

LMS 6-WHEEL MILK TANK No. 44013

This was built by London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) at Derby in 1929 and the chassis was numbered 5291. Three similar vehicles were constructed as part of Lot number 424 which, once the tanks were installed, were numbered 44012 to 44015. The 3,000 gallon capacity tank was owned by United Dairies Ltd (explained below). Milk tanks numbered from 44000 to 44069 were all built for United Dairies. In 1959 United Dairies, Cow & Gate Ltd and Aplin & Barrett merged to form Unigate Creameries Ltd.

Milk tank wagons were unusual in that the underframe was owned by the relevant railway companies but the tank was owned by the dairies concerned. Despite the underframe being owned by the railway company they were operated as private owner wagons. Thus a United Dairies milk tank worked only between United Dairies creameries and bottling plants. Additionally, pre-Nationalisation milk tanks were restricted to the lines of the railway company that built the underframe - thus LMS built milk tanks worked only over LMS lines.

This restriction, however, was lifted upon nationalisation and so an LMS built milk tank might be seen in Cornwall or Scotland for example. It all depended on the dairy company, who owned the tank, and as to where they wanted to move their milk. In 1956 it was noted that United Dairies had widespread creameries and dairies at Bailey Gate, Calverley, Carmarthen, Ealing Broadway, Finchley, Mitre Bridge Junction, Shepherds Bush, Vauxhall, Welford, Whitland, Wootton Bassett Junction and Yetminster.

Incidentally, two different types of underframe bracing were used by the LMS. The changes were in accordance with Railway Clearing House recommendations on the matter and were implemented at some point in the 1940s. Interestingly, the GWR at Swindon decided not to change the bracing on their vehicles retaining its earlier style throughout.

44013 started life as a four-wheel tank wagon numbered 5291 which was changed to 44013 during 1933. In 1937, the chassis was rebuilt at Derby on a new six-wheel frame to LMS Diagram 1993 as part of Lot No. 2077. The new chassis was fitted with vacuum braking equipment, had a 13 ft wheel base overall and was 20 ft 6 ins long over headstocks. This new chassis was rather longer than the original 4-wheel chassis which is why the tank looks a little short. The tank is around 17 ft long with an external diameter of 6 ft 3 ins which gives it a nominal capacity of 3,000 gallons.

Eventually movement of bulk milk in Britain changed to road transport, with increasing opening of motorways, and 44013 ceased revenue earning use. It then entered Departmental Service, at some stage, being renumbered ADW44013. After another period it became an Internal User vehicle which usually means it not moving from the location allocated to it.

ADW44013 was allocated initially to Lincoln TMD, but that closed in the second half of 1985. It was apparently photographed at Immingham on 2nd November 1986 and seen in Lincoln Holmes Yard on 21st February 1988. It was then moved to Doncaster Hexthorpe ECD being spotted in Doncaster Wood Yard on Friday 26th July 1991. Finally it was allocated to Derby Etches Park T&RSMD (renumbered IU 024982) in April 1992 and was seen there on numerous occasions until August 1995. It had been intended for service as an oil storage tank wagon but did not get used for that purpose.

For a non-moving Internal User vehicle it certainly got around in it last few years on BR. But, eventually, it was condemned by BR and purchased for use at the Swanage Railway in late 1993. En-route to Dorset in 1994 it was diverted to participate in a 'milk train event' at the Severn Valley Railway that year.

It's use is now nominally restricted to outings in Steam Gala demonstration Goods Trains and, occasionally, as a 'water bowser' to assist watering of steam locos.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 15th October 2021 Updated 18th June 2022