

BR 13T 'PIPE' 5-PLANK WAGON B 740044

British Railways (BR) ordered 300 wagons from their Litchurch Lane Carriage & Wagon Works at Derby in Lot No. 2004 to design diagram 1/460. The batch was numbered B 740000 to B 740299 and they all entered service during 1949. The basic 5-plank design arose from LMS and LNER examples but most of BR's vehicles had modified bodies.

Over several years, BR built a total of 1,950 wagons designated specifically for carrying cast iron or steel pipes. A further 50 wagons were constructed specifically to transport newsprint paper rolls. Initially they were designated as 'High Goods - Dropsides' but were later re-designated 'Pipe' when the newsprint business transferred to road haulage.

B 740044 weighs around 8 Tons empty and its length over buffers was 24 ft 10 ins with the two axle design having a wheelbase of 12 ft. Four axle boxes were the standard BR oil lubricated plain bearing type. Each drop-side was made up from two 5 wooden plank doors and the wagon was hand braked only. The 5-plank wooden ends were fixed to four vertical steel stanchions at each end of the chassis.

'Instanter' type coupling links were provided at each draw hook. These were used commonly on goods stock designed for faster trains. First patented in the 1890's this coupling was widely introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. In this system the centre link of the three link chain was in the form of a distorted triangle, almost a 'Y' or 'T' shape.

In one position the longest side of the triangle formed the link, in effect loose coupling. This was ideal when shunting around tightly curved sidings to reduce the risk of 'buffer lock'. If the wagons were shunted together a shunter could move the centre link round until the shorter side of the triangle formed the link. In this position wagons would be coupled with buffers just touching. This tended to eliminate some of the banging about when in transit.

'Pipe' wagons were designed to carry loads up to 13 Tons and the drop sides made them quite versatile in loads they could transport. Later on vacuum braking equipment was added to make 'Pipe' wagons even more versatile. As a result, these vehicles were re-classified as 'SOV' under BR's Total Operating Processing System (TOPS) which was introduced widely across the network during the early 1970s.

Earlier, in 1966, it was noted that only 12 original hand braked examples remained which had not received either vacuum or air brakes. However, these did not last in service for too long as unfitted freight trains were being phased out by BR.

During 1983 some 50 wagons were withdrawn from traffic to be rebuilt with air brakes and then reclassified as 'ODA' wagons under BR's TOPS system. They were, primarily, for Ministry of Defence traffic although many others were transferred to departmental use.

In the book *British Rail Wagon Fleet* [B125611 – B955247], published by SCT Publishing (February 1994), it shows B 740044 as withdrawn from revenue earning service. Subsequently it was transferred to the Signals & Telecommunications Department and given the prefix KDB (740044) and worked for that section for some time. It also

received a re-coding under TOPS from 'SOV' to 'ZDV'.

After final withdrawal by BR, the Southern Catering Project Group purchased B 740044 from the Coalfields sidings at Cambridge in May 2001 although it is not been ascertained when it had arrived there originally.

It was transported from Cambridge to Norden Road/Rail Interface on 28th February 2002 accompanied by 16 ton Steel Mineral Wagon number ADB577004. This latter wagon has since been sold to the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust at Midsomer Norton station.

During 2015, KDB 740044 was refurbished, painted in BR Bauxite (to show it was a vacuum braked vehicle) and given it's original number B 740044. Since then it has been used in various Swanage Railway Steam Gala demonstration goods trains.

More recently, the owners decided to dispose of this wagon. B 740044 was sold and scheduled to be shunted to the Road/Rail Interface at Norden for despatch. Road transport was booked to take B 740044 to it's new owners, somewhere in East Sussex, on Tuesday 6th June 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<http://www.scp.org.uk/wagonlisthome.html>

https://www.ltsv.com/w_profile_022.php

<http://igg.org.uk/rail/4-rstock/04arstock2b.htm>

British Rail Wagon Fleet [B125611 – B955247] published by SCT Publishing (Feb. 1994)

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