

SR 6½ TON HAND CRANE ADS 2008

During the Second World War, Cowans & Sheldon of Carlisle built a number of 6½ and 10 Tons travelling yard cranes for various railway companies. This 4 wheel Crane was built in 1944 and issued with works number 8512. It was part of a batch of four similar cranes (Order Nos. 8511-8514) for the Southern Railway. Shortly after production it was towed southwards as part of an unfitted Class 9 (no vacuum brakes) train. As a consequence, when being towed on the main line, the service was limited to a maximum speed 40 mph.

The crane's maximum lifting capacity was 6½ Tons although it could lift lighter loads as far as a radius of 25 feet. On arrival the crane was allocated Southern Railway Departmental Number DS 1586 but, under BR, it was renumbered ADS 2008.

On BR's introduction of the Total Operations Processing System (TOPS), in the 1970's, the crane became coded ZZP. The initial Z represented '2/3-axle departmental wagon', the second Z represented the type 'Crane/Snowplough/Test Loco' with the letter P representing 'No continuous brake, through vacuum pipe' vehicle.

It is not known when the original match wagon, which accompanied DS 1586 during it's early years, was discarded. However, some time in BR service (but before 1979) it received vehicle ADB 502826 as it's new match wagon. This was a former Conflat A wagon, originally numbered B502826, being built during 1958 by Pressed Steel under BR Lot No. 3153 to BR Design Diagram No. 1/069.

The crane and match wagon were noted coupled together at Exmouth Junction Carriage & Wagon Depot on 5th June 1979. During the early 1980's they were allocated to the Western Region's Exeter District C&W Dept., for a short while, being based at Exeter Riverside yard near Exeter St Davids station.

The crane and match wagon returned to Exmouth Junction's newly re-named On Track Plant Depot around 1983 and were noted at work there until around 1986. During 1987 they moved, briefly, to Plymouth Laira Traction Maintenance Depot before returning again to Exmouth Junction.

By May 1991 they had migrated westward being noted working at St Blazey Wagon Repair Depot on various dates between May 1991 and June 1998. During this period they were not moved outside the depot so BR allocated Internal User numbers to the crane (061014) and match wagon (061015).

At their meeting on 25th July 1997, the Railway Heritage Committee formally 'Designated' the crane with it's match wagon. On 31st July 1998 it was decided to dispose of it to the Southern Steam Trust which has since been taken over by the Swanage Railway Trust. Crane ADS 2008 arrived, with match wagon ADB 502826, in late 1998.

Unfortunately, because it has not been used since it's arrival the SRT Council of Management took the decision, at it's July 2012 meeting, to offer it for sale to other

heritage railways. So far this has met with no success.

Further information about Cowans & Sheldon's cranes may be found at CASCAT (Cumbria Archive Service Catalogue):

<http://archiveweb.cumbria.gov.uk/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=DB+40%2fCF%2f1>

Information collated by Peter Sykes 2nd March 2024