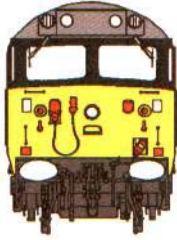
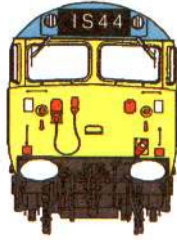


Class 50 Alliance

50035 Ark Royal



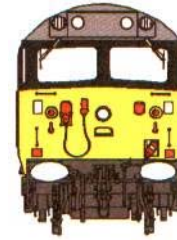
50044 Exeter



50031 Hood



50049 Defiance



PRESS RELEASE

Failure of Class 50 Alliance 50031's main generator

Whilst working the five-coach 5Z50 09.22 ecs Cardiff Canton to LNWR Crewe for ATW on 11 January, C50A 50031 *Hood* suffered a main generator failure near Ludlow but was able to coast into the station and the engine was still running. C50A's riding inspector, Mike Matthews, diagnosed that the failure was too serious to permit the locomotive to continue under its own power. After around 100 minutes, EWS 66023 arrived from Hereford, where it had been stabled in line with its schedule, whilst working a steel train, and reversed 5Z50 wrong line to Wooferton, where the train crossed to the southbound road and continued to Hereford.

Ultimately Riviera 47847 arrived from Crewe and towed 50031 and its train back to Canton as 5Z47. On the 16th C50A 50049 *Defiance* worked 5Z50 Cardiff Canton to LNWR Crewe, which comprised 50031, five coaches and 47847, the latter being defective and unable to work the train.

50031 has been moved to LNWR Crewe to have its power unit removed so that the damage to the main generator can be assessed. Once this has taken place then a decision will be made as to what action to take. C50A has recently overhauled the main generator armature from its spare power unit (ex 50018) for fitting into 50035. Alternatively, in order to keep two Fifties available for ATW, with only minor attention TPWS-fitted 50044 could be returned to main line certification until it is required for use on the Severn Valley Railway.

Careful attention to generator maintenance has always been C50A policy. The component has been kept as clean as possible whilst in situ and a close watch kept on the brush gear to ensure good commutation. This policy has proved effective in mitigating failures because prolonged periods out of use (the norm in preservation) allow dampness to build up in the generator windings and this can then be a cause of failure.

Notes to editors

C50A owns 50035/44/49 and maintains 50031 on behalf of its owners. The main line locomotives are operated by subsidiary company, Class Fifty Operations Ltd (TOPS code CFOL), which hires them to TOCs, such as ATW and for charter use.

The current engine and generator set was fitted to 50031 at Old Oak Common in 1989 and has not been removed subsequently. Removal of the item entails removal of the complete engine and generator set, a lift of over 30 tonnes and not a task to be undertaken as a matter of routine. Splitting and refitting a main generator to the engine is also a specialised job. C50A has previously tackled these tasks on two of its other Fifties, 50035 *Ark Royal* and 50049 *Defiance*, whilst the work on 50044 *Exeter* was carried out by Brush at Loughborough. In all these cases, the reason was failure of the main generator. This component had a bad reputation for failure throughout the life of the class during BR service. Periods between failure were erratic and very few locomotives ever ran between works overhauls (typically 4 years or 8,000 TOPS hours) without at least one failure and, in fact, this often brought about a decision to send the locomotive for overhaul.

The Class 50 main generators were manufactured in 1967/8 and had their armatures rewound during refurbishment at Doncaster Works between 1979 and 1983.