

Tank Wagon AM 812 Joins the Goods Fleet

By Matt Lander, Bluebell Railway Goods Division

This week the Bluebell Railway Goods Division finished the restoration of tank wagon AM 812 (aka Esso 1921).

A brief history of the vehicle: This tank wagon was built in January 1942 by Hurst Nelson of Motherwell for the Air Ministry and numbered AM 812. It was initially a Class A tank which means it carried liquids like petrol, aviation spirit and anything else with a flash point below 23 degrees. Around February 1948 it was bought by Esso – then still the Anglo American Oil Co. – renumbered 1921 and converted to Class B spec with ladders, bottom discharge and steam heating coils (for warming up heavier liquids).

It was restored by Wagon Repairs Limited at Esso's expense and was donated to the Bluebell in November 1977. During the 1990s it was overhauled at the Bluebell which included

removing the tank barrel. It ran up until 2015 when it was withdrawn.

In June 2025 we started work on both the oil tank wagons as part of a filming contract which paid for grit blasting and priming and a load of new timber to replace the rotten packings at each end.

Work on this wagon has included:

- Fully recording all the livery/signwriting information
- Contract grit blasting and priming in black as requested by the filming company
- Almost all new packing timbers
- Full repaint into Air Ministry matt dark grey including recreated stencils that match the originals found



- ➡ New replica cast resin Air Ministry owner's plates made
- ➡ Non destructive testing of drawgear and axles.

This week the Ultrasonic Axle Testing (UAT) was completed by a contractor. Initial indications were

good but we won't know for sure until the official paperwork is received.

The group should be very proud of what's been achieved on this restoration. We're now putting our efforts into finishing off Shell Tank No. 4497 and will be starting to dismantle the SR Conflat D 39617 ready to start its restoration.

HOW TO HELP

Please consider donating to our Bluebell Railway Trust held fund to enable us to continue this work. Select the Wagon Repair Fund from the drop-down menu: www.bluebell-railway.com/trust/make-a-donation/



Left: Careful removal of paint layers revealed the outlines of the original lettering, which were recorded and faithfully reproduced when the wagon was overhauled (compare with photo on previous page).

Below: Reproduction Air Ministry owner's plate.



SUPPORT THE WAGON RESTORATION FUND



HELP TO SUPPORT US IN OUR
VENTURE TO CONTINUE
OVERHAULING OUR WAGONS.

YOUR DONATIONS HELP TO FUND THE
TIMBER, STEEL, PAINT AND TOOLS
NECESSARY TO RECREATE THE SIGHT
OF A PROPER GOODS TRAIN IN
SUSSEX



OUR NEXT PROJECT – SR 39617

ESTIMATED COST: £5000

BEFORE



AFTER



Donate via the Bluebell Railway Trust
(scan the QR code)