

# The Renumbering of the VR Stephenson A<sup>2</sup> Class

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Starting in late 1923, the VR renumbered the A<sup>2</sup> class locomotives to the number group 800 to 999, with some class members already occupying numbers in this range. The Walschaerts valve gear equipped locomotives were allocated the numbers 940 to 999, and those not already carrying numbers in this group were renumbered in blocks, retaining the last one or two digits of their original number.

The renumbering of the Stephenson valve gear locomotives was more complicated. These were renumbered putting superheated locomotives at the upper end of the number range. This meant that all the high numbered locomotives were superheated, since the Walschaerts equipped locomotives, numbered above the Stephenson locomotives, were all superheated by this time.

This meant that a number of A<sup>2</sup> locomotives with high numbers, already superheated, were not renumbered. Thus, for example, 920, 923 and 924, 928 and 929, 931 and 934 to 937 retained their original numbers throughout their life.

At the other end of the range, locomotives 800 to 803 retained their numbers as locomotives without superheaters until they

were superheated. These then received higher numbers, those being superheated earlier getting higher numbers in the new list.

In some cases, number plates were swapped between high numbered locomotives without superheaters and low numbered locomotives with superheaters, when they were in workshops together.

To clarify which locomotives had superheaters, a new classification of A<sup>1</sup> was introduced for locomotives without superheaters from May 1929. Despite this new class, the numbers of locomotives without superheaters were altered to keep the numbers of locomotives without superheaters below the numbers of those with superheaters (as shown in the table of A<sup>1</sup> Numbers.)

So, in general, the later a locomotive was superheated, the lower its number appeared in the list of superheated locomotives. One exception to this was the second locomotive built, originally 574. When this locomotive was fitted with a superheater in late 1946, the next available number was 820. However, another superheated locomotive, 878, was written off earlier in 1946, and the former 574 took the number 878. The remaining locomotives were numbered in sequence, although there was a time gap before the remaining locomotives were superheated in 1948 and 1949.

But a result of the re use of the number was that only 124 numbers were used in the list of superheated Stephenson A<sup>2</sup>s, one less than the number built.

The numerical tabulation is based on that published as an on line extra to *ARH* 982 in August 2019 by Milton Biddle. This in turn was based on lists by the late John Buckland and additional data provided by Peter Medlin in his book *VR Locomotives by Number*. I have added the mid 1920s renumbering dates and the dates of reclassification to A<sup>1</sup>, where available, and the dates of renumbering as class A<sup>1</sup> where available. Most of my additions came from Peter Medlin's book, but some data came from Mark Bau's Victorian Railways website. In particular Mark has scanned the locomotive record cards for the A<sup>2</sup> Class among others, thankfully including both locomotives numbered 878 in the superheated list.

From Mark Bau's record cards, I have corrected the superheating dates of three locomotives shown in John Buckland's original lists. Two of these were converted in the same week, and the cards updated by the same person. The corrected dates are shown in red. [ARH](#)

Original A <sup>2</sup> Number	1923 A <sup>2</sup> Number	Date Renumbered	Reclassified A <sup>1</sup>	A <sup>1</sup> Numbers	Final A <sup>2</sup> Number	Date in Service	Date Superheated	'Off Register'
572	805	5 August 1925		805	825	December 1917	March 1946	17 September 1954
574	807	25 May 1925			878	October 1908	December 1946	7 May 1954
576	875	13 May 1924	September 1930	806	837	October 1908	March 1944	4 January 1952
578	876	14 April 1925	November 1929	800	869	November 1908	June 1932	13 November 1952
580	877	25 October 1923	May 1929	877 ; 803 (18/11/1929)	845	November 1908	February 1941	27 October 1954
722	817	6 August 1925	April 1930	817	827	December 1908	December 1944	27 March 1961
724	819	16 December 1924	September 1929	819	854	March 1909	December 1933	20 April 1951
726	820	11 November 1925		820	870	March 1909	December 1931	9 February 1962
728	881	1 May 1924	January 1928	804	833	April 1909	May 1944	9 December 1954
730	822	25 November 1925	August 1929	822	861	April 1909	September 1933	13 April 1953
752	823	29 January 1926			887	February 1910	September 1926	10 February 1954
754	825	12 October 1925			883	February 1910	August 1929	27 June 1962
756	827	12 February 1926	November 1929	827	863	March 1910	February 1933	18 December 1953
758	829	26 August 1925	October 1929	829	867	March 1910	June 1932	30 April 1952
760	831	2 September 1925			882	April 1910	October 1929	13 November 1952
762	833	8 December 1925		833	849	May 1910	November 1935	13 March 1953
764	835	18 April 1925		835	852	May 1910	May 1935	6 August 1954
766	837	7 December 1925		837	838	June 1910	July 1942	3 March 1951
768	840	4 September 1925		840	875	June 1910	January 1931	25 May 1954
770	841	30 November 1925		841 ; 803 (7/8/1941)	829	June 1910	September 1944	14 May 1952
798	842	8 October 1925		842 ; 808 (2/3/48)	816	December 1910	October 1949	21 April 1955
799	890	29 October 1924			890	September 1912	July 1920	28 September 1950
800	800				876	January 1911	December 1929	17 October 1960
801	801			801	842	September 1912	May 1941	26 August 1953
802	802			802	824	February 1911	June 1946	8 December 1950
803	803				877	September 1912	February 1930	18 January 1954
804	885	7 August 1926			885	February 1911	August 1926	30 July 1954
805	891	29 June 1925			891	October 1912	December 1919	5 December 1952
806	886	3 August 1926			886	March 1911	August 1926	28 February 1956
87	892	27 February 1925			892	October 1912	March 1920	13 February 1952
808	808			808	855	March 1911	December 1933	2 July 1956
809	893	6 May 1925			893	October 1912	February 1920	14 May 1954
810	810		September 1929	810	851	March 1911	September 1935	21 December 1955
811	811			811	820	October 1912	July 1948	18 June 1953
812	812		12 September 1929	812	856	April 1911	December 1933	30 August 1951

813	894	13 May 1925			894	November 1912	March 1920	22 November 1956
814	814				881	April 1911	August 1929	9 October 1959
815	895	11 February 1925			895	November 1912	October 1919	4 September 1951
816	816		12 September 1929	816	818	May 1911	April 1949	13 February 1953
817	896	20 July 1925			896	November 1912	March 1920	20 March 1953
818	818		May 1931	818	853	June 1911	October 1934	13 April 1953
819	897	9 December 1924			897	November 1912	September 1919	15 December 1953
820	898	24 October 1925			898	June 1911	May 1918	7 November 1952
821	899	23 November 1925			899	December 1912	September 1919	26 September 1951
822	900	26 August 1925			900	July 1911	June 1920	3 September 1951
823	901	19 January 1926			901	December 1912	August 1920	31 May 1951
824	824			824	826	August 1911	January 1946	1 July 1960
825	902	24 September 1925			902	December 1912	October 1919	22 April 1954
826	826				871	August 1911	July 1931	25 January 1951
827	903	9 February 1926			903	December 1912	July 1920	27 January 1956
828	828				873	August 1911	July 1931	27 January 1955
829	904	14 June 1926			904	January 1913	August 1919	31 July 1947
830	830			830	864	September 1911	February 1933	2 April 1954
831	905	19 June 1925			905	February 1913	June 1920	9 December 1953
832	832		December 1929	832	872	September 1911	August 1931	18 September 1953
833	906	25 August 1925			906	February 1913	December 1919	30 January 1954
834	858			858	858	September 1911	October 1933	30 July 1953
835	907	8 April 1925			97	February 1913	September 1920	5 June 1953
836	836			836	865	October 1911	December 1932	29 September 1956
837	908	25 August 1925			908	February 1913	December 1920	7 July 1951
838	838			838	841	July 1913	August 1941	19 October 1959
839	839			839	857	March 1913	March 1933	16 January 1953
840	909	14 May 1925			909	August 1913	December 1920	12 January 1955
841	910	21 September 1925			910	May 1913	May 1920	8 February 1957
842	911	4 April 1925			911	August 1913	May 1915	21 February 1950
843	843			843 ; 812 (21/2/1941)	817	March 1913	April 1949	30 October 1953
844	912	10 December 1925			912	August 1913	May 1920	18 September 1953
845	913	10 February 1926			913	April 1913	December 1922	6 February 1953
846	846			846 ; 827 (29/12/1933)	830	August 1913	November 1944	1 July 1953
847	914	7 August 1925			914	April 1913	May 1920	26 November 1953
848	848				884	August 1913	July 1929	20 August 1963

849	916	3 September 1925			916	September 1913	December 1922	3 August 1946
850	917	3 September 1925			917	September 1913	July 1920	7 November 1952
851	851				879	September 1913	October 1929	26 March 1954
852	852			852 ; 829 (28/1/1933)	846	September 1913	July 1940	23 July 1954
853	918	3 August 1925			918	October 1913	December 1920	19 June 1953
854	854		27 January 1933	832 ; 801 (1/1944)	821	October 1913	November 1946	9 October 1953
855	855			855 ; 840 (9/1933) ; 810 (6/1941)	832	October 1913	June 1944	14 September 1953
856	919	12 June 1926			919	October 1913	March 1931	19 February 1954
857	921	1 September 1925			921	October 1913	June 1920	24 March 1953
858	925	3 July 1925			925	November 1913	March 1919	2 October 1953
859	859		23 January 1933	828	831	November 1913	September 1944	2 October 1953
860	860		December 1929	860	860	November 1913	February 1933	13 April 1953
861	926	25 September 1925			926	November 1913	October 1920	19 February 1951
862	927	23 June 1925			927	December 1913	February 1921	15 November 1954
863	863				878	December 1913	October 1929	25 March 1946
864	930	24 August 1925			930	December 1913	September 1919	4 December 1953
865	865			865 ; 825 (1/1932)	828	December 1913	October 1944	11 October 1960
866	932	20 June 1925			932	December 1913	September 1919	27 March 1962
867	867			867 ; 823 (1/1932)	836	January 1914	February 1944	21 March 1956
868	868			868	868	February 1914	March 1931	12 May 1953
869	869			869 ; 821 (4/1931); 814 (7/1946)	819	February 1914	November 1948	8 July 1953
870	870		April 1930	870 ; 815 (4/1931)	839	February 1914	February 1942	12 February 1954
871	871			871 ; 814 (4/1931)	834	July 1914	March 1944	20 May 1960
872	933	16 October 1926			933	February 1914	May 1919	27 November 1953
913	845	10 February 1926		845 ; 809 (29/12/1933)	823	July 1914	May 1946	13 July 1959
914	847	7 August 1925			874	August 1914	December 1929	8 February 1963
915	915				915	August 1914	September 1924	20 January 1955
916	849	3 September 1925		849; 822 (25/12/1933)	848	August 1914	May 1936	24 November 1953
917	850	19 December 1925		850	850	August 1914	March 1933	15 May 1953
918	853	25 August 1925		853	862	September 1914	May 1933	29 August 1952
919	856	1 September 1925	September 1926	856 ; 844 (7/1933)	844	October 1914	December 1933	5 June 1956
920	920				920	October 1914	June 1919	22 May 1953
921	888	27 November 1925			888	October 1914	November 1925	22 November 1955
922	922				922	October 1914	May 1921	31 March 1954

923	923				923	October 1914	May 1922	5 October 1960
924	924				924	November 1914	February 1919	10 April 1953
925	858	3 July 1925		826	847	November 1914	May 1936	23 January 1953
926	861	2 September 1925		861 ; 820 (14/1/1933)	843	November 1914	March 1941	11 June 1953
927	862	23 June 1925		862 ; 800 (10/1/1933)	835	November 1914	March 1944	13 January 1951
928	928				928	December 1914	December 1924	1 June 1956
929	929				929	December 1914	November 1919	21 October 1955
930	864	20 August 1925	January 1932	831	840	December 1914	March 1941	4 December 1953
931	931				931	December 1914	March 1924	12 October 1953
932	866	7 July 1925		866	866	December 1914	March 1932	12 May 1953
933	872	25 August 1926	April 1931	813	822	January 1915	August 1946	27 February 1961
934	934				934	January 1915	August 1920	8 October 1954
935	935				935	February 1915	June 1919	24 November 1955
936	936				936	February 1915	October 1922	3 May 1954
937	937				937	February 1915	May 1922	19 January 1955
938	873	27 November 1924	12 March 1931	809	859	February 1915	September 1933	9 April 1951
939	874	1 December 1929			880	February 1915	August 1929	19 January 1953
940	938	16 September 1925			938	March 1915	October 1922	27 January 1961
941	939	7 August 1925			939	March 1915	July 1918	16 June 1959
942	902	20 July 1924			889	March 1915	November 1925	12 June 1956