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Littlebrook Power Station on the Move

On behalf of Drax Power Ltd, Collett set to work on the relocation of nine 185 Tonne transformers as a result of Littlebrook Power Station D's closure.



Following a similar successful operation in 2014 which required the relocation of six transformers, the project called upon the expertise of Collett to devise a solution for transporting each of the transformers, measuring 5.08m (H) x 3.5m (W) x 6.5m (L), from Dartford to Drax Power Station near Selby, North Yorkshire. Faced with the task of moving several abnormal loads originating within the busy capital the Collett Team began devising intricate transport arrangements to facilitate the loads.

It was proposed that each of the loads would be moved in three stages. Firstly each transformer would be transported individually from Littlebrook to Thamesport, Isle of Grain where the loads would be consolidated into two RoRo barge shipments delivered directly to the Port of Goole. From here the transformers would be stored at Collett's Goole heavy lift terminal prior to the final 5 mile onward transport to Drax Power Station.

This proposal required intricate planning throughout; however the logistics of transporting these heavy cargoes from Littlebrook to Thamesport would provide the biggest challenge. Collett's Consulting division worked tirelessly undertaking route studies, site visits and swept path analysis reports of several roads and surroundings to ensure a safe suitable path for the movements. Having liaised with local authorities, councils and constabularies an agreed route was firmly in place and in March Collett mobilised their fleet and headed for Littlebrook Power station to begin the first of the transformer moves.

Not a simple task of lifting each transformer and loading to an awaiting trailer, each transformer, due to its position, required complex manoeuvring procedures to allow Collett's Team to safely position for transport.

Due to the position of the transformers Collett had to utilise their specialist heavy duty jacking & skidding system to manoeuvre each of the cargoes. Space limitations within Littlebrook required each transformer to be skidded 6m, before turning 90 degrees and skidding a further 18m to safely clear the confines of the power station's industrial surroundings. Finally, after jacking & skidding from their original position, the transformers were turned a further 90 degrees to position for loading.

Utilising Collett's girder bridge for the initial stage of the project the first transformer was loaded to the trailer and at 9pm the convoy began its 24 mile journey. Travelling with three tractor units, two in push pull formation and one in support, four police escorts and two pilot cars, the convoy left Littlebrook Power Station. As identified by Collett's Consulting Team the combination, due to its overall loaded weight of 390 Tonne, 16 Tonne per axle and substantial 71m (L) & 5.13M (W) loaded dimensions, would be unable to use the bridge over the M25 at Littlebrook Interchange, and as a result, a rolling road block had been put into place on both the northbound and southbound carriageways of the M25. This allowed the entire girder bridge to contraflow two roundabouts and utilise the northbound sliproad to gain access to the M25. Once on the motorway Collett's Team reversed the entire combination for half a mile across

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the central reservation and along the southbound carriageway allowing access to Exit 1A and onward transport to Thamesport.

Once this intricate manoeuvre was complete the convoy continued enroute, employing extensive traffic management throughout as the Collett Team navigated 4-lane motorways, dual and single carriageways. Having negotiated 18 roundabouts, undertaken several contraflow manoeuvres, implemented Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders and employed manual steering practices at select points along the route, approximately 6 hours after departing from Littlebrook Power Station the transformer arrived safely at Thamesport.

Over the following weeks the remaining transformers left Littlebrook and were safely consolidated at Thamesport and after discharge from the girder bridge each transformer was stored on stools and load spreading mats portside. With the transformers safely stored at the Port Collett chartered the Terra Marique RoRo barge, featuring a hydraulic roadway and ballast system allowing for the vessel to load on varying quay heights. The Collett Team set to loading each of the transformers to SPMT and conventional axles and expertly manoeuvred each one to the hold of the vessel. With the loads safely secured the barge set sail for Goole, firstly carrying three transformers with a second shipment of six to follow in the coming weeks.

With the loads arriving safely in Goole Collett began work discharging the transformers once again utilising SPMT operations and conventional axles to unload the transformers at the Port. Each transformer then made the short journey to the Collett's Goole heavy lift facility for storage on stools for ease of re-loading.

As and when required each transformer left Collett's Goole depot and travelled the short distance to Drax Power Station where, once again utilising specialist jacking & skidding systems, each transformer was carefully manoeuvred into position for storage.

With a total of 9 girder bridge movements, two RoRo Barge shipments, nine onward transportation operations and numerous jacking & skidding manoeuvres this project certainly provided a challenge that the entire Collett Team expertly rose to, completing each stage to the highest of standards.

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More about [Collett & Sons Ltd](#): Experts in Motion since 1928 Collett have a wealth of experience transporting difficult and abnormal loads throughout the UK, Europe and worldwide. Their specialist fleet operates across depots in Halifax, Goole, the Port of Grangemouth, and most recently Collett (Ireland) Ltd in Dublin. Experts in the transport of abnormal loads, [Collett](#) are your global professional partner for [transport](#), [heavy lift](#), [marine](#) & [transport consulting](#).