

LSWR 10T COVERED GOODS VAN 2780

2780 was built at London & South Western Railway (LSWR) Carriage & Wagon Works at Eastleigh in 1906. This basic design originated around 1885 under LSWR's newly appointed first-ever Carriage & Wagon Superintendent William Panter [1885 to 1905]. Covered Van 2780 was constructed using design diagram 1410 which related to a standard, hand braked only ventilated van, with a low roof, weighing 6 Tons 8 cwt empty and capable of carrying up to 10 Tons of cargo.

The wood planking bodywork has diagonally braced external timber frames with a single sliding door on each side. A large number of small ventilation openings were drilled in the wooden bodywork which would have been protected with triangular or rectangular shaped sheet steel fixed to (and flush with) the external the timber framing. The ventilation was meant to assist the transportation of perishable traffic such as fruit, fish, meat, etc.

One special steel bracket was attached to the bottom horizontal frame member, on each side, to the right of the sliding door. This was known by some as a 'horse hook' which provided an attaching point so that the van could be moved in sidings by a horse when no locomotive was available. This appears to have been a standard LSWR fitting to most of it's wagon fleet during this era.

The LSWR built vans to this basic design on either wooden or steel underframes between 1899 and 1912 and 2780 has the latter. This design [1410] was the most prolific covered van on LSWR with around 1,000 in service at their peak. There were some variations, over these years, in brake gear and/or suspension equipment but it was never fitted with vacuum brakes.

After the Grouping in 1923 it became Southern Railway van number 42679. It lasted in revenue earning service until just after the Second World War, being withdrawn in December 1946, entering Departmental Service shortly afterwards. It was renumbered 395s in 1947 and later to DS395). It was used to carry electrical spares between Eastleigh Works and Slade Green depot with other spares between Slade Green and Lancing Carriage & Wagon Works.

In 1960 it was moved to Margate carriage sidings to be used as an internal user wagon numbered 081273, sometime in the 1970's, for general C&W stores. About 1978, this van became the last LSWR origin vehicle still in any service on BR.

With it's 75th anniversary since entering service fast approaching it was withdrawn by BR in 1980 and purchased by the Tenterden Rolling Stock Group on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. It was moved in June of that year and repainted into LSWR dark brown livery with a new number - KESR No.129.

Since then it was purchased privately and transported to the Swanage Railway. More recently it has received a further repaint into the current LSWR livery, refurbished inside and given it's original LSWR number 2780. It's new role, residing at Corfe Castle Station cattle dock, is "The Book Wagon" selling second hand books, DVDs and other railway ephemera to raise much needed funds.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 13th October 2021

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