

WHERE 77s WAS REALLY ALLOCATED TO

by ROGER BUTCHER



Ex-LSWR C14 Class departmental shunter No.77s at Town Quay, Southampton in 1957.

Dick Riley

Following the article in Link 110 on the extraordinary inaccuracy of the information published in the Ian Allan Locomotive books on the Eastern Region departmental diesel locomotive fleet, Roger Butcher discusses a Southern Region departmental steam locomotive whose latter location and numbering was regularly misreported. The opportunity is then taken to update ESS members on a number of matters, including the ongoing work of the HSBT team.

The majority of you reading this article will have been inside the cab of either a steam, diesel or electric locomotive. Some of you will have had memorable cab-rides while no doubt a number of you have fulfilled the role of driver (if only for a very limited period and under strict supervision).

Whilst my most memorable cab-rides were through the Channel Tunnel in 22379 and 22403 (in 1995) and 92004 (in 1997), the first locomotive cab I ever went inside could scarcely have been more modest!

VERY LUCKY

When my father returned in April 1958 from (nearly) eighteen months in the Far East, he found that his only child's interest in football was growing rapidly whilst he had also discovered the joys of train-spotting. Having just passed my eleven-plus to the Northern Grammar School (in Portsmouth) and also passed the entrance examination to Portsmouth Grammar School - the local 'public' school - my father was well disposed to support my newly-found interest. And until his career in the Royal Navy took him to Gibraltar in March 1961, family holidays and days out in the West Country, South Wales and Southern England always included an element of shed-bashing for me. As my 91-year-old mother occasionally reminds me I was very lucky! And she is right!

Whilst I look back fondly at the locomotives his support enabled me to see, it was a visit to Southampton Town Quay that I have particularly fond memories of. Although at the time the sighting of 77s puzzled me.

77s

The reason for visiting Southampton in August 1958 was to see Chipperfield's Circus. Whilst I had virtually no interest in carnivals, pantomimes and the like, the fact that the circus was 'in the dock area' gained my interest. As it transpired the circus was set up in Mayflower Park, immediately adjacent to the connecting line between the Eastern and Western Docks! Not surprisingly I was more than happy to attend the same circus the following year!

Whilst USAs were the dominant locomotive type in the Southampton Docks railway complex, a visit

to Southampton Town Quay found a diminutive 0-4-0T with an unusual number. Seeing my interest the driver kindly asked my father whether I would like to come into the cab. Little did I realise it at the time but my love affair with departmental stock had begun. An interest that nearly 40 years later developed into the setting up of my own publishing company.

According to the Ian Allan books of the time there was a C14 renumbered DS77 allocated to Redbridge Sleeper Depot. And allocated there until its withdrawal in April 1959. However, whenever at the time I passed Redbridge Sleeper Depot (en route to or returning from South Wales) it was an Eastleigh-based 02 carrying out shunting duties. I later learnt that, following the withdrawal during 1957 of the last two C14s in capital stock that had shunted Southampton Town Quay (30588/9), 77s returned after 30 years departmental service to the duty it had left in October 1927! And there it stayed until its withdrawal in April 1959, although it was never renumbered back into capital stock, whilst its permanent reallocation to Southampton Town Quay went almost unnoticed and unrecorded. Similarly, the retaining of its pre-nationalisation s suffix (instead of a DS prefix) completely escaped the attention of the person responsible for compiling the Ian Allan stock books.

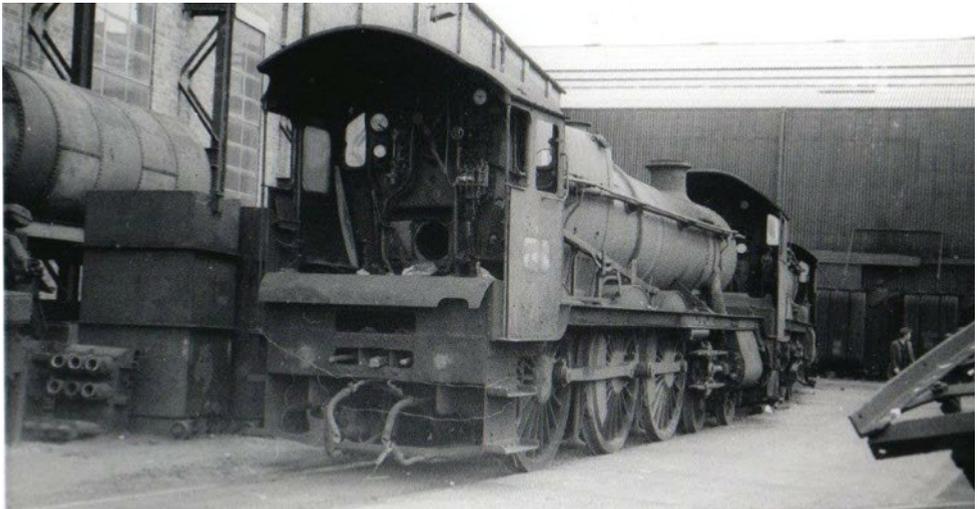
STEAM WORLD

I expressed the hope in Link 117 that *Steam World* would publish a correction to the alleged photograph of Oswestry Works that it published in its February 2016 issue. A number of ESS members contacted me to say if a railway magazine did deem to reply to an email/letter pointing out errors, it was generally on the lines that they had passed your communication to the writer of the article, the implication being that he / she would respond themselves. Almost inevitably the subsequent silence was deafening. As for a correction actually being published - some hope! So, hats off to those magazines (such as *The Railway Magazine*) that do have the courage and integrity to publish corrections. As for the photographer who claimed his photograph of Worcester Works was Oswestry Works - what next? A photograph of Worcester Shed captioned as Oswestry Shed perhaps?

WORCESTER

Continuing on the Worcester theme, my thanks to Dave Bathurst for the accompanying photograph of 5998 *Trevor Hall* at Cashmore's Great Bridge yard on June 13th, 1964. The significance of this photograph is twofold. Firstly, from a personal point of view it was one of the five named Western Region locomotives I never saw of the 670 in stock when I began this wonderful hobby of ours in August 1957. As such it will be featured in a future article entitled 'The ones that got away' or something similar. Secondly, it added to the information held on the HSBT database in that previously the last reported sighting of 5998 at Cashmore's, Great Bridge, was that of Michael Hale on June 6th, 1964.

It also enables me to emphasise that our forthcoming HSBT books will only publish what we are confident is correct. In other words facts from primary sources not guesswork on scrapping dates. As ESS member Richard Derry so clearly stated on page 264 in his excellent *The Book of the Merchant Navy Pacifics* second edition, 2011, Irwell Press, the notes on disposals "do not include dates of actual scrapping for the locomotives sold to private contractors since these are rarely known with any certainty.



Ex-GWR Hall Class 4-6-0 No.5998 *Trevor Hall* awaiting scrapping at Cashmore's yard, Great Bridge on June 13th, 1964.

D Bathurst



D2724, with **D2745** behind, at Slag Reduction Co, Ickles, on January 14th, 1968.

Alan Wass

Exactly, the formula-driven guesswork of the *What Happened to Steam* (WHTS) booklets has to be seen for what it is - an attempt to portray a level of knowledge that bordered on fantasy. As it happens 5998 suffered from another of the infamous Hands' formulas - that a withdrawn locomotive was always stored at its home depot, in this case Pontypool Road. The reality is 5998 was withdrawn and stored at Worcester where it was held until its movement to Cashmore, Great Bridge.

USAs AT SEVERN TUNNEL JUNCTION

One of the most satisfying aspects of the HSBT project has been helping enthusiasts reflecting back on their observations in the last twelve years of steam on British Railways. Unfortunately the damage done by the WHTS books is such that we have been contacted by many enthusiasts who had doubted their own observations because they conflicted with what had been published.

Using the USA pictured on page 28 of Link 117 as an example, a *Railway Magazine* reader who had seen three USAs at Severn Tunnel Junction on March 17th, 1968 had doubted his sanity based on the information published in the WHTS books. His observations were, of course, correct, the HSBT database showing that 30067, 30069 and 30071 were present on that date, Severn Tunnel Junction being a regular staging point for locomotives en route to the South Wales scrapyards. So, subject to some possible tweaks on the final wording and presentation the entry for 30067 in the HSBT Southern Region book will read:

30067

Withdrawn from Eastleigh on 9-7-67 – sold from Salisbury

Sold to J Cashmore, Newport on 10-11-67

Stored on Salisbury 8-7-67 to 24-2-68

Stored at Bath Westmoreland Road yard 24-2-68 to 1-3-68

Stored on Gloucester Horton Road 2-3-68 to 9-3-68

Stored on Severn Tunnel Junction 14-3-68 to 20-3-68

Despatched to Newport on 21-3-68

Taken into breaker's yard on 22-3-68

The hope/intention is to give as complete as possible a picture of what really happened to a steam locomotive from the date it was withdrawn. Where it was stored and the time it spent there. Its transition to the scrapyard and staging points, if known. Its arrival at the scrapyard and the last known date it was seen at the scrapyard. No formulas, no guesswork no speculation. Facts, not the fiction that has tainted and plagued this aspect of steam locomotive history.

THE DIESEL FABRICATIONS

The accompanying photograph of D2724/45 on January 14th, 1968 is of particular interest in that it is the only photograph so far traced of a diesel locomotive in the Slag Reduction, Ickles Yard. All other known photographs of diesel locomotives were taken in the reception sidings which were some distance away from the actual yard.

Firstly, the date of the photograph is relevant in that it disproves the scrapping date of August 1967 faithfully copied by various authors from one diesel locomotive disposal book to the next for nearly four decades. Secondly, it confirms John Hall's belief that the scrapping date was erroneous as there was a sighting reported in the January 1968 *Railway Observer* of D2724/45 at Thornton Junction on November 5th, 1967.

As for the erroneous report that Barlborough Metals was involved in the disposal, the RE Trem documentation shows that D2724/45 were two of 24 Scottish Region diesel shunters the company purchased in mid-1967. It is interesting to note that neither locomotive appears to have come via Skipton (as the other 22 did) but were seen in Chesterfield Goods Yard on December 31st, 1967, suggesting they may have come via Manchester and Ambergate. As for the scrapping dates of D2724/45 John firmly believes (as I do) it is the last date of a sighting at a scrapyards that should be recorded, not the 'let's add a month (or more)' formula to a sighting in a scrapyards.

As was revealed in Link 117 that was how D2231 was 'recorded' as scrapped when in fact it had been sold to an Italian company! To add to what was said in Link 117 on D2231 it is important to mention that Alberto Perego stated that its worksplate included the data '1955 204HP Loco N.2555 / D81', this confirming its identity as D2231.

Just one final comment when sending in information to John Hall (or Peter Hall) please make it absolutely clear where your information has come from. The reason for repeating this point is that a number of correspondents (not ESS members) have used the expression 'according to my records', when contributing to a debate on a specific diesel locomotive disposal. An already published book is a secondary source and it is, of course, only primary source information we are all seeking.

HSBT PROJECT

As regards the steam element of the HSBT Project, I am pleased to say that Terry Hayward has started on the Western Region book and has already made significant progress. As referenced above, the location (and timespan) of where a locomotive was stored after withdrawal is an aspect of our work that we are determined to focus on as much as practicable, so wretched is the information already published.

However, it requires an extraordinary amount of effort and here I must pay tribute to ESS member John Aitchison. John, who is the project's notebook researcher, has the ability to transfer data accurately from notebooks, STNs, and other primary sources at a speed that beggars belief. As a result he has around three quarters of a million entries on the database he manages for the HSBT Project! So, if you have not done so already, please make your observations available to John before it is too late. We will pay all the costs of having your precious notebooks sent back and forth by special delivery. Or arrange for them to be collected from your home and returned safely. Your notebooks could so easily contain some of the missing pieces in the jigsaw we are endeavouring to complete!
