

## The AMBIS Range of engine plates

### Historic Evidence

The L&YR and LNWR used to number the engine and tenders that was helpful when shopping the engine as it might leave the works with a different tender than it had arrived with. The MR was different by putting large numbers on tenders – to assist its train reporting system – there is evidence that sometimes a locomotive would leave Derby works with one number (and sometimes livery) different to that of its tender. However the MR used to put water tank size plates – in gallons - on the tender rear and also the bunker of tank engines.

Around 1927 the LMSR decided to number all tenders separately from the engine and surviving MR tenders acquired a second plaque on the rear of the tender. Engines surviving from the L&YR and LNWR already had number plates and these were kept by the LMS, carefully arranging that a number for each tender was unique across all sources. It appears the MR water capacity plates were abandoned by the LMSR, they were retained on MR built tenders. When numbering tenders it appears the LMSR concentrated, but not totally effectively on trying to group similar tenders by their capacity into a consecutive number series.

There is photographic evidence that pre-group locomotives outshopped by the LMSR when built at the company locomotive works i.e. Derby, Crewe and Horwich, but not built by contractors, lost their initial number plate and acquired a “LMS built – 1923” or a similar plate with the relevant locomotive works name – i.e. Derby, Crewe or Horwich. Many pre-group engines not taken forward in LMSR ownership are likely to have been scrapped without this change, some were not even repainted in an LMS livery. This major drive for record keeping in one series starts c.1928 which is when other major changes such as the engine number were also made.

New tenders – mainly Fowler and Stanier examples plus later Ivatt engines acquired LMS style number plates in a higher, block ranges than pre-grouping builds. Some pre-grouping companies appear to have limited their locomotive and tender assets reference numbers to a restricted range, there is evidence that an old asset number may be reused for new or “rebuilt” stock and this resulted in a random number pattern for locomotive numbers and tenders of the company absorbed into the LMSR.

### Number plate etches

There are just too many plates to produce for every number and anyway these will be very tiny to read at most distances, so we have fudged the issue for third and fourth digit of numbers and provided a range of first and second digit numbers that suit records available and for classes that have been produced as models lasting past 1928.

The MR tender water capacity plates have been produced with a full set of capacity numbers spread across the quantity of tenders and tank engine water capacities reflecting their frequency – e.g. 3250 and 3500 gallons are numerically more frequent than 2000 gallons.

The LMS (re)built plates are not numbered but have Derby, Crewe or Gorton labels. The evidence about practices by other English railway companies making up the LMSR in 1923 was not available so consequently there is no reference to their company workshops on these build plate etches.

For wagon number plates we assume two will be needed for each vehicle, whereas locomotives and tenders require only one of each.

### Finishing

These are all produced in 0.1mm brass (or 4 thou’) half etched and are quite delicate. Our standard suggestion will be to use a metal blackening product for a whole sheet of number plates. For brass plates on engines carefully scrape the blackening agent off. For the wagon number plates we suggest rolling white ink across the etching and leave it to dry at least 24 hours and then lightly spray with clear varnish. The ink can be washed off if the finish is not

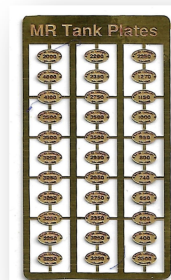
to your satisfaction and can be repeated. It might be possible to roll white paint instead of using ink. Using a paint brush to apply a white finish we have not found particularly successful.

#### MR Water Tank Plates (EMP1)

Generally these plates were fitted to the rear of tenders and bunkers on tank engines. These have the following water volume figures:

Tank engines 400, 600, 650, 740, 850, 1000, 1150, 1270,

Other engines 2000, 2200, 2250, 2350 (2), 2750 (2), 2950 (2), 3250 (8), 3500 (5), 4000, 4100

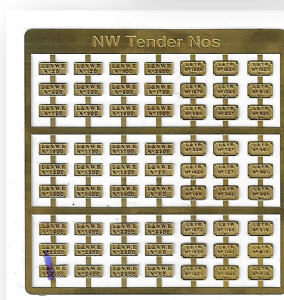


#### LNWR and L&YR tender number plates (EMP2)

Ex LNWR and L&YR locomotives retained by the LMSR were allowed to keep their original tender number (there may be exceptions to this)

LNWR – 36 plates

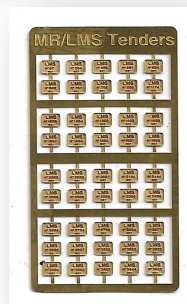
L&YR – 27 plates



#### LMS tender numbers for ex-MR locomotives (EMP3)

As MR locomotive tenders had not been separately numbered from the locomotive the LMSR gave them an asset number in addition to the water tank capacity plate fitted by the MR.

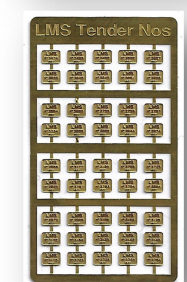
45 plates



#### Later LMS tender numbers (EMP4)

These numbers are for the later tender construction (after 1928) when one asset table of numbers was finalised.

45 plates



#### LMSR Build plates (EMP5)

Following a workshop visit pre-grouping locomotives being retained by the LMSR had their company building plate replaced by an LMSR oval plate with a Derby, Crewe or Horwich label. However engines built by contractors appear to have retained their original builders plate. We have no further information about what happened to other LMSR constituent companies locomotives.

16 plates labelled Derby

11 plates labelled Crewe

6 plates labelled Horwich

