

## Mending the overhead electricity wires

Some of the locos that brought freight trains into the Marshalling Yards were electrically powered, and occasionally as they raised their pantograph would break the overhead cable. This caused a problem, as the pole mounted hook switches had to be pulled to isolate the section,, the Yard Shunting Engine would tow the Electric Loco to a live section, and the Freight Train would be hastily split up and dumped in the sidings.

Soon the overhead linesmen would appear in a long grey round roofed wagon, with my neighbour Ron in charge. This wagon was full of winches, clamps, tools of every sort, plus a cooker, armchairs and blankets. First, they would get the two ends of the broken cable and standing on top of their wagon winch them together making a union with a long slim fastening coupling bolt. After smothering it down, they would test it with the juice running through and then if it worked well, off they went to the next job. Occasionally, the cable would be worn, pitted and charred, and with previous repairs, which meant a new length of cable being spliced in at the weekend working sessions. Cable under tension, at a high voltage up in the air about 20 feet was a tricky and dangerous proposition, but the replacement was always a perfect job.

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