

SR BOGIE GOODS BRAKE VAN S 56289

S 56289 was built to Southern Railway (SR) diagram No. 1550 as part of Lot No. A867 comprising a batch of 25 bogie brake vans numbered 56282-56306. The underframe had been constructed by SR's Carriage and Wagon Works at Lancing in Sussex then transported to Ashford for completion of everything else. S 56289 was outshopped from the SR wagon works at Ashford in Kent during the summer of 1936.

The bogies were a heavy-duty version of the standard SR carriage bogie with both of them being equipped with vacuum brakes. Sand boxes were installed at each end outside the large Guard's compartment 'verandahs', with delivery pipes down near the rails. The use of sand aided braking effectiveness during poor railhead conditions.

The overall design was specific to SR enabling easier operation of their fast fitted goods trains which had to be interspersed with many express passenger trains. Standard four wheeled vans were not considered suitable. As a result, they were officially designated '*Bogie Goods Brake Vans, Express Service*' and Guards soon took to them duly appreciating their much better riding characteristics. Despite the Guard's compartment being slightly bigger the only additional equipment installed was the emergency vacuum brake 'setter' and vacuum brake pipe gauge.

They were regularly rostered for the fastest Goods Trains, many of which would be timed for up to 75 mph, as well as mail and parcels trains where time was of the essence. The Southern also had a lot of perishables traffic which needed to be worked in fast (brake-) fitted trains. Additionally, there was plenty of similar traffic to/from the continent to be dropped off/picked up at Dover and even more arising at Southampton.

Generally, SR was primarily a passenger railway but, as can be seen above, it carried a lot of traffic that needed rapid movement between regular passenger services. Many of the Goods Trains from Southampton and Weymouth (Channel Islands perishables) would be hauled by the Southern's S15 and H15 locos or, later on, by BR Class 5 4-6-0's to Feltham Yard. Here wagons would be sorted, if going further afield, or run on direct to Nine Elms Goods Depot if destined for London.

At some stage it was withdrawn from revenue earning service being transferred to Departmental Service. It served the Mechanical Engineering : Power Supply section being renumbered ADS56289 and was painted in BR Engineers Grey livery with a 'Middle Blue' scheme for the upper panels. At one time, in the mid 1980's, 73004 'Bluebell Railway' was seen at Haywards Heath with a gauging train that included ADS56289 and a MK3 Sleeper. Polystyrene blocks had been attached to the roof and sides of the Sleeper and small cameras were attached to the roof of ADS56289 to monitor clearances during the journey.

It was believed to be one of three 'Queen Mary' brake vans hauled by [USA 0-6-0T] 30072, which, along with ADS56284, gave rides along a siding during the Woking 150 celebrations on 29th May 1988.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 12th October 2021

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