



## WHERE THE EASTERN REGION DEPARTMENTAL DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES WERE REALLY ALLOCATED TO

by ROGER BUTCHER

*The ESS has been privileged to act as one of the main channels of communication in the attempts of the HSBT team to bring an end to the constant recycling of erroneous and fabricated information on the allocation, storage and disposal of steam locomotives. Diesel locomotives are not immune to this problem and in this article Roger Butcher reflects on 13 diesel locomotives which were subject to a quite extraordinary amount of erroneous published information.*

*The opportunity is then taken to update ESS members on the ongoing work of the HSBT team.*

Until I saw my last surviving British Railways steam locomotive at 7.23 am on Leeds Holbeck Shed on June 26th, 1966, I had never taken a great deal of notice of the departmental diesel locomotives listed in the Ian Allan Locoshed books. Although chasing those former British Railways steam locomotives that survived in industrial service was to come later, my immediate focus was on preparing a comprehensive list of the diesel and electric locomotives I was yet to see. Having prepared that list it, therefore, came as a great surprise to see Ruston and Hornsby diesel locomotive No.86 in the roundhouse at York North on July 24th, 1966 as it was clearly neither new nor on my wants list and I knew I had not seen it before! It transpired that, despite being built in 1961, it was never recorded at all in any of the Ian Allan Locoshed books until very near the end of its working life in 1969/70.

So, was this an isolated error? Far from it and the accompanying table and notes (*on opposite page*) reveal the many differences between what was in the Ian Allan Locoshed books and where the Eastern Region departmental diesel locomotives were really allocated to. The information in the table has primarily been provided by ESS members Richard Day, Rob Pritchard, Roy Hennefer, Terry Hayward, Dave Hunt and myself.

### ERRORS AND FABRICATIONS

Whilst the erroneous information published in the departmental locomotive section of the Ian Allan locoshed books were 'genuine' errors (typesetting mistakes, transfers not being notified to the Public Relations Officer, etc) the same cannot be said for the RCTS disposal tables in Volume 4 of the British Railways Standard Steam Locomotives series. Quite simply the tables are a toxic mixture of fabricated sales dates, formula-driven scrap dates and Zulu fabrications.

In Link 106 I proposed that an independent panel be given access to the HSBT database and the RCTS database which the RCTS claim is based on direct correspondence with the scrap dealers. That would show who is telling the truth and who is not. Having offered Zulu (the Northampton RCTS Branch member who fabricated the 'missing disposals' - see Link 104) £20,000 for the 'the direct correspondence with scrap dealers' he also claims to have, it was appropriate to make the same offer / challenge to the RCTS. As neither the RCTS nor Zulu are able or willing to produce the evidence they claim to have, you do not have to be Inspector Poirot to come to the conclusion that this 'direct correspondence' does not exist!

### VIEWS FROM THE RCTS MEMBERSHIP

Whilst Gordon Davies and his RCTS Management Committee (RMC) continue to present an image akin to Kim Jong-un and his North Korean cronies, it is at this point I need to publish some more of the emails and letters we have received from RCTS members.

- 1) "The longer the present stand-off continues the worse the whole matter becomes. I just cannot see how Gordon can make some of his comments. Common sense tells me the comments cannot be true. Defending a stubborn author?"
- 2) "Really saddened at your resignation from the RCTS. I simply cannot understand the position of the society."
- 3) "All in all I despair but I doubt being named and shamed in *The Railway Magazine* will make the slightest bit of difference to attitudes I am afraid.
- 4) "I have asked our Secretary David Pick who is on the Management Committee for an explanation and I shall not let the matter rest."

In thanking the above RCTS members for their comments can I also thank in advance those RCTS officials / members who have kindly undertaken to circulate this article to as many RCTS members as possible so that the membership is fully aware of what is being said in their name. My thanks also to those ESS / RCTS members who have unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade the RMC to come to its senses.

**USING THE JANUARY 1966 IAN ALLAN LOCOSHED BOOK AS AN EXAMPLE, THIS TABLE SHOWS THE ALLOCATION GIVEN IN THAT BOOK AND WHERE THE LOCOMOTIVE LISTED WAS REALLY ALLOCATED AT THE TIME**

	<b>IAN ALLAN ALLOCATION</b>	<b>WHERE REALLY ALLOCATED</b>
<b>52</b>	West Hartlepool PW Depot	York Leeman Road Engineers Yard (since April 1961). Awaiting movement to the Southern Region.
<b>56</b>	Hull Engineers Department	Darlington – based since 1963. See <i>note (a)</i> .
<b>81</b>	Cambridge Engineers Department	Peterborough Engineers Yard (since delivery in 1958). Transferred to Doncaster Wood Yard January 1966. See <i>note (b)</i> .
<b>82</b>	Dinsdale	Darlington-based since early 1964. See <i>notes (a) and (c)</i> .
<b>83</b>	Low Fell	Low Fell Engineers Yard.
<b>84</b>	York Engineers Department	Worked at York Concrete Depot since 4/61. Transferred to York Leeman Road 5/65 to replace No.52. See <i>note (d)</i>
<b>85</b>	Crofton PW Depot	Crofton PWay Depot.
<b>86</b>	Not listed in any locoshed book until 1969/70!	York Concrete Depot having arrived there 5/65 following the closure of West Hartlepool Creosote Depot. See <i>note (d)</i>
<b>87</b>	Geneva Yard Darlington	Darlington-based since delivered in 1961. See <i>note (a)</i>
<b>88</b>	Faverdale Works Darlington	Barassie Wagon Works, Scotland since mid-1963
<b>89</b>	Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot	Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot since early 1964 when it replaced No.82
<b>91</b>	Cambridge Engineers Department	Chesterton Jct, Cambridge
<b>92</b>	Cambridge Engineers Department	Chesterton Jct, Cambridge

- a) 56, 82 and 87 were the Darlington-based departmental locomotives and were interchangeable between Etherley Tip, Geneva Yard and Croft Store Yard.
- b) The listed allocation of Cambridge Engineers Department originated from a typesetting error in the May 1960 Ian Allan locoshed book. It was never allocated there.
- c) 82 was replaced by 89 at Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot as it was not considered powerful enough for the work required.
- d) Whilst there are a number of instances recorded of interchangeability between the shunting duties at York Concrete Depot and York Leeman Road, the allocations detailed above are the normal ones.

**MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**

Based on the feedback I have received, the membership of the RCTS is continuing to decline as while the RMC claim that RCTS members simply aren't interested whether my accusations are correct or not, I am convinced that very few RCTS members are comfortable with the decision to refuse to acknowledge / accept / apologise for the fabricated information in its 9F book. Certainly I am aware of members who have indicated they would not be renewing their membership in 2014, whilst others joke that, as life members, they are trapped! However, whilst we can quantify at least a 10% decrease in members in the last 3 years, the RCTS has, despite repeated requests from Keith Gunner (a RCTS member still), refused to say what their current membership figure is and how many members did not renew in 2014. Yet the RMC talk of obtaining a 5% increase in membership each year between 2014 and 2018. Yes really!

**THE TOOTH FAIRY**

So, what is the current position of the RCTS on this issue? According to David Bird, the voice of the RCTS Publications Committee, in an email to Keith Gunner on May 22nd, 2014:

- "1. It is not felt that an apology to anybody is due as a result of the information contained in the 9F book.
2. The information we have published is basically correct.
3. There are some minor and I stress minor errors which we will correct if the 9F reprint takes place.
4. Clearly any corrections made will receive proper accreditation.



Departmental Locomotive No.86 at York North MPD on March 1st, 1969.

Richard Day Collection

5. We will accredit John True with use of his archive material, omitted from the original publication.”

You will notice in the above statement that – as always – no answer at all to the five questions I posed in my article in Link 106 (which was reproduced in the October 2013 *RO*). Quite frankly you are more likely to believe in the tooth fairy than believe the evasive nonsense in David’s statement.

It is my view that the RMC is endeavouring to cling on to an era of 30 years ago or more where the culture was to protect the establishment rather than delve too far into any allegations of wrong doing. It is a culture that – as we have seen on our news bulletins in recent times – is simply untenable in 2014. Quite simply, I am not prepared to allow the RMC to cover up and condone the tainted material one of its society’s members introduced into railway history. Coupled with the sheer scale of the information in the disposal tables which is not factually-based, it is no wonder that the society’s stance has been dubbed RCTS-Gate.

So, whilst I am reserving the option to take the matter through our legal system, the next steps are to ensure that as many RCTS members as possible are fully briefed that their society’s position on this issue is farcical and is completely at odds with the position taken by every other railway publisher that has an interest in the disposal of the British Railways steam locomotive fleet.

In addition, there will soon be a link on our website [www.whatreallyhappenedtosteam.co.uk](http://www.whatreallyhappenedtosteam.co.uk) which will solely focus on the RCTS’s quite ridiculous position on this issue. That link, which will probably be called ‘RCTS-Gate’, will then be a point of reference I can refer to in the articles I have agreed to write in different magazines in the coming months. That link will include my various articles for the Engine Shed Society and many thanks to Paul Smith for giving his permission for that to happen.

#### **YET ANOTHER FABRICATION**

In his response to my article (right of reply) in the October 2013 *Railway Observer*, Gordon Davies stated ‘I am delighted that Mr Butcher agrees with me that the RCTS and the HSBT should meet’. This statement is simply not true as I regard any meeting as no more than an escape route for the RCTS to non-existent middle ground. In pointing out that Gordon’s statement is a total fabrication – yes, another one – can I thank Keith Gunner for his persistent, but unsuccessful, dialogue with the RMC to establish what evidence Gordon had to support his statement. That dialogue ended with RCTS Secretary, Bob Green’s cryptic comment ‘correspondence now closed’ – one of the RMC’s standard ways of avoiding answering searching questions.

#### **DISAPPEARING STANDARDS (NO PUN INTENDED)**

What has happened to the standards set by the authors of the superb GWR and LNER books? Do you really think they would have so swiftly dismissed the input of so many RCTS members? I don’t think so! Those authors belonged to an era when in-house reviews of RCTS books were not only modest and unassuming but markedly less self-congratulatory. An era when the work of the HSBT team would have been willingly embraced. An era when the RCTS was widely respected. An era now sadly gone for ever. And all because a very small number of people put personal pride before the long-term reputation of the RCTS.