



9th July 1967

By Geoff Burch

I applied for a job at Guildford Motor Power Depot as an engine cleaner. I got the paper through that said I would have to attend a medical first and that was at London Bridge. I went to Guildford on the 4th April, after I left school. On the 4th April 1961, I started work as engine cleaner at Guildford.

My first day was incredible I mean once we were kitted out with the protective clothing, i.e. a uniform of overalls and a grease top hat, we were issued a rule book and various other bits of paraphernalia to take home and digest but my first day was spent helping to clean a Schools class 30909 St Pauls. Beautiful Brunswick green locomotive, one of three that were at Guildford loco at the time, 30903, 30906, 30909. So, I helped to clean 30909 on my first day. So, I went home quite elated that I had helped to clean this wonderful Schools class.

I was working on the last locomotive, or one of the last locomotives to leave Guildford to go to Salisbury. The following day on the 10th July we had moved to Woking and then I became a second man on diesels or electrics from that point on. It was overnight.

My last day was, was quite special for me. As I mentioned I was on one of the last locomotives. I was booked on duty at Guildford to, I think it said on the alteration sheet locomotive to Salisbury if required. They were required, so there were 4 locomotives left at Guildford to leave on the last day. Two BR standard locomotives 73155 and 73318. West Country Class 34018 Axminster and the last locomotive to leave on the last day was US class 30072 and that was to be taken by a pair of Fratton men. So the journey consisted of the two locomotives, the two BR standard locomotives coupled together, my driver was driver Bill Brain and the other locomotive was crewed by Pat Kinseller and Dave Elston and we coupled up and left Guildford to go to Woking, to start with, and then reversed and went down to Salisbury and the, one of the moments of that was going through Brookwood where I had spent so much time as a child watching steam locomotives going through and there I am on one of the last locomotives to leave going through Brookwood, so quite a nice feeling. When travelling through Grateley, we were stopped by the signal, and we had 10 to 15 minutes to wait. The signaller suggested go and get a pint of beer, so we went out to the pub and brought the pints of beer back to the loco and we got pictures of us with pints of beer on the front of the loco. I mean certainly you weren't allowed to drink really on duty.



It was customary for you to have a drink somewhere after the journey probably to quench your first if you like. The, whilst we were gone, the West Country class locomotive left Guildford. That was crewed by Dave Bunce and Charlie Hampshire, and they followed us down to Salisbury. As I said the last locomotive to leave the USA class was turned and took water and coal etc and made its way to Salisbury via Fratton because of the coaling and watering side of things. So, it had to break its journey at Fratton to get to Salisbury.

We then set off for Salisbury. It was quite strange really getting off that locomotive at Salisbury and for the very last time. I suppose because there were 4 of us there at the time we were sort of all jovial about it but I suppose in a way it was very strange that we had got off. We were going to make our way back to Guildford and we were never going to get on a steam engine again.

