

SR 21T MACHINERY FLAT S 61155

This design of wagon was originally prepared by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SECR) in 1922 but none were built before the Grouping occurred on 1st January 1923. Therefore all three batches, totalling 47 vehicles, were constructed by the Southern Railway (SR).

61155 formed part of the third batch of twenty two wagons (numbered 61151 – 61172) ordered as Lot No. A1096 by the Southern Railway (SR) on 16th May 1939. It was built to SECR's design diagram 1681 at SR's Ashford Carriage & Wagon Works during June 1942.

All 22 had a 4 wheel chassis fitted with two hand brake levers (one on each side). The vehicle chassis had a well measuring 16 ft long with a 22 ft 6 ins wheelbase, an overall length of 29 ft 6 ins and an empty weight of 9 Tons 7 cwt. The original carrying capacity was 20 Tons but SR increased it to 21 Tons in July 1942. They had no vacuum brakes and relied on hand brake levers on each side to apply brakes when stationary in sidings.

Like all machinery flats and well wagons they were considered as 'Non-Common User' thus allowing SR to keep them within their control. SR's official records recorded these as 'Mac B' being the original telegraphic code for this type of Machinery Flat wagon. The wagons themselves appear to have been marked as "WELL B" and, in BR days, they became "LOWMAC SD". These well wagons were ideal for somewhat outsize loads with BR allocating an "S" prefix thus renumbering the vehicle as S 61155.

Large containers of Lions were carried on one occasion from Southampton Docks to Olympia in the 1950's. This was in connection with Circus Knie which remains the largest circus of Switzerland based in their home town of Rapperswil. More usual loads carried on well wagons included excavators, road-making machines and large (up to 10 ft 6 ins diameter) cable drums.

Nothing specific has been discovered regarding 61155's revenue earning service on the main line. During the 1960's many LOWMAC SD vehicles were transferred to Departmental Service with several consigned to the Civil Engineers section. DS 61155 was noted carrying two mini-skips whilst stabled in sidings at Ipswich on Thursday 20th July 1989. Also noted was a vehicle-wide notice in large letters, fixed to each head stock, stating "DO NOT LOOSE SHUNT" to warn railway workers.

Under BR's Total Operations Processing System (TOPS), introduced during the mid-1970's, these vehicles were coded "ZXO". Z = 2 axle Departmental wagon; X = specific type; and O = indicates no continuous brakes [i.e. Unfitted].

Originally, DS 61155 was purchased from Ipswich Yard in January 1999 by Drummond Locomotives Limited – owners of Drummond M7 0-4-4T loco 30053. It arrived at Norden shortly afterwards. In a further change of ownership, DS61155 was sold to the Southern Catering Project Group in June 2004.

Some work on renewing rotten deck timbers has been undertaken but it awaits funding for full refurbishment to be undertaken.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 24th October 2021

Updated by Jeremy Weller 10th April 2023