

SR PASSENGER BRAKE VAN (BY) S 13 S

This vehicle was the penultimate Southern Railway Passenger Non-Gangwayed Brake Van of its type to be constructed. The steel underframe was built at SR's Lancing Carriage & Wagon Works then transferred to Eastleigh Carriage & Wagon Works where its wooden bodywork was fixed to the metal strapping and fittings and underfloor equipment was added. The design included an external-only-access safe.

It was designed by Richard Maunsell and built to Design Diagram 3094. S 13 S was part of Lot No. 1091 (Numbered 10 – 14) being outshopped during World War II in April 1941. The 36 feet long four wheel vehicle had a wheelbase of 23 feet with the complete vehicle weighing 15 Tons tare (empty). The Guard's compartment was a more spacious 7ft 3ins instead of the normal (i.e. non-safe fitted) BY's 4ft 6ins. This resulted in a smaller parcels section at one end whereas the other end, which incorporated the safe, was 15ft 5 ⁷/₁₆ ins as usual.

In addition to the safe, these four vans were also distinguishable by the vehicle number being painted in large white figures on a red background - thus S **13** S.

S 13 S had vacuum braking, steam heating and was the third of just four vehicles having a full width safe for use on certain services to/from Channel ports. Likely contents for transportation in the safe would include bullion, jewellery and other high-value items.

BYs were also used for the carriage of parcels, newspapers, and many other forms of general merchandise. It was equipped with facilities for a guard, including a small steam heated radiator, a hand brake, a shelf for writing up train logs as well as two periscopes to provide a view in either direction. They were rated to run in passenger trains, up to 75 mph, but were also used on parcels trains.

BR's policy of rationalisation and standardisation of the 1970s resulted in S 13 S being withdrawn from revenue-earning service in April 1978 at Bricklayers Arms yard, Bermondsey. It was purchased and then moved to Swanage where it was restored to operational use.

In the early days, it had been used to store replacement seating for one of the coaches at Swanage then undergoing restoration. Currently it is used by the Swanage Railway Signals & Telecommunications Department as a stores and workshop vehicle.

S 13 S is unique as the only preserved example of the four safe-fitted BYs built in 1941.

Information collated by Peter Sykes 6th October 2021
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