

## BRITISH RAIL'S AUTUMN LEAF PROBLEM – 1980

This report attempts to give an informed insight into the problem of low adhesion caused by leaves on the line and review the way in which various areas are attempting to combat it. From the knowledge and experience gained from looking at this problem over several years, certain recommendations are made to help deal with it more adequately in the future.

In conclusion:

- The extensive tree lopping exercise mounted on the Liverpool/Southport line significantly reduced the amount of leaf contamination reaching the rails.
- The tree lopping, aided by the daily application of Sandite and driver co-operation in exercising their ability on approaching trouble spots, resulted in satisfactory operation of the service on the Liverpool/Southport line throughout the autumn.
- Although some leaves were trapped by the leaf fence, their usefulness is still not known.
- Operation of the LTE water cannon on the Rickmansworth/Amersham line did not result in adequate adhesion for operation of the BR DMUs. In fact conditions are worse immediately following the water cannon train.
- Despite the operation of the water cannon trains the Southern Region reported the worst season on record. However, limited use of Sandite gave encouraging results.
- Trackside water sprays have been shown to offer an effective means of maintaining leaf free rails and adequate levels of adhesion, yet it was not used in 1980.
- Disc braked trains fitted with WSP equipment, 507s and 508s, are susceptible to over-runs in braking areas on leaf affected track in damp conditions.