

## LT HW 402 20 Ton Ballast Hopper Wagon



*Photo Copyright: Fraser White*

This vehicle was built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company at their 28 acre site on the bank of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal within easy reach of the ports of Sharpness and Bristol and close to the coalfields of the Forest of Dean. The site had started as just five acres in 1860 and was served by the Midland Railway's High Orchard Branch.

HW (Hopper Wagon) 402 was part of the first batch of just seven 4 wheel ballast hopper wagons [400 – 406] constructed in 1935 for the London Passenger Transport Board. Originally it was allocated the number HE 232 but, at some stage during its working life, was re-numbered to HW 402 which it kept until withdrawal.

Three sets of opening flaps are controlled by separate geared hand wheels so that ballast could be dropped onto the centre, left and/or right of the track. Its original livery would have been LPTB Engineering Department Grey.

All four buffers were designed to be raised and 'folded back' so that, instead of the usual draw hook coupling, use could be made of LT's specific wedgelock coupling system when being hauled by their electric and battery locos. Through wiring was also fitted, at a later date, with the relevant metal conduit still evident.

This basic design was quite popular as London Underground ordered three more batches [1938 and 1951 by GRC&W and 1965 BR Shildon] totalling a further 31 wagons numbered HW 407 – HW 437 inclusive.

LT sold or scrapped all 38 four wheel ballast wagons between July 1980 and August 1986. In 1985, a batch of twelve ballast wagons became available for sale with 402 being purchased for preservation. The wagon's subsequent history appears to show that it has been used at the Bluebell Railway, Lavender Line and the Mid-Norfolk Railway before arrival at Swanage.