

BR 14 Ton CONTAINER FLAT 'Conflat L' B 738749

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 738749, 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 738749, was transferred to Departmental Service. It carried two cable drum stands for the Signal & Telecommunications Department and was allocated the number KDB 738749. It was converted under design diagram ZV204A and placed in S&T Pool 8071.

It was photographed awaiting it's next duty in sidings at Tees Yard on Sunday 25th September 1988. KDB 738749, 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 Peterborough it was purchased by the Southern Catering Project Group in December 1997 and arrived on Swanage Railway metals in January 1998.

For a time it was part of the rake carrying items connected with the former Old Oak Common Shed 70 ft turntable and related equipment. Later it carried some stonework dismantled from the listed building supporting a water tower formerly based adjacent to Salisbury station. This stone was cleared due to filming requirements and, currently, has taken over as a match wagon for Crane CCI011 (FBC 2).

In 2023, the owners decided to offer B 738749 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