

BR 14 Ton CONTAINER FLAT 'Conflat L' B 738836

The vehicle was ordered by British Railways (BR) as part of Lot No. 2489 to design diagram I/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 top hatch - and gravity discharged through bottom doors. The 'Conflat L' wagon, such as B 738836, was designed to carry up to three of these smaller containers. This traffic ceased when bulk powders were transported in air-discharged tank wagons.

BR had coded the 'Conflat L' as FLV under the TOPS system. '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 generally. 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 738836 was transferred to Departmental Service. Under design diagram ZV204A it was converted to carry two stands for cable drums for the Signals & Telecommunications Department. It was allocated the number KDB 738836 and was noted in this guise at Chesterton Junction on Saturday 14th May 1988. KDB 738836 noted as withdrawn in "British Rail Wagon Fleet (B 125311 – B 955247)" book by SCT Publishing in February 1994.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. B 738836 was moved to Yeovil Coal (Up) Sidings in July 1999 for storage.

Eventually, it was moved to Swanage Railway metals during October 2000. It has seen occasional use in the Railway's Steam Gala demonstration goods trains.

In 2023, the owners decided to offer B 738836 to the Swanage Railway Trust and the Trust purchased the vehicle.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 18th October 2021

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Checked by Jeremy Weller 1st May 2023