

## BR 12T VENTILATED VAN B 780331

B 780331 was built in 1958 at British Railway's (BR) C&W Works at Ashford to Diagram 1/213 as part of Lot No. 3109. It was a vacuum braked, two axle, 10 ft wheelbase wagon of which BR had ordered several thousands of similar design. They were produced over many years and, in fact, Lot 3109 from Ashford produced 700 vans alone (numbered B 779851 to B 780550) between April and October 1958 – a phenomenal figure.

BR's design 1/213 saw almost 4,400 12 Ton Ventilated Vans, of the same basic design, produced in several Lots (batches) between 1952 and 1957 by many C&W Works. These were coded by BR as "Vanfit".

The typical specification for Lot 3109 vans included plywood sides and doors, 4-shoe brakes for the vacuum system, and hydraulic buffers from various manufacturers. Axle boxes contained oil lubricated plain bearings. The ends were constructed of two-part corrugated steel ends (8 corrugations above and 8 below the division), a vent at each end and with the sides strengthened by steel angle iron.

No specific workings can be traced for B 780331 but it is quite likely that it would have travelled widely. It was noted as withdrawn in the book *British Rail Wagon Fleet* (B125611 – B955247), published by SCT Publishing in 1994, but no location for its storage was shown. In fact it was as far north as Perth!

The vehicle was purchased by Southern Catering Project Group in November 1998 and was moved to Yeovil Coal (Up) Sidings in February 1999. It was transferred to Norden Road/Rail terminal in November 2000. Currently it is in use as a Carriage & Wagon Department carpentry store.

More recently, the SCPG decided to dispose of this van. KDB 774977 has now been sold and moved to the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust which operates a 1½ mile heritage railway line at Hunsbury Hill, south west of Northampton.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023