

## SR 21T Machinery Flat (Well B) S 61095

This design of wagon was originally prepared by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SECR) in 1922 but none were built before the Grouping on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923. Therefore all three batches, totalling 47 vehicles, were constructed by the Southern Railway (SR).

Well wagon 61095 was ordered on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1925 by Southern Railway (SR) using design diagram 1681. It was constructed at Eastleigh Carriage & Wagon Works in 1928 as part of Lot No. E109 which comprised 13 wagons numbered 61086 to 61098. It is believed that these were the first to be constructed with SR numbers. The 4 wheel chassis had a 22 ft 6 ins wheelbase, an overall length of 29 ft 6 ins and an empty weight of 9 Tons.

They were coded 'Mac B' originally as the telegraphic code for this type of Machinery Flat wagon and the original batch of wagons was built in October 1923. One of the initial uses was to carry items emanating from the Invicta factory premises of Aveling, Porter in Strood in Kent. These included steam rollers, steam tractors and ploughs, traction engines and road engines.

The original carrying capacity was 20 Tons but, in July 1942, SR increased it to 21 Tons. Like all machinery flats and well wagons they were considered as 'Non-Common User' thus allowing SR to keep them within their control.

There was an interesting feature of batches numbered 61048 – 61059 and 61086 – 61098 [61095 being one of these of course]. They were included in a restricted amount of rolling stock that could, by special arrangement, be used on Nord Railway of France. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to ascertain whether 61095 ever ventured across the English Channel.

Meanwhile, back in the UK these well wagons were ideal for somewhat outsize loads with BR allocating an "S" prefix thus renumbering the vehicle as S 61095. Large containers of Lions were carried on one occasion from Southampton Docks to Olympia in the 1950's. This was in connection with Circus Knie which remains the largest circus of Switzerland based in their home town of Rapperswil. The circus was founded in 1803 by the Knie family and has existed in its present form since 1919 when it changed from an open arena to a covered Big-Top tent.

More down-to-earth loads on well wagons included excavators, road-making machines and large (10 ft 6 ins diameter) cable drums. In 1942, three wagons were sold to HM Government to carry emergency mobile rectifier sub-stations. In January 1952, HMG returned them to BR (Southern Region) complete with WW2 sub-stations still in place!

After withdrawal from revenue earning service, several ended up in Departmental Service such as the Chief Civil Engineers Department. 61095 became ADS 61095 and was used for some years to carry track relaying gantries and related equipment.

Few of these Well B wagons have been preserved on heritage railways. However, on withdrawal by BR, ADS 61095 was purchased and moved to Swanage.

It is now used as the Runner Wagon for the Railway's Crane CB 5968 (FBC 1). The last regular mechanical inspection, in February 2021, found the top wooden planking remained in good order after it's replacement in 2019. Unfortunately the steel vacuum through pipe is corroded, and probably leaks, plus one flexible vacuum bag is missing however whilst it is

used with FBC I it is unlikely to cause problems as that has no vacuum brakes either.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Checked by Jeremy Weller 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022