

THE DIESEL FABRICATIONS

by JOHN HALL



Accident-damaged BRC&W Type 2 Bo-Bo No. **D5383** at **Derby** on an unknown date.

Colour-Rail 32910

The revelations in Link 111 that Zulu also fabricated diesel locomotive disposals came as a big shock to many railway publishers and enthusiasts. The first article on the subject was written by ESS member Peter Hall and appeared in the April 2015 issue of The Railway Magazine. In this first part of a two-part article, ESS member John Hall explains that Zulu's diesel locomotive disposal fabrications actually predate those which he provided for the What Happened to Steam books. As well as discussing the number of locomotives whose disposals are fabricated (or almost certainly are), John reflects on the role of the Brass Platers.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of my work in comparing previously published reference books with the primary information the HSBT Project team has been able to acquire/access (on diesel and electric locomotive disposals) is the complete absence of primary research by the authors concerned in relation to the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is particularly frustrating as much of what we are now seeking to learn would have been readily available in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

For example, scrapyards such as Bird, Long Marston; Cohen, Kettering; CF Booth, Rotherham and Doncaster and MacWilliam, Shettleston all survived into that period and absolutely no one – unless you know different – took the trouble or interest to extract accurate data from the above-mentioned yards. Similarly, at that time, the HSBT Project leader, Roger Butcher, was thoroughly researching the official documentation held by British Rail's Rolling Stock Library (RSL) for his departmental coaching stock and on-track plant books and had no reason to access the diesel locomotive disposal records the RSL then (but no longer) held for the pre-TOPS period. The subject – or so it seemed – had been thoroughly researched. We now know that was not the case!

APPEAL LISTS IN THE RAILWAY OBSERVER

The inevitable question I am always asked by interested parties is how many diesel and electric locomotive disposals do I believe Zulu fabricated? To answer that, as best I can, is to first discuss Zulu's 'modus operandi' and how much of his 'paperwork' the HSBT Project possesses.

The first matter to make clear is that Zulu only responded to appeals for information. In other words, when the relevant disposal information was not known. And when, therefore, his deceit was unlikely to be easily apparent. As regards steam locomotive disposals the HSBT Project team is in the 'fortunate' position of having – in his own writing – the fabrications Zulu supplied for the *What Happened to Steam* books. However, whilst that paperwork includes some diesel 'information', the files in our possession cover 1975 to 1979 and Zulu's responses to the appeal lists of unknown disposals in the RCTS *Railway Observer* (RO) are now known to have started some years earlier.

In total, 385 locomotives were included in the appeal lists but I am confident that - based on the BR official sales documentation, movement data, surviving scrapyard arrival documentation and enthusiast observations that we have been able to source – just over 50% of the answers subsequently published in the RO are correct.

At the time of writing there are 188 diesel and electric locomotive disposals that cannot be verified and are, therefore, potentially fabricated. These will be listed in the next issue of Link but, in the meantime, please do contact Peter Hall if you possess any of the types of information we are seeking and that are listed in the previous paragraph. Peter's contact details are peter@hall59.freeserve.co.uk

CASHMORE RECORDS

Key to exposing the fabricated disposals listed in the *What Happened to Steam* books were the Cashmore records the HSBT Project possesses. The same records also reveal that D2122, D3117, D5043, D5093, D5138, D5139, D5383 and E2001 were not scrapped at that company's yards as previously published. Those records also reveal that D3096 arrived at its Newport scrapyards on November 21st, 1972.

That information contrasts with the publication in the January 1977 RO (page 13) that D3096 was scrapped on site by BR at Selhurst in September 1972. D3096 was one of the missing disposals in *Pronounced Life Extinct* (PLE), the first book published on diesel and electric locomotive disposals. Sadly, but inevitably, that fabricated disposal then appears in every subsequently published reference book.

As far as can be judged, PLE is little more than what had appeared in the RO but it is the first published book to contain Zulu fabrications. Inevitably there is no bibliography at all and no evidence of any primary research. On the subject of bibliographies (or the lack of them), it is interesting to note that the only one of the published reference books to list Zulu (under his real name) is Dave Strickland's *Locomotive Directory*. It is, however, now clear that Zulu drip-fed his fabrications into all the early reference books. Subsequent authors (and now the relevant websites) all eagerly copied the previously published secondary information and fiction became historical fact!

BR WORKSHOPS

As far as I can judge the BR Workshop disposals are (almost) correct. However, there are a number of exceptions which are highlighted next:

D2136. Did anyone see it at Swindon Works after July 13th, 1972?

E3055. Whilst there is a photograph of its cabs at Crewe Works, was it actually scrapped there?

26000. Did anyone see this locomotive after it was sighted at Bury Steam Shed on April 10th, 1971? Derby Locomotive Works. Despite there being many stored locomotives on site at this works during the late 1960s, no actual cutting up has been verified as having taken place. Unfortunately, this location is one of those that Zulu liked to 'quote' (e.g. ED2 and D3121) but we now know that ED2 was scrapped at Cohen, Rotherham and D3121 was scrapped at Slag Reduction, Ickles.

However, no reliable disposal information has been forthcoming for D3034, D3051, D3117, D3193 and D5383 – all of which were last noted at Derby Locomotive Works – whilst it is known that the published disposals of D3117 and D5383 at Cashmore, Great Bridge are fabricated. Of the above diesel shunters it is, I believe, highly likely that some may have been exported, their fabricated disposals disguising that fact.

For example, could D3193 be the diesel shunter seen at Imperia, Northern Italy in July 1969? Last recorded at Derby Locomotive Works on August 26th, 1967, D3193 had apparently disappeared by October 1st, 1967, never to be seen again. As there is no evidence forthcoming of any accident, or any other damage, to D3193, the inevitable question has to be why was this locomotive withdrawn five years before any other Class 08 shunter? Logic would suggest it was simply sold to industry or exported.



Barclay 0-4-0DM shunter No. **D2432** at Ayr MPD on August 28th, 1966

Colour-Rail 2003/17



BR 0-6-0DE shunter No. **D3137** at Whitehouse on February 22nd, 1962 (Colour-Rail 200241)

Surely there has to be someone who can provide a fresh insight into this era at Derby Locomotive Works and the locomotives referenced above?

RE TREM

Despite purchasing over 350 diesel locomotives from British Rail, RE Trem of Finningley, near Doncaster is not a company name readers of the various diesel and electric locomotive disposal books are likely to be familiar with. It is believed that the firm's premises were never rail-connected, although there is a suggestion (only) that it may have used CF Booth, Doncaster, as a 'third party' location.

What is known is that the early era of diesel locomotive disposals attracted interest not just from scrapyards, but for the reusable components that were of value, for example, to trawlers and other boats. In addition to that market, RE Trem sold significant numbers of diesel shunters into industrial use in the UK as well as a number of locomotives for export. I am confident that there are a number of unrecorded sales for further use that have not been published.

For example, an ESS member has informed the HSBT Project team that he saw a number of previously unrecorded ex-BR locomotives in Italy in the early 1990s but his sightings were scoffed at by one of the authors of the disposal books as the locomotives in question had been scrapped (supposedly!). I am now hoping that the notebooks with the relevant observations can be found in the member's loft or garage!

As to the locations where diesel locomotives purchased by RE Trem were scrapped, confirmed locations are GH Campbell, Airdrie; CF Booth, Doncaster and Rotherham; Slag Reduction, Ickles; Pollock & Brown, Northam, and Steelbreaking & Dismantling, Chesterfield. A number of other locations have been suggested but, as yet, they cannot be confirmed.

As for those locomotives that were not scrapped by the companies listed above, but were sold for further use, D3137 and D3621 are prime candidates where their (possible) survival went unrecorded because of Zulu's deceit and the absence of primary research undertaken by authors compiling books covering this era.

BRASS PLATERS

One aspect of the scrap industry that is not fully appreciated is the role of the 'brass platers'. This is the name used in the scrap industry to describe companies who only own the brass plate on their front door and do not have their own yard. They undertake the trading and it will be their name on the British Rail sales documentation. However, a number of smaller contractors work for them, either cutting up on site or in their own yards.

One such company is Peter Wood, Eckington who supplied rolling stock to various scrapyards and steelworks, notably at Ickles, Briton Ferry and Queenborough. So, if we take Queenborough as an example, the yard there that actually scrapped the steam locomotives regularly reported as P Wood, Queenborough was actually Lacmots, Queenborough. Put another way, the location P Wood, Queenborough has never existed, despite being referenced as such in the various listings of scrap locations where steam and diesel locomotives ended their days!

For whatever reason, the name P Wood seems to have become (in authors' eyes) synonymous with Queenborough with the diesel shunters sold to Shipbreaking (Queenborough) similarly being listed as sold to P Wood, Queenborough, despite there being no such location! It is also relevant to mention that RE Trem supplied the first two ex-BR diesel shunters, D2432 and D2726, initially used to shunt the Queenborough complex of Shipbreaking (Queenborough) and one would imagine that is the same route later disposals to Kent (and Italy) took!

TO BE CONTINUED

0-6-0DM SHUNTER No.D2571



Hunslet 0-6-0DM shunter No.**D2571** at **Yarmouth Beach** on an unknown date. *P Moffat/Colour-Rail 33268*