

Profile 30**CBA/CDA/PGA Hoppers (MGR derivatives)**

Build Details:	Various (see text for details)
Numbering:	Various (see text for details)
Bogies / Suspension:	
Dimensions:	
Published Drawings:	
Areas of operation:	Various (see text for details)
Main liveries:	Various (see text for details)

Summary:

Three batches of wagons have been built whose design derived from the hugely successful Merry-go-round coal hopper type. Separated by nearly 15 years, the designs were for three different commodities (lime, gypsum and china clay) and served specific flows in almost geographically opposite corners of the country. The gypsum hoppers were sold to the private sector before entering service while the limestone wagons diversified into potash before succumbing to corrosion. Only the china clay wagons, built in the 1980s, survive.

History:

CBA 250052 at Margam, 9th March 1991.
Paul Bartlett



CDA 375081 at Lostwithiel, 23rd August 2005.
Martyn Read

The Merry-go-round coal hoppers first introduced in 1964 were highly successful and the design eventually spawned three spin-offs. The first two batches were both built at BR Shildon in 1969 and both featured automatic door operating equipment similar to that fitted to the HAA coal hoppers. Lot number 3680 and diagram number 1/252 were allocated to the construction of 52 covered lime hoppers. Basically a HAA hopper with a fixed top fitted, the roof featured six hinged loading hatches and a short access catwalk at each end. Originally intended to be numbered B870880 to B870931 (following on from the 24 ton Covhops built in 1962) they emerged with numbers in the new air-braked series as 250000 to 250051. Like the HAA wagons, the hopper was left in unpainted metal finish, the support framework being painted brown (later red) and the underframe black. The wagons were put to use conveying lime between the ICI quarry at Tunstead in the peak district and the BSC steelworks at Port Talbot, South Wales. The nature of the cargo meant that their livery soon acquired a white-stained appearance. Under TOPS, the code CBA was applied, with design code CB001A. Seven of the wagons were withdrawn following a derailment in 1977, and this led to the placing of an order for 5 replacement wagons. Built at Shildon to lot 3922 in the closing months of the year, these were numbered 250052 to 250056. Initially to design code CB001A, this second batch was later changed to CB001B.

In the early 1980s, 14 of the CBAs were transferred to Teesside for use on potash service from Boulby mine. However, problems with corrosion caused by the material resulted in all been withdrawn later in the same decade. The Port Talbot services had meanwhile changed source and now ran from the British Steel-owned Hardendale quarry near Shap.

By 2000, the traffic of lime to Port Talbot was being supplemented by a new flow from the quarry at Thrislington in county Durham. This used containers loaded on flat wagons. The initial wagon type is not known but by late 2000 a batch of newly built FCAs were allocated. The Thrislington service eventually took over completely and the remaining CBA wagons were stored, and then scrapped at Margam in 2002.

In an interesting twist, the flow of lime from Hardendale to Redcar, which

had used PGA hoppers for many years (recoded HGA from 2003 onwards), gained some former HAA coal hoppers by 2008. 38 wagons were allocated, mainly HFAs but also including HBA, HCA and HNA. Most of these were wagons fitted with top canopies and, although not fully covered, their general appearance and white staining made them appear very similar to the CBA fleet. To complicate matters, the other batch of wagons used on the flow (PBA covered hoppers owned by Corus) were recoded CBA following purchase by EWS in 2003. These wagons were to a distinctly different design.

The second batch of wagons built at Shildon in 1969 were open gypsum hoppers, originally allocated numbers 375000 to 375038 to lot 3698. However, before entering service, the entire fleet was sold to BRT and renumbered as 10551 to 10589 to diagram P507. The hopper itself was somewhat shorter than the basic HAA design and carried BRT and Blue Circle logos on the unpainted metal finish. The hopper framework was red and the wagons were hired to Blue Circle to work between the gypsum mine at Mountfield and the cement works at Northfleet, both in Kent. Under TOPS the wagons were renumbered as BRT19551 to 19589 and given the TOPS code PGA (design code PG001A). Soon afterwards they were sold to Blue Circle resulting in a change of prefix to APCM. These wagons lead uneventful lives until 1984, when a number were sent north to work between the British Gypsum works at New Biggin and Blue Circle's Oxwellmains cement works. All returned south by the end of 1986 and remained there until the closure of the Northfleet works in about 1992. The whole fleet was then scrapped.

The final type covered by this profile is the CDA fleet of china clay hoppers. China clay is the main railfreight traffic in the far south west of England and, until the 1980s, was conveyed mainly in railway-owned, short-wheelbase, wooden bodied open wagons. Most of these wagons (TOPS code UCV, changed to OOV in 1983) were fitted with sheet rails and carried distinctive blue tarpaulins, earning the type the name of Clayhoods. Quarry operator English China Clays Ltd was unwilling to invest in new wagons to replace this obsolete fleet. Much of the traffic was local, destined for export through the docks at Fowey, but there were also longer distance flows to Staffordshire (for use in pottery) and Scotland (primarily for paper mills). The longer flows received new wagons in the early 1980s (in the form of PBA and PRA types) but the 500-odd Clayhoods remained on the local workings.

In 1986, a plan was drawn up to replace the Clayhoods with a fleet of hoppers derived from the standard HAA coal wagon. The nature of the cargo meant that protection from the elements was essential and HAA number 353224 was fitted with a flexible roller roof by G Nevilles Ltd in 1987. It was initially recoded as a CBA. An order was placed later that year for 124 new wagons under lot number 4062. Built at BREL Doncaster, these were the first MGR-pattern wagons built since 1982, and a revised TOPS code of CDA (CDA-R) was allocated. The prototype was recoded CDA with design code CD001A, while the new-build batch were assigned CD002A. Deliveries started before the end of the year, the number series being 375000-375123, reusing the numbers originally allocated to the Blue Circle gypsum hoppers. Apart from the roller roof, the wagons differed from standard coal hoppers in having a blue hopper support framework and a large 'ECC International' label on the hopper sides.

Problems were encountered with the discharging of the china clay loads, residue being left behind that could contaminate later loads of different grade material. To counter this, the wagons returned north to York (Clifton carriage depot) to have a new, non-stick coating applied, reportedly being recoded CD002B in the process. By February 1988, the whole fleet had been delivered and modified, and withdrawals of the Clayhoods commenced.

A second batch of CDAs was produced in 1989, these being converted from HAA hoppers by RFS Doncaster. Renumbered as 375124-375137, the wagons were coded CD001B.

Apart from the removal of the ECC labels, and the repainting of the hopper framework into EWS maroon, the wagons are still in original condition and used on the same services. The prototype (which was never renumbered), and the later batch of rebuilds were all placed into storage in 2004 as a result of service changes, while five of the new-build batch had been withdrawn by 2008, probably as a result of accident damage.

Updates