

What really happened to 92034

Although neither Raymond Harrison (LINK 89) nor Edward Mann (LINK 90) would have realised it when their letters were published, Raymond's question about the official withdrawal date, storage and disposal of 92034 and Edward's well-intentioned response were highlighting the tip of a very, very big iceberg!

For those of you who have seen the November issue of *The Railway Magazine*, you will be aware of what I am talking about. If you have not seen my article, it can be found on [www.whatreallyhappenedtosteam.co.uk](http://www.whatreallyhappenedtosteam.co.uk)

As regards this specific locomotive, Raymond's query regarding 92034 arose because he did not see 92034 (which he needed) during his visits to Immingham in 1965 where it was allegedly stored. Hence, his query regarding the locomotive's official withdrawal, storage and disposal.

The official withdrawal date is simple – it is on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1964. What is not so straightforward is the 'official' disposal information. This is because there was no central source where storage locations (after withdrawal), sale to a scrapyard, movement to a scrapyard and scrapping at the scrapyard, were kept. Quite simply, why should there be? These locomotives were redundant assets and such information was of little use to British Rail.

That does not mean, of course, there is not official information available, but the sources are fragmented. Information can be built up from documentation that has survived such as sales documents, official notices giving movements to scrapyards etc. Also, of course, unofficial sources such as enthusiast observations and photographs.

Unfortunately, because of this void, anything published somehow becomes interpreted by many as 'official' information.

For example, Edward Mann's letter stated 'officially, it seems to have been stored at Immingham from May to July 1965 and was cut up by T. W. Ward, Killamarsh in August 1965. Essentially, *The Book of the 9F 2-10-0s (Irwell Press)* and *Volume 4 of the RCTS Detailed History of British Railways Standard Steam Locomotives*, which have provided the information say the same thing'.

So, where did these two books unearth their 'information' (which is complete rubbish)? The answer is quite simple – it is copied from Peter Hands' *What Happened to Steam (Volume 12)*, published in 1982. And, as *The Railway Magazine* article points out, Peter's books:

- a) Had no access at all to the official information that is available.
- b) Contain many, many errors.

So, what really did happen to 92034? The Steam Railway Research Society (SRRS) Database shows:

- a) It was withdrawn on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1964.
- b) Its withdrawal followed nearly five months of storage at Colwick where it is believed it failed in early 1964, possibly following working an oil train from Immingham where it was allocated. It remained stored at Colwick until the winter of 1964/65 when it moved to T. W. Ward, Killamarsh for scrap, the only recorded observation of its presence there being on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1965.

So, was this an isolated error in the 9F disposal information published in the two books quoted by Edward Mann? If only! To detail all the errors I would need considerably more space than the generous amount the Editor has already allowed me here.

#### Month of scrapping

I will, however, draw attention to the so-called scrapping date information in these two books. Almost every author, including the two books quoted by Edward Mann, specify the month of scrapping. All very neat and tidy, but if you look specifically at the foreword of each of Peter Hands' books, it clearly states:

'With reference to the column 'where scrapped' the works dates are actual cut-up dates, but where the locomotives were sold to private contractors it is often the case that these were the dates the locomotives were purchased.'

Yes, read those last 20 words again very carefully! They are not actual scrapping dates and do not claim to be, although obviously if you do not read the foreword then you would be left with the impression they were.

As Richard Strange, General Secretary of the SRRS has said for many years, some of the guesses will be correct, but that's what the majority of the information is (as regard dates)...guesses. As regards the companies and locations where locomotives were scrapped, there are approximately 2,000 (yes 2,000) where the information is either suspect or erroneous.

This circle of a perpetuation of errors has to be broken and I would urge all Engine Shed Society members who have personal notes or primary source information of steam locomotives stored awaiting disposal, en route to, or in, scrapyards to please get in touch. The contact details of the 'What really happened to steam' project are on our website. Alternatively, please write directly to me at: HSBT Project, 26 Priory Gardens, Langstone, Newport, NP18 2JG.