

# **BR 14 TON CONTAINER FLAT 'CONFLAT L'**

## **B 738507**

This vehicle was ordered by British Railways (BR) as part of Lot No. 2489 to design diagram 1/064 in 1953. The batch of over 370 vehicles were built at Ashford Carriage & Wagon Works numbered B 738500 to B 738872 during that year. The four wheel chassis had a wheelbase of 10 ft and weighed 7 Tons unloaded with a carrying capacity of 14 Tons.

BR tried to encourage the delivery of cement and lime directly to sites and it introduced a small L type container for dry powders such as these. They were gravity-filled through a top hatch with the contents gravity-discharged through bottom doors. 'Conflat L' wagons, such as B 738507, were designed to carry up to three of these smaller containers. This traffic ceased when bulk powders were transported in specialised air-discharged tank wagons.

BR had coded the 'Conflat L' as FLV under BR's Total Operating Processing System (TOPS). 'F' stood for flat wagon, 'L' was a sub-division of that type of wagon, and the 'V' related to fitted vacuum brakes. After BR introduced their Freightliner system the use of these original containers greatly reduced the workload of Conflats in general. Some were re-used as runner wagons, coupled semi-permanently, with diesel shunters to ensure track circuits were activated showing signalmen where they were.

On withdrawal from revenue earning service B 738507 was transferred to Departmental Service. It was equipped with one cable drum stand, for the Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Department, and allocated the number ADB738507. ADB738507 was noted as still in Departmental Service in "British Rail Wagon Fleet (B 125311 – B 955247)" book by SCT Publishing in February 1994.

After eventual withdrawal at Heaton near Newcastle it was purchased by the Southern Catering Group in March 1999. B738507 was moved to Yeovil Coal (Up) Sidings in July 1999 for storage. Eventually, it was moved to Swanage Railway metals during October 2000.

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 the same lorry that had delivered ex-SR 12 ton Goods Van S49208 to Norden took away B738507, a BR 'Conflat L', for a period on loan to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway to assist with cable recovery from Winchfield Tunnel. The mountings BR had added to carry large cable drums were essential in this task. The wagon was returned shortly after the work was completed.

The cable drum stand has been adapted, during 2019, to help support the jib of Crane CCI011 (FBC 2) enabling B738507 to continue being the crane's runner wagon.

In 2023, the owners decided to offer B738507 to the Swanage Railway Trust and the Trust purchased the vehicle.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Swanage Railway Stock Books

British Rail Wagon Fleet [B 125311 – B 955247] by John Dickenson (SCT Publishing  
1994)

Information compiled by Peter Sykes and checked by Jeremy Weller  
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