

English Electric Traction Chester to Holyhead

Volume 1: 1959 to 1983



Contents

Introduction	3
1. Chester to Rhyl	4
2. Rhyl to Llandudno Junction	19
3. Llandudno to Trawsfynydd	31
4. Llandudno Junction to Bangor	37
5. Caernarfon branch	57
6. Bangor to Holyhead	60
7. Amlwch branch	80
8. Holyhead	85



1.

Chester to Rhyl

English Electric produced the first Diesels to be used in North Wales. They could be seen in action on the Chester to Rhyl section of the line to Holyhead from 1959 onwards. Class 40's saw regular use on passenger and a variety of freight services throughout the period covered by this volume. The second most common type was the class 50 with early workings involving commissioning runs to Rhyl when brand new from Vulcan Foundry during 1967 and 1968. As mentioned in the introduction, the odd class 37 also worked along the section during the period and as will be seen later, class 20's visited the area twice.

At the beginning of each chapter in this volume we will take a look at the route as it was during the period which it covers. On leaving Chester station the line passes a Depot on the right, home to many a class 40 between duties, then the junction for Birkenhead, also on the right, before running through tunnels under the line to Chester Northgate station (closed in 1969) and the City walls prior to crossing Roodee Viaduct over the river Dee. This is followed by Saltney Junction, the line to Wrexham and Shrewsbury branching off to the left, then Mold Junction yard, host to a number of class 40 hauled freight workings throughout the period. The line continues onwards through Shotton without any major gradients to tackle, the once busy John Summers, later British Steel, complex visible across the river Dee. Next comes Connah's Quay, home to the Crumps wagon works, before Flint. Bagillt marks the start of a four track section that, until the late 1960's, ran almost to Llandudno Junction to cope with the huge volume of summer holiday traffic, a large proportion of which was in the hands of class 40's from the mid 1960's onwards. A few miles on is the Courtaulds factory at Greenfield, served by a range of freight services throughout the period, a number class 40 hauled. Holywell Junction comes next, then Mostyn, home to a dock complex on the river Dee. Point of Ayr colliery is the last industrial site on the Chester to Rhyl section before the line heads along the coast through Prestatyn and the junction for the Dyserth branch (closed 1973). Finally, the route runs between the sea and numerous caravan parks before reaching Rhyl where during the 1960's trains often had to queue up to enter the station on a busy summer Saturday. At the start of the period covered by this volume over 50 down trains were sometimes scheduled to reach Rhyl in a three hour period on such a day, how times have changed!



Above

Two for the price of one! Class 40 No 306, later 40106, the unique green liveried member of the class, is seen with ex works class 50 No 417 (50017) on a return running in turn from Bangor, probably the 15.10 to Euston. The fact that the class 40 is leading suggests that all is not well with 417. Both locomotives would be removed at Crewe in favour of electric traction. Date, 23rd March 1973.

Photo Ian Langhorn. www.the-transport-photo-interchange.co.uk.

Chester to Rhyl



Above

August 28th 1979 and Haymarket based 40165 has found itself on the 15.40 Manchester to Bangor, seen departing Flint station. This was an exceptionally rare working for this example and was followed by the 19.30 return. She was back in North Wales on the 30th working the 17.18 Llandudno to Manchester.

Photo Dave Rapson.

Below

With the Courtaulds industrial complex dominating the skyline, 40019 "Caronia" rushes through Greenfield working 1J30, the 11.03 Bangor to Manchester on October 27th 1981. A rake of oil tanks can be seen parked in the unloading siding adjacent to the down line.

Photo Dave Rapson.

