

## BR 12T VENTILATED GOODS VAN B 774977

B 774977 was built in 1957 by BR Wolverton Carriage & Wagon Works near present day Milton Keynes in Lot No. 2991 under design diagram 1/208. Batch 2991 was numbered B774451 to B775449. In fact, BR's most common van diagram was 1/208 with nearly 20,000 being built – earlier versions having planked sides and later builds using plywood sheets.

BR's official view in 1955 was that railways should favour vans for general goods traffic and the proportion of vans seen in general goods trains rose steadily over the following years. This was a slow process however and it was not until the late 1960's that vans outnumbered open wagons in general traffic stock totals.

B 774977 was known as a "VANFIT". This was a sort of shorthand for the vacuum fitted 12T ventilated van. The two axle design had a wheelbase of 10 ft. It's sides were planked but the hinged doors, two on each side, were faced with plywood sheets.

It would have been used widely across the British Railways network but the increasingly rapid transfer over to air braked trains was well underway by the early 1990's.

In British Rail Wagon Fleet (125611 – 955247), published by SCT Publishing in 1994, this van was shown as withdrawn from Departmental Service numbered KDB 774977. The initial 'K' indicating it being allocated to the Signalling & Telecommunications Department.

KDB 774977 was purchased where it was lying at Perth, in November 1998, by the Southern Catering Project Group (SCPG). The van was moved to the Yeovil Coal (Up) Sidings for storage in February 1999 with eventual transfer to Norden Road/Rail terminal in November 2000. Since then it has been refurbished both internally and externally and is now used as a store.

More recently, the SCPG decided to dispose of this van and KDB 774977 has now been sold. It is rumoured that KDB 774977 might be moving to the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust which operates a 1½ mile heritage railway line at Hunsbury Hill, south west of Northampton. Movement details have not yet been confirmed.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021

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