

MOTOR CAR VAN for CONTINENTAL FERRY SERVICE

(FERRYVAN 889027)

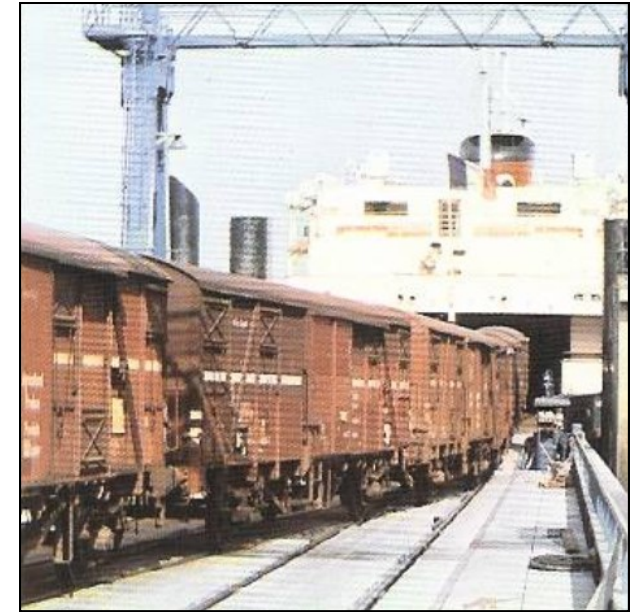
Long before the Channel Tunnel was completed, trains were passing to and fro across the English Channel by means of train ferries; much like motor car ferries, but with tracks set in the decks and loading ramps. In fact, some dangerous goods, prohibited from the *Chunnel*, still have to pass by surface transport.

Vehicles passing between Great Britain and the Continent of Europe must conform to the regulations governing the reciprocal use of wagons in international traffic issued by the R.I.V. (Regolamento Internazionale Veicoli) Union, or International Wagon Union. The dimensions of such vehicles are unfortunately determined by the British Standard Loading Gauge, since ours is much more restrictive than the Continental one.

But size is not the only consideration: though a normal British domestic vehicle would easily pass over foreign metals, its unusual fittings and incompatibility would cause problems. This is not so much the case now that British factories use the metric system and so much rolling stock is foreign anyway.

This 14-ton capacity wagon, one of a lot of ten, was built at Lancing in 1958 to carry cars to and from the Continent, but it was also used for general merchandise. In 1986, it was converted into a mess van to accompany a track maintenance machine. Originally, the wagon had drop-down doors at each end, with fully-opening, side-hung doors above, to enable cars to be driven from one wagon to another, or onto a platform or carriage chute. There were also double doors at each side. Inside were two pairs of adjustable wheelbars fitted to tracks in the walls, enabling motor cars to be secured.

One of the most obvious signs that this is a continental wagon is the large eyes affixed to the solebars which were used to shackle the vehicle to the deck of the ferry. Another difference is the length of the



Unloading the train ferry at Dunkirk West

coupling: the three-link “instanter” coupling of a domestic wagon will not reach the drawbar hook so the continental screw coupling must be used.

Less obvious is the way the wagon is built and the standardization of its components. The wheelsets,



Exeter Bypass in the 1960s.

The message applied whether you were going to Torbay or Tuscany.

This wagon could have been formed in a passenger train, here or abroad, and was designed to run at up to 62½ M.P.H. (100 K.P.H.).

Incidentally, foreign vehicles complying with the conditions in regard to construction laid down in the U.I.C. (Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer) Code and permitted to run over B.R. lines are marked with an anchor symbol in a rectangular frame. Until 1966, wagons had to be equipped with the vacuum brake for use only in Britain.

for instance, have wheels which are one metre in diameter, commonly available across much of Europe.

In most respects, this wagon is a shorter version of the B.R.-built C.C.T. (Covered Carriage Truck) but with different running and brake gear.

The special features would have been most evident at the headstock, where, in addition to the buffers and drawbar hook, there were:-

- Couplers (two) for through electric heating equipment (removed);
- Flexible hose and dummy coupling for vacuum brake pipe;
- Flexible hoses and cocks (two) for air brake pipe;
- Flexible hoses and cocks for through steam pipes, B.R. and Continental (removed).