle hung, nose suspended, and connected to the bogie wheels through a final spur gear drive. In later years, and as electric traction progressed, frame mounted motors were fitted to some locomotive types to further reduce unsprung masses.

The primary suspension was provided by helical springs from each axlebox to the main bogie frame, with lateral movement controlled through “silentbloc” parallel rubber bushes. Secondary suspension was achieved through what had become popular on other classes – notably a.c. electric types and HST power cars – with three ‘Flexicoil’



The first of the class No. 58001 seen here at Hatton North Junction on 24/10/1985, in original livery and on its designed duties – an MGR coal train.

Photo: Rob Hodgkins - 58001 Hatton North 24-10-85, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=69825548>

springs per side, and fitted into pockets on the locomotive underframe.

The EP (Electro-Pneumatic) brake system provided, was a modified version of the Davies & Metcalfe E70 equipment as fitted to the Class 56. Overall,

the brakes were a traditional clasp type arrangement acting directly on the wheel trades and operated by a pair of brake cylinders on each wheel, each of which was fitted with an automatic slack adjuster. Since these were freight only locomotives, there was no need to provide vacuum brake options, and the rolling stock numbers so fitted was dwindling rapidly in the 1980s anyway.



In the coal sub-sector livery of British Rail, No. 58005 is captured at Saltley Depot on 01/06/91. The two-tone grey livery is brightened by the application of the sector livery totem, and this loco is also sporting the raised aluminium double arrow symbol on the cab side.

Photo: Tutenkhamun Sleeping - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/54543575@N08/51227426595/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=106589981>

A key objective with the Class 58 braking setup was in essence simpler in both design and installation, with the driver controlling the brake application through an electrical brake controller, which in turn sends signals to the brake pressure control unit, which in turn activates the brake cylinders on the bogies. This electrical control of an automatic air-brake was used successfully on the Class 56, so it was adopted for what BREL hoped might win them some export orders on this new Class 58 design too. BR/BREL claimed these as advantages:

- Simpler pneumatic system
- Simplifies design at the cab as large diameter pipes are not required to the driver's brake valve.
- Adaptable for automatic control if required in the future.

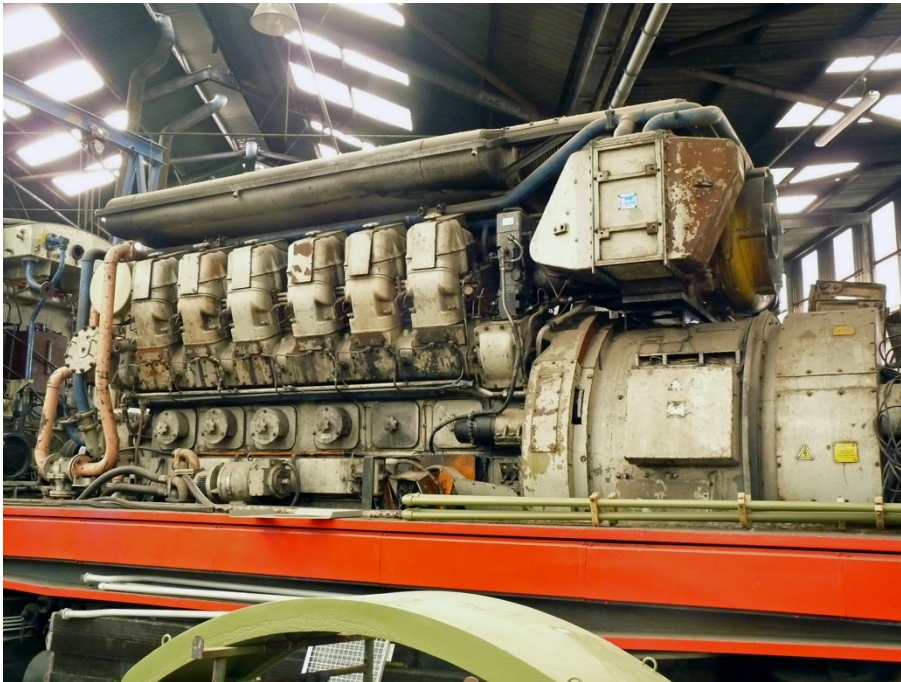
Each bogie was also equipped with sandboxes, with air-operated delivery to the leading wheels of each bogie.



58037 at Saltley on 11/04/87 showing the CP3 bogie fitted to the class in their original condition.

Photo: Tutenkhamun Sleeping - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/54543575@N08/5276865078/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=106557726>

Power Unit



The well-used power unit of Class 58 No. 58016, with its 12-cylinder Ruston engine, paired with its Brush alternator, showing engine casing removed, as the loco was undergoing restoration at the Barrow Hill Roundhouse.

Photo: nottsexminer - no.58016 Class 58 Engine
Uploaded by Oxyman, CC BY-SA 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22380099>

Engine & Alternator

The diesel engine was essentially a de-rated, Ruston RK3ACT charge air cooled 12-cylinder, developing 2460kW, from its 250mm x 305mm cylinders in a vee formation, and mounted in the centre of the locomotive. The engine was started by a pair of d.c. motors driving a ring gear fixed to the engine flywheel, with a power take off at the engine's free end driving the hydrostatic pump for the radiator fans and air compressors. These engines were built at what was by then the GEC Diesels works at Vulcan Foundry. This was a place that had a very long history of innovation and development of the diesel engine, including the successful English Electric designs. As the consolidation in the rail industry built up during the 1970s and 1980s, they

became part of the GEC Traction empire, along with Ruston Paxman.

The business end of the engine is where the Brush supplied alternator is mounted to the engine crankshaft via a hollow tube and coupling adaptor. The auxiliary alternator was bolted to the main alternator hub by a shaft extension which also carried the brushless exciter rotors for both alternators. Overall – the design and assembly of the alternators was intended to provide durability of earing parts, ease of maintenance and interchangeability of parts, with all being self-ventilated units.

Traction Motors

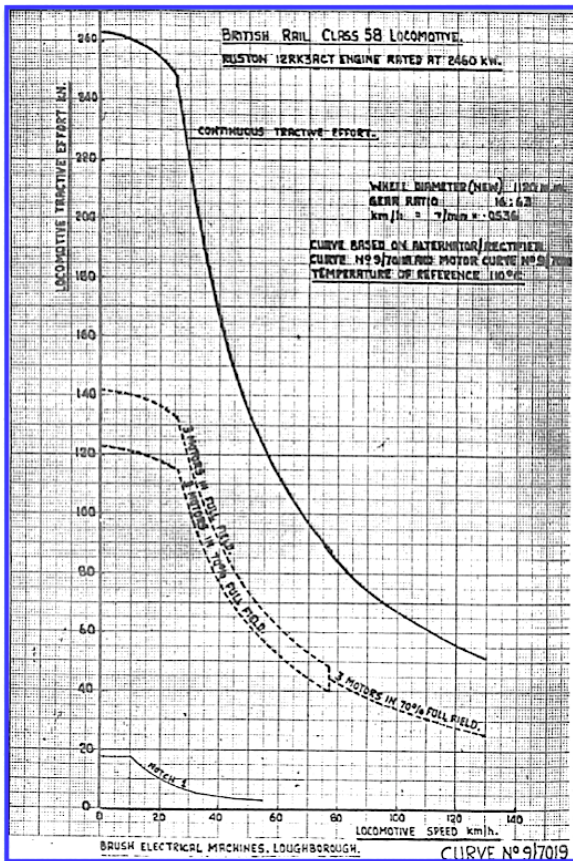
Interestingly, the traction motors – designated type TM 73-62 - used on the 58s were derived from those used on the BR built Class 45 'Peak', the 'Kestrel' prototype 4,000hp locomotive, and the highly successful Class 56. The design of this key component required to be lighter in weight, but robust and durable, simple to maintain, easily interchangeable, and with acceptable working life of wearing components.

These were 4-pole d.c. machines (*asynchronous motors were still some way off for BR*), and force ventilated from the body mounted blowers, with flexible connections to the armature core end, before passing through the motor, and exhausted to the outside world at the drive pinion end.

Control Systems

As the diesel and electric traction era on BR had matured, the variety of control systems had rationalised, and by 1982, electro-pneumatic control was pretty much standard. From the driver's control panel, power was supplied to the

sic d.c. traction motors, arranged in three groups of series pair connections through a conventional silicon diode rectifier assembly.



Each pair of traction motors was switched by an electropneumatic contactor, with a single stage of field-divert, or field weakening, with a single three-circuit electropneumatic reverser controls the direction of current flow through the motor fields.

Leading Dimensions

British Rail Class 58 Co-Co	
Builder	BREL Doncaster Works
No. built	50
Built	1982-84
Design	BREL/British Rail
Gauge	1435mm
Wheel arrangement	Co-Co
Engine	Ruston 12RK3CT
Cylinders	12
Horsepower	2,460 kW @ 1,000 rpm
Traction Motors	6 x Brush TM 73-62
Main Alternator	Brush BA 1101 B
Max tractive effort	275,000N
Continuous tractive effort	240,000N @ 28 km/hr
Wheel diameter	1,120mm
Bogie wheelbase	14,860mm
Bogie centres	10,800mm
Length over buffers	19,130mm
Axle load	21.4 – 21.6 tonnes
Total weight	129 tonnes
Fuel capacity:	4,215 litres
Minimum curve radius	80 m
Maximum speed	80 mph
Maximum height	3,946mm
Maximum width	2,720mm

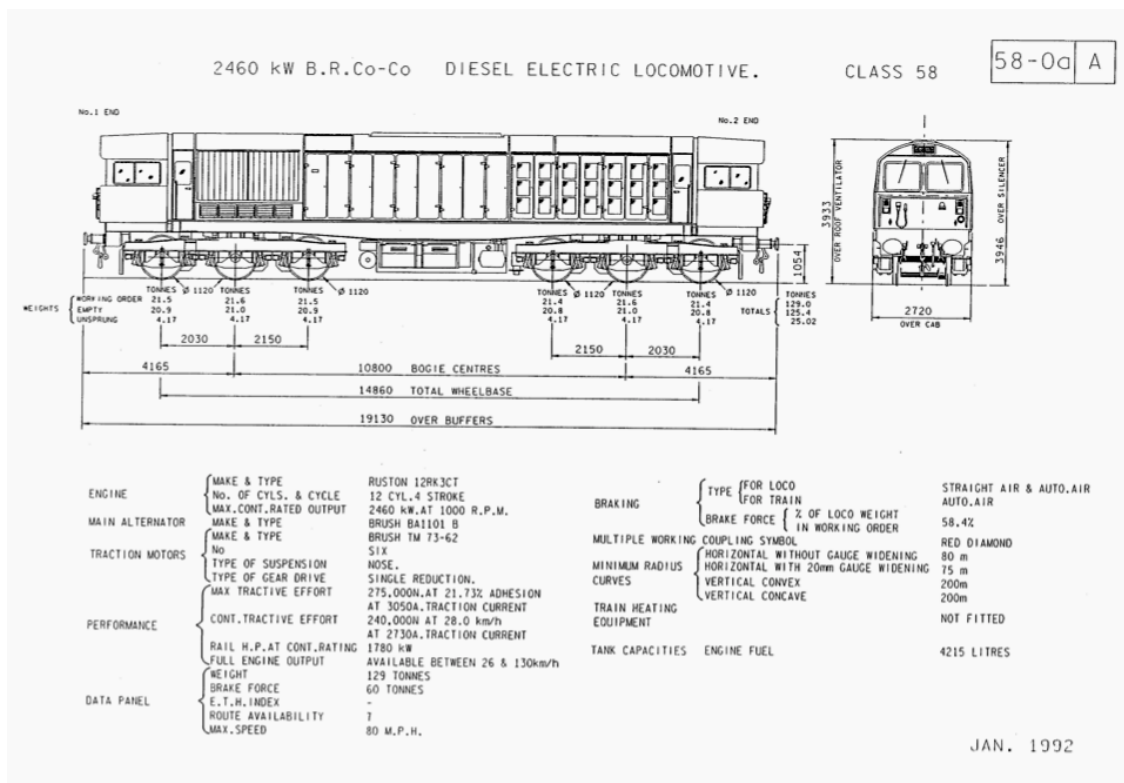
Two key components of the arrangement were the slow speed control and wheelslip/slide correction.

Slow Speed Working & Wheelslip/Slide

For slow speed working the traction motors are connected in series, to match the alternator characteristic, with the driver selecting one of four speed settings and the locomotive's speed was sensed at two of the motors. Locomotive speed was controlled automatically, and the driver could adjust this as necessary by a controlled brake application.

Newer BR locomotives were then also being fitted with wheelslip/slide detection systems, and for the Class 58 – given its operational environment – this was deemed an essential feature. The poor wheel/rail adhesion conditions in Colliery and Power Station sidings on say merry-go-round workings was seen to be their most challenging job on BR.

In essence, what happened or happens, was: When wheelslip was detected the tractive effort was reduced and power output demanded by the driver's controller pre-set level was reduced. Then, when wheelslip stops tractive effort was reapplied at a lower level than that pre-set before wheelslip occurred.



Performance & Operation



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58036 Saltley 18/04/87

Just 3 months before the last of the class was delivered, 58036 was captured in its original livery at Saltley on 18/04/87.

Photo: Steve Jones - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tutenkhamunsleeping/5883861124/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=79968294>

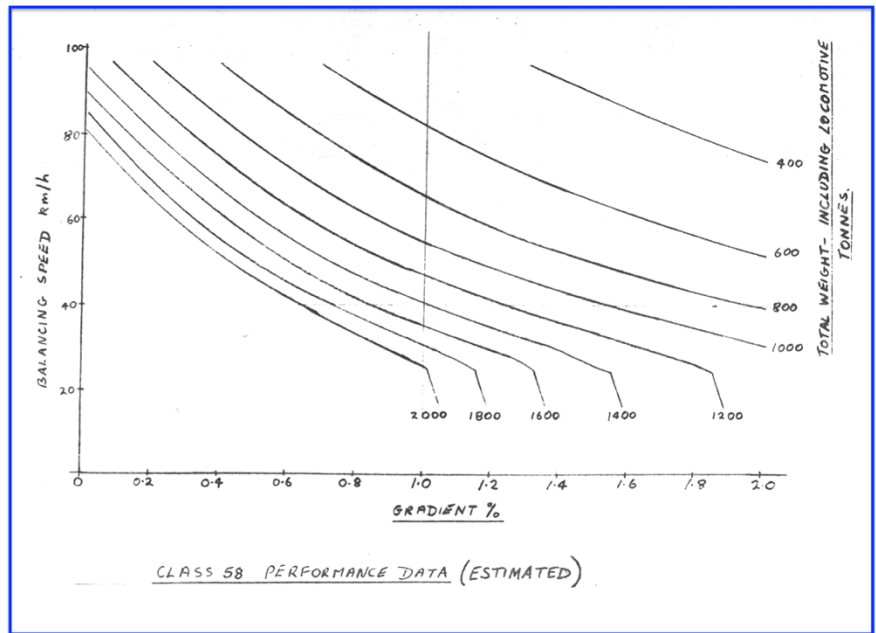
All of the Class 58s were built at Doncaster Works between 1982 and 1987, and within a couple of years the Class 58 was proving more reliable than the preceding design, Class 56. That said, the initial trials with 58001 highlighted a problem with the climate control systems for the cab – which showed that they were not effective at high speed – and so modifications were made and were applied to the remainder.

The 58's were also designed so that up to three could be driven in multiple from one cab, by a single crew, but – they could not be worked in combination with any other class. The last of the class, 58050 was fitted temporarily with another form of wheelslip control – “Sepex”. Although this arrangement was more specifically associated with a new design of d. c. traction motor with “separately excited” field coils, hence the name, but which provided for a greater degree of control of power applied through the traction motor. The system was an integral feature of the later Class 60 design.

These locos came at a time when there was significant upheaval in the rail industry, and the lack of government investment and support demanded organisational changes, which led to “sectorisation”, where British Rail’s Railfreight

operation was divided into separate units for handling passengers and goods traffic. Sectorisation provided Railfreight, Parcels InterCity, Provincial and the heavily subsidised commuter traffic in Network Southeast as separate units. This resulted in the creation of the Trainload Freight sector, which was further sub-divided into 5 sub-sectors:

1. Metals & Automotive
2. Coal
3. Petroleum & Liquids
4. Speedlink Distribution
5. Construction Products



However, “Speedlink Distribution” – wagonload freight traffic was combined with the Freightliner service to create “Speedlink Distribution”, and so Trainload Freight was solely focused on bulk traffic from 1988 onwards.

Overall, ‘sectorisation’ was driven in part through lack of government investment and funding, and the idea that operating these sectors as separate business divisions could deliver further efficiencies and reduce the need for public support.

The Class 58s entered service, with the Coal sub-sector, and intended for the merry-go-round services to power stations, but this was dramatically interrupted by the run-down of the UK coal industry and the miners’ strike. They were transferred to other duties but were reportedly less successful on some services than the Class 56, and continued in general freight operations in the UK until after privatisation in 1993. A year later – BR’s Trainload Freight was rebadged as “Mainline Freight”, which was itself subdivided into two further business units as part of the privatisation plan – “Loadhaul” and “Transrail”.

The complexities of Britain’s rail network into a franchised system with multiple companies was very bureaucratic and provided no opportunity for long term development, or strategic planning.



A Trainload Freight Class 58 No. 58026 rebranded as “Mainline Freight, seen here at Rugby on 21/04/2001

Photo: Tutenkhamun Sleeping - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/54543575@N08/5584739954/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=106590044>

Three years after the first steps, the various freight franchised operators merged to form EWS (English, Welsh & Scottish Railway), owned by Wisconsin Central and various banks and investment houses in the USA.

EWS bought British Rail's Trainload Freight business quite cheaply, and at the time, the freight business was still profitable, and according to some reports, the most profitable operation in Europe. In 1989, BR's Railfreight operation increased its operating surplus by over 50% to £69m, compared with the previous year, and winning new bulk traffic to end the year carrying 149.5 million tonnes. Curiously this had fallen to 88.7 million tonnes in 1995, just before being sold – a rather steep fall of over 40% in 6 years – could this all have been down to the loss of coal traffic?

In 1996 – 14 years after the first Class 58 was delivered, all of the class was taken over by EWS, and still allocated to Toton Depot. Initially they were still primarily based on coal traffic in the Midlands, but as a result of EWS' franchise giving them country wide track access they appeared in other places too. The exceptions were Scotland and Wales, but perhaps contrary to earlier comparisons with the Class 56, in EWS days these were described as the 'best performing Type 5s built'.

As the turn of the century approached, these were almost coming of age at 18 years old, but in 1999, the first two Class 58s were put into store by EWS – 58017 And 58022. It was seen as the beginning of the end, but by rail standards these were barely just out of the showroom, and less than 2 years later, the Class 58s were no longer scheduled to haul coal trains in the East Midlands, being replaced by the new Class 66s.

2001 and 2002 really saw the end of Class 58 workings in the UK, and EWS had concentrated their operations to the South and West of their franchised area, based out of Eastleigh.

Whilst no export order was ever gained for this class, the first couple of years of the new millennium saw the Netherlands Railfreight operator ACTS hiring Class 58s (58038, 58039, 58044, 58049) to work their 'Veendam Shuttle' service between Rotterdam and Veendam. Two of the class arrived in 2003, and a third in 2005, with

an expected end to their service in 2009, but all three were eventually re-hired to France and set to work on the construction trains for the new LGV lines.



In its final EWS livery No. 58049, named "Littleton Colliery" is seen here at Heamies Farm in March 2002 – when the end of the line – literally – for this class in the UK was close.

Photo: Tutenkhamun Sleeping -
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/54543575@N08/5947220430/>, CC BY 2.0,
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Similarly, in 2003, 8 locomotives (58020, 58024, 58025, 58029, 58030, 58031, 58041, 58043) were initially selected by GIF – the Spanish Infrastructure operator for work on building Spain's new high-speed lines. At the time of writing, 12 of the class are stored at two locations, sporting ADIF colours.

The Class 58 locos in France were hired by Fertis for SNCF and operated under either ETF or TSO colours for working construction trains when the LGV Est was being constructed in the early 2000s, and later stored at the Alizay Depot, near Rouen. After that stint, they were stored at Alizay and Metz, but by 2006/7, all of the French exports were returned to the UK and stored out of use at Eastleigh and Old Oak Common.

Similarly, the 12 sent to Spain were put into service by ADIF, the Spanish infrastructure manager, who were busy building new high-speed lines. Four of the locos sent Spain were later stored out of use, and the other 8 were scrapped by the end of 2019.



The Class 58s hired out to French infrastructure company were used on the construction of the LGV-Est, and in this view a pair are seen hauling a long welded rail train, with 58-032 at the head end, near the station that would become Belfort-Montbéliard-TGV (Meroux)

Photo: Babskwal - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
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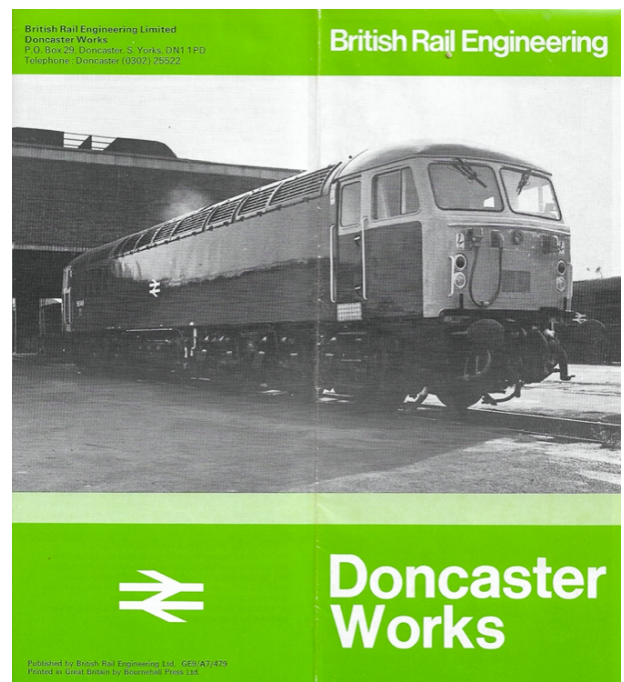
The following lists the building and withdrawal, scrapping, sale and/or storage/restoration of this unique BREL built locomotive. On average it saw just under 16 years of mainline service with BR, before wholesale withdrawals took place in 1999, 2000 and 2002, with the final 21 locos being withdrawn in 2002.

Number	Built	UK Withdrawal	Years UK Service	Name
58 001	09-Dec-82	08-Oct-99	16.84	
58 002	09-May-83	09-Nov-00	17.52	Daw Mill Colliery
58 003	31-Jul-83	29-Nov-99	16.34	Markham Colliery
58 004	30-Sep-83	09-Jan-02	18.29	
58 005	31-Oct-83	13-Oct-00	16.96	Ironbridge Power Station
58 006	31-Oct-83	11-Jan-00	16.21	
58 007	30-Nov-83	19-Jan-00	16.15	Drakelow Power Station
58 008	31-Dec-83	29-Nov-99	15.92	
58 009	31-Jan-84	16-Jan-02	17.97	
58 010	29-Feb-84	08-Dec-99	15.78	Audrey Newton
58 011	31-Mar-84	07-Dec-99	15.70	Worksop Depot
58 012	31-Mar-84	05-Dec-99	15.69	
58 013	31-Mar-84	26-Apr-01	17.08	
58 014	30-Apr-84	17-Nov-00	16.56	Didcot Power Station
58 015	30-Sep-84	08-Oct-99	15.03	
58 016	05-Oct-84	05-Aug-02	17.84	
58 017	31-Oct-84	30-Apr-99	14.50	Eastleigh Depot
58 018	31-Oct-84	07-Dec-99	15.11	High Marnham Power Station
58 019	30-Nov-84	07-Apr-01	16.36	Shirebrook Colliery
58 020	30-Nov-84	02-Sep-02	17.77	Doncaster Works

58 021	31-Dec-84	03-Aug-02	17.60	Hither Green Depot
58 022	31-Dec-84	11-Mar-02	17.20	
58 023	31-Dec-84	24-Jul-99	14.57	Peterborough Depot
58 024	31-Dec-84	02-Sep-02	17.68	
58 025	31-Jan-85	05-Aug-02	17.52	
58 026	31-Mar-85	16-Jan-02	16.81	
58 027	31-Mar-85	05-Sep-99	14.44	
58 028	31-Mar-85	29-Oct-99	14.59	
58 029	31-Mar-85	25-Jun-02	17.25	
58 030	30-Jun-85	01-Aug-02	17.10	
58 031	30-Sep-85	06-Apr-02	16.53	Cabellero Ferroviario
58 032	30-Sep-85	12-Jan-00	14.29	Thorsby Colliery
58 033	30-Sep-85	31-Aug-02	16.93	
58 034	30-Nov-85	18-Aug-99	13.72	Bassetlaw
58 035	31-Jan-86	30-Jun-99	13.42	
58 036	28-Feb-86	10-Mar-00	14.04	
58 037	28-Feb-86	08-Apr-02	16.12	Worksop Depot
58 038	28-Feb-86	04-Dec-99	13.77	
58 039	31-Mar-86	30-Dec-99	13.76	Rugeley Power Station
58 040	31-Mar-86	07-Dec-99	13.70	Cottam Power Station
58 041	31-Mar-86	08-Jul-02	16.28	Ratcliffe Power Station
58 042	31-May-86	13-Apr-02	15.88	Ironbridge Power Station / Petrolea
58 043	31-Jul-86	01-Aug-02	16.01	Knottingly
58 044	31-Aug-86	24-Jul-99	12.90	Oxcroft Opencast
58 045	30-Sep-86	31-Aug-02	15.93	
58 046	31-Oct-86	13-Jan-00	13.21	Thoresby Colliery / Ashfordby Mine
58 047	31-Oct-86	04-Sep-02	15.85	Manton Colliery
58 048	30-Nov-86	19-Jan-00	13.15	Coventry Colliery
58 049	31-Dec-86	29-May-02	15.42	Littleton Colliery
58 050	31-Mar-87	05-Aug-02	15.36	Toton Traction Depot

Five Class 58s were saved from the breaker's torch, but only four will be operated as 'preserved' or privately run in the UK, but the fifth example (58022) is owned by the Ivatt Diesel Recreation Society, where the chassis will be used to re-create the LMS pioneer diesel 10000. Of the others,

Of this unusual British diesel locomotive 58016 was the first to be rescued in 2010, by the Class 58 Group, who also bought 58045, withdrawn in August 2002, to provide spares for 58016 which was withdrawn in the same month, to be restored at the Barrow Hill Roundhouse.



In summary, 17 of the class have been scrapped, 4 rescued for preservation – a fifth was purchased to be used to be ‘cannibalised’ for parts for one of the remaining 58s, although it too was finally scrapped. There were no large scale export orders for this design, although it was certainly well used in the construction of high-speed lines in Spain and France, but its days were numbered by the decisions of the new operator EWS, who chose to order some 250 2-stroke locos – Class 66 - from Electro-Motive.

BREL and the British Rail designers had made a decent job of designing and building a locomotive for hauling rail freight, as a modular concept, to simplify manufacturing, maintenance and servicing, but it was the change in management strategies brought in through privatisation that spelled its demise.

The final word on the Class 58 should perhaps go to this entry in “Railnews” for July 1987, with 58050 as the last locomotive built at Doncaster “Plant”.

Railnews 7/87

16

Plant works'

last loco

By STEVE CHAPMAN

LOCOMOTIVE 58050 may be just another freight engine but it will go down in the history books as the last of a very distinguished line.

Its ancestors include such famous steam giants as Flying Scotsman and Mallard – the world's fastest steam locomotive.

That's because 58050, apart from being the 2,542nd to be built at Doncaster is also the last to emerge from the great Plant works.

Along with its illustrious companions, 58050 will stand testimony to the immense skill of generations of craftsmen who created what were arguably the world's finest locomotives.

First set up by the Great Northern Railway in 1853, the Plant eventually covered 84 acres. Among its many products were the first side corridor passenger coach, electric locomotives for the Euston-Birmingham/Crewe electrification, diesel shunters and 45,000 hay bailers under contract to International Harvesters.

The final loco was due out early this year but was delayed for fitting by private loco manufacturer Brush of experimental wheelslip retarding equipment, and actually emerged after the loco works had officially ceased production.

Now under BR's manufacturing and maintenance policy the Doncaster site has been divided up for three important new roles.

The Crimpsall loco shop has become a Level 5 maintenance depot undertaking component exchange overhauls, the former DMU repair shop is now the Railpart centre supplying spares to over 100 maintenance depots, while the wagon shops, which recently won a £4 million order from BR for new china clay wagons, has been constituted as a separate BRB subsidiary called Doncaster Wagon Works Ltd.

Before the changeover Doncaster employed over 3,000 people, about half of whom will be left when the transition is fully complete.

BREL has contributed £500,000 for job creation through the Doncaster Business Advice Centre covering payments to firms employing former BREL workers, start-up grants for new businesses, retraining and other initiatives.




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