

CLASSIC MODERN TRACTION IN ACTION

Malcolm Ranieri

Although many still hanker for the days of steam, the classic diesel and electric locomotives of the 1950s through to the 1980s today evoke a similar nostalgia. In their day, these powerful representatives of the 'modern age', thundering through the British countryside, presented a striking and often very attractive contrast between the timelessness of the landscape and the brilliance of the contemporary engineering.

The principal purpose of this book on classic modern traction, by acclaimed photographer Malcolm Ranieri, is to illustrate and document the classes of locomotive which have already gone (or are fast disappearing) from our rail network. Soon locomotives like the 37s and 47s, and 86s and 90s on electrified lines, which dominated passenger and freight services for four decades, will only be seen in action on preserved lines or static in museums. It not a catalogue of all the classes of locomotive which have disappeared over the past thirty years or so, but an in-depth look, using photographs of the locomotives in action, at the changing face of the railways of Britain over that period. Malcolm Ranieri does not just portray the locomotive in action but places it in its natural environment, in effect the train in the landscape. Our British landscape is rich and varied, and provides many different backdrops from the rural, the rugged, the industrial and the urban, through which the trains run. Malcolm Ranieri also highlights some of the significant changes in the lineside picture over the last few years. For example, railway signalling is now largely by electric light, whereas the more photogenic signal box and manually-operated signals are quickly disappearing. Stations have been rebuilt and the attractive rural halt is no more, replaced by structures akin to bus shelters. Safety considerations have also meant that modern fencing has not enhanced many locations and lineside vegetation has also increased.

With more than 150 historic and choice images, and with informative captions (which in many cases explain the techniques used to take the photographs), Malcolm Ranieri has captured an important part of Britain's railway heritage in its heyday, before it slipped from view to become a preservationist's dream but largely a main line memory.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malcolm Edward Ranieri was born in December, 1945 to an Italian father and English mother, and lived until his late teens at Haselor, a Warwickshire village. He still lives in his favourite county at Ettington, near Stratford upon Avon. He entered local government in 1962 and took early retirement in 1997, as Audit Manager at Warwick District Council.

Photography has been an all consuming interest for over 40 years, especially steam railways all over the world, though his interests encompass all forms of classic transport, and photography in general. Malcolm gained the Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society in 1998, and also the Masters award of the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain in 2000, and regularly exhibits in photographic exhibitions all over the country.

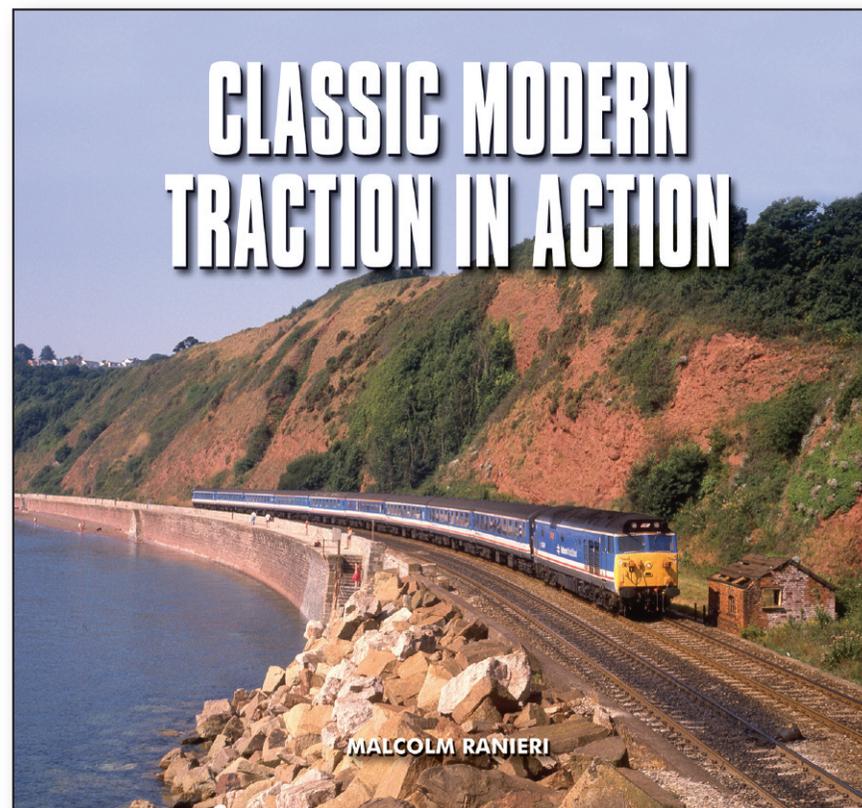
Since retiring Malcolm has taken up photojournalism, reporting for magazines such as *Old Glory*. He has been a volunteer on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for over 15 years and is currently a Duty Stationmaster. His previous books for Halsgrove are *The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway* and *Classic Commercial Vehicles*.

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Above: July, 1993. A chocolate and cream (GWR) liveried Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) at Hatton Bank, near Warwick.

Above left: July, 1999. 31452 and 31602 enter Aspley Guise Station, Bedfordshire.

March, 1989. 56209 on a Bardons stone train runs along the Kennet and Avon Canal at Crofton on the Berks and Hants Railway.

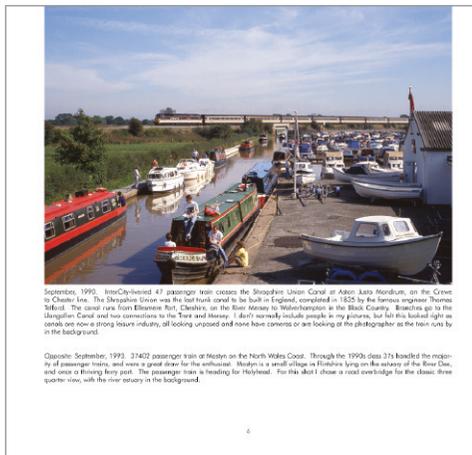


Left: September, 1998. 37413 and 37214 double-head an Enterprise short freight on the Fort William to Glasgow line at Spean Bridge, Scotland.

Below: Example of a double-page spread.



August, 1995. 37421 at Penmaenmawr on the North Wales coast.



September, 1995. InterCity-liveried 47 passenger train crosses the Shipdalen Union Canal at Adon, Aaris, Nordland, on the Cretan to Chetler line. The Shipdalen Union was the first hand canal to be built in England, completed in 1825 by the famous engineer Thomas Telford. The canal runs from Ellensham Port, Cheshire, on the River Mersey to Widdershonston in the Black Country. Branches go to the Birmingham Canal and two connections to the Trent and Humber. (Left) normally include people as they grow, but for this limited light no canal on now a strong leisure industry, all looking unposed and none have cameras or are looking at the photographer as the train runs by in the background.

October, September, 1999. 37422 passenger train on Meirion on the North Wales Coast. Through the 1990s class 37s benefited the majority of passenger trains, and were a great drive for the enthusiast. Meirion is a small village in Eisteddfod lying on the shores of the River Don, and once a busy ferry port. The passenger train is heading for Holyhead. For this shot I chose a view over bridge for the class three quarter view with the river estuary in the background.

