

## Depot History

Cardiff Canton depot opened in June 1882 replacing a smaller shed situated a few miles east of Cardiff General station at Long Dyke. Coded CDF by the GWR the initial depot consisted of a 40 ft long six road shed. The facility was extended in 1897 with the addition of a “roundhouse” incorporating a 55 ft turntable with no less than 28 roads radiating off it.

Increasing demands on the depot resulted in the building of a lifting shed and new coaling stage in 1925. Final expansion under steam operation came in 1931 when a new 65 ft turntable was built at the west end of the facility.

Nationalisation in 1948 resulted in the depot being re-coded 86C under British Railways which was in turn replaced by 88A in 1960 then 86A in September 1963 and finally CF during May 1973.

Introduction of Diesel traction by the Western Region in the late 1950's resulted in the need for a number of chief Diesel depots on the region. Four were chosen, these being Cardiff Canton along with Plymouth Laira, Bristol Bath Road and London Old Oak Common. Dieselisation of the Cardiff Division commenced in 1962. A total of 26 Western and Hymek Diesel Hydraulics were allocated to 88A by the end of that year, the first of each type being D7022 in February and D1012 “Western Firebrand” in November along with class 37 D6742 on loan from Sheffield Darnall for clearance tests. Until full completion of the new Diesel depot at Canton these were maintained in part of the Servicing Shed and the recently opened DMU maintenance facility located on the same site, as well as at Godfrey Road depot Newport. The Divisional Diesel allocation had increased significantly by the summer of 1964 whilst Steam locomotives had reduced in number from 1,111 to 367 during the same period.

To enable the modernisation required to deal with Diesel traction, Canton was closed to Steam on Saturday the 8th September 1962 with the final Steam Locomotive to leave being Castle Class 5073 “Blenheim” to work the 19.30 Crewe TPO the following day.

Canton was demolished during the winter of 1962/63 and rebuilt by contractors Kyle Stewart at a cost of £1.32 Million on a 30 acre site. On the 10th of October 1963 the first section re-opened, a 270 ft long 3 road Servicing Shed which used parts of the original 1882 structure in its construction. Even though a large part of the depot was in use some months before, the official re-opening of the depot took place following the building of a new heavy maintenance facility on the site of the old roundhouse, with berths for 16 locomotives.

Presided over by the Rt Hon Lord Brecon, Minister of State for Welsh Affairs, this took place on Friday the 18th of September 1964 with Landore based class 47 D1756 ceremoniously breaking a ribbon whilst entering the new building which was to become known as the “Main Shed”.

*British Railways  
Western Region*

*Opening Ceremony  
Diesel Locomotive  
Servicing and  
Maintenance  
Depot at Canton  
Cardiff*

*by The Rt. Hon. Lord Brecon  
Minister of State  
(Welsh Affairs)  
Friday  
18 September 1964*