

BR 12T SHOCK-ABSORBING VAN B 854906

B 854906 was built in 1958 at BR's Faverdale Wagon Works, Darlington under Lot No. 3117 to design diagram 1/218. This batch of SHOCVAN's numbered some 475 vehicles (B854526 to 855000). In 1957 and 1958, BR had ordered almost 1,400 SHOCVANS.

Shock absorbing vans had a shorter body, than ordinary 12 Ton Ventilated Vans, which was not mounted on the chassis directly but, in effect, cradled on a shock absorbing mount. Bear in mind that when couplings on loose coupled freight trains were pulled tight there was at least 3 inches of slack between the buffers of each wagon. This could, and did, lead to jolts/surges as the train accelerated and braked.

As mentioned earlier, the body is not fastened to the frames in the conventional sense but secured via a number of sliding brackets allowing a certain amount of travel back and forth. Basically, the body is held in position centred by springs, which absorb most movements, and the end of travel is protected by spring loaded bump stops for further cushioning.

Broadly speaking anything that would suffer damage from heavy jolts would be loaded in a SHOCVAN. This did not preclude it from transporting other, non-delicate, merchandise when necessary.

When withdrawn from revenue earning service it was placed in Departmental Service and given the number DB 854906. Subsequently it was transferred to Internal User service at Bounds Green Traction & Rolling Stock Maintenance Depot in North London. It was coded ZDV when allocated IU number 041488 and stencilled on each side was the legend

BOUNDS GREEN INTERNAL USE ONLY NOT TO WORK OUTSIDE DEPOT LIMITS

and this stencil was still extant when purchased.

The Southern Catering Project Group bought DB 854906 in September 1997 before moving it to Norden road/rail terminal in January 1998.

It has been restored to its original BR Bauxite livery - but without the white vertical bands denoting it's SHOCVAN status. Currently, it is used as a C&W paint store.