



## WHERE SOME WESTERN REGION STEAM LOCOMOTIVES WERE REALLY ALLOCATED TO



Ex-GWR Class 5600 0-6-2T No. **5632** at **Abercynon MPD** on May 3rd, 1964. This locomotive was one of a batch of Class 5600s that were transferred to Radyr in 1962 but omitted from PRO press releases. *JP Mullett/Colour Rail*

*In Link 102, Roger Butcher – in his article on where Western Region steam locomotives were really stored – referred to the number of locomotive reallocations that never made the railway press. Richard Strange now examines the examples given by Roger Butcher in more detail.*

Firstly, Roger mentioned that, as far as he could judge, all the various books/CDs, etc that purport to deal comprehensively with locomotive allocations all originate from the same secondary sources. In other words from sources that had been notified of stock changes by the appropriate regional Public Relations Office.

### **4103, 4131 & 4132**

In the case of the Western Region, the Paddington Public Relations Office/Officer (PRO) usually supplied accredited societies and commercial magazines with changes on a four-week ending basis, in other words an amalgamation of each of the four individual weeks made available to the PRO. However, for some unexplained reason the advices published in early July 1964 covered no fewer than seven weeks. This break in routine was accompanied by the omission of some of the changes, eg the reallocations of 4103 and 4131. No corrections were ever issued and the last allocation in the railway press when the locomotives were withdrawn was, therefore, Bristol Barrow Road, hence what duly appeared in "*What Happened to Steam*" (WHTS).

However, the BR (WR) weekly internal advices, on the other hand, tell us that the locomotives were transferred to Taunton during the week which ended on June 13th, 1964, and they were withdrawn during the week which ended on September 5th, 1964.

There is ample observation evidence of their transfer to Taunton, and both eventually left there for Bird, Bynea attached to 34106/7, which had been sent off from Exmouth Junction on December 3rd, 1964.

As regards No.4132, the Paddington PRO was again at fault here in issuing advices in 1964 which were confused and confusing, to the extent that the British Locomotive Society (BLS) magazine was moved to criticise them in its September 1964 issue. In addition to lengthy criticism of the standard of the Paddington PRO advices, the magazine gave corrections to the official errors which included that

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the previously reported transfer of 4132 to Barry should have been shown as a withdrawal (from Severn Tunnel Junction).

The correct version of events, as had been elicited by several of the magazines, was that 4132 was withdrawn from 86E, not transferred to 88B. The author of WHTS chose a source which published the incorrect information, and then compounded the error by, therefore, assuming that storage had been at Radyr.

### 5262

In the autumn of 1960 the Paddington PRO failed to include a *significant* number of stock changes in its advices to societies and magazines, including that of 5262 from Llanelly to Severn Tunnel Junction in September. A year later one society magazine was able to print an incomplete list of the locomotives concerned (but not the missing reallocations), but no correction for 5262 was ever issued, as with 4103/31.

### 5600 & 5634

5600 was reallocated from Treherbert to Radyr week ending June 30th, 1962 and withdrawn from there on July 27th, 1962. The magazines did not show the transfer - because the PRO advice omitted it. This was, in fact, another PRO fiasco, because with 5600 to Radyr went 5607/8/11/13/32/54 (Nos 5600/11/13/32 were noted at Radyr on July 16th, 1962). These other transfers would also be 'lost' to the magazines, as would the correct last allocation where some were withdrawn without further reallocation. However, the *Ian Allan Locoshed* book allocations dated July 14th, 1962 for all those mentioned here were correctly 88B, so I suppose Ian Allan staff somehow obtained the correct information from the PRO. Perhaps a reader can tell us why a significant number of this class were moved to Radyr from Treherbert?

With No.5634, WHTS showed this as last allocation Neyland and stored at that depot after withdrawal. The transfer to Neyland was shown by various magazines so presumably came from the PRO advice. Nevertheless, the correct receiving sheds in September 1962 were first Worcester (probably a 'paper' transfer only) and then Merthyr. It is known to have been sub-shedded out to Dowlais Cae Harris and Rhymney before withdrawal on July 24th, 1964. The HSBT team have a note of it on Cae Harris on June 27th, 1964, but it was certainly moved to Radyr some time after withdrawal, and was noted there on the 3rd and 6th of September 1964.

### 6770

This locomotive moved to Swansea East Dock when Paxton Street closed in August 1959. No later moves are recorded in the region's *internal* documentation. This situation is mirrored by the *society* magazines, which show East Dock as the final shed, so it is apparent that no error was made by the PRO in their advices.

On the other hand, WHTS states that a transfer was made to Truro and thus that 83F was 6770's final shed. This suggests that the source of the WHTS error was a typing error in the May 1960 *Trains Illustrated*, in the part of the reallocation list therein which read:

"6719-87D; 6822-86C; 6869-83G; 6770-83F; 6871, 6949-83B . . ."

It was, of course, 6870 which was reallocated to 83F, as reported correctly in the society magazines. The Ian Allan organisation went on to repeat the allocation error in subsequent *Locoshed* books. The same error can be found in recent allocation works by several modern authors.

The author of WHTS gave Swindon Works as the storage location of 6770. This is not correct. The loco did not even receive a shopping at Swindon, let alone spend time stored there. It was not seen at Swindon Works during eighteen visits after withdrawal, up to September 15th, 1963. From *at least* April 13th to August 11th, 1963 it was, in fact, noted at Danygraig, and an *official* list of stored locos at September 27th, 1963 shows 6770 at Danygraig. One has to wonder what the source of the WHTS information was!

### 7213 & 7818

7213: Another PRO error here, in apparently not advising the transfer from Oxley to Llanelly in November 1962, although at least some magazines published the final allocation shed on withdrawal in September 1964 correctly as Llanelly.

7818: Another November 1962 'lost' move, from Machynlleth to Tyseley. WHTS failed to pick up the last allocation on withdrawal in January 1965, even though this was correctly shown as Tyseley in society magazines. It is, therefore, a fairly safe supposition that the author was using *Trains Illustrated*, which like the others had not been advised of the move to Tyseley, and whose practice it was *not* to show the last allocation of withdrawn locos.

The inevitable conclusions from all the foregoing must surely be that in the case of the Western Region at least, the PRO advices were not a very reliable 'official' source at times and needed to be examined carefully; nor were the magazines which obtained their information from them, or the *Locoshed* books! That is *not* to suggest that official records as a whole were unreliable, and there is no evidence to date that the PRO advices of other regions were quite so unreliable as those of the Western!