

Tri-ang TT

By Rolande Allen

A Utility Van with a Royal Connection

From time to time unusual variations of some models come to light. For the collector, it is always exciting to make such a discovery but, for the model historian, it is also important to try to understand how and/or why such a variation came to exist.

This article concerns a maroon Utility Van with a royal connection.

T.85 Utility Van - maroon

The maroon Utility Van was available for a very short period of time. It featured in the Tri-ang TT 4th edition (1960) and 5th edition (1961) UK catalogues and price lists but by 1962 it had disappeared, although, it was later listed in the August 1962 USA Trade Price List and Order Form; presumably to sell off existing surplus stock.



When first released, the T.85 maroon Utility Van was initially numbered S224S whilst its sister, the T.135 green Utility Van, carried the number S227S.

In his article on Tri-ang TT (Train Collector, September 2008), Rob Hampton stated that the maroon Utility Van later carried the S227S number. Somewhat inevitably with Tri-ang, from time to time the numbering tools tended to get mixed up and this explains why the less common version of the maroon Utility Van can be found with this number.

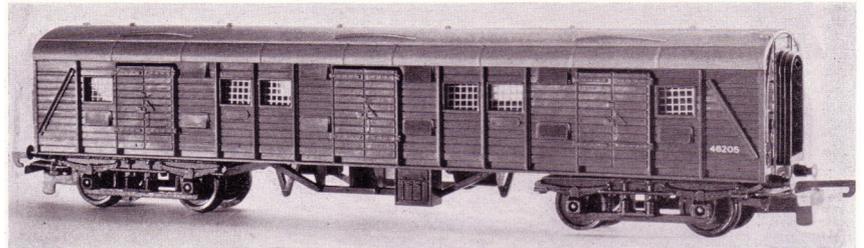
I believed that these were the only two running numbers that existed ... until just very recently.

The New Discovery

Whilst talking to a good friend of mine, Peter Waddington, he happened to ask, "Have you seen ..." - he has a habit of asking these sort of questions and I know that something usually interesting or exciting is about to transpire - "... a maroon TT Utility Van with the number 46205?" I wasn't disappointed. Naturally, I said that I had not but would try to find out what I could. Some frantic sorting through my Tri-ang Railways archive quickly, and rather surprisingly, revealed a result.

Railway Modeller

The Railway Modeller of March 1960 featured



and briefly reviewed a number of new releases by Tri-ang in both OO and TT-3 gauges. Page 72 illustrated 'the TT-3 bogie luggage van' and stated that it was available in maroon or green.

The featured picture was a Tri-ang, in-house produced, publicity illustration of a pre-production model; not a photograph of an actual model which had been supplied to the magazine for review.

Although in black and white the model featured is clearly the maroon version and carries the running number 46205 - a number that was never thought to have been carried on models released to the general public.

The Model

The first question which came to mind was whether this Utility Van was the pre-production model which had been featured in the photograph or was it actually one of a very few which had been released for sale to the general public?

It is difficult to be certain about this. However, in the absence of any other examples having been discovered, for the present, it seems likely that this is a pre-production model. Perhaps, a very few additional examples were manufactured and distributed as samples to the company's area sales representatives.

The second question was why does this model carry the running number 46205?

There appears to be no logical reason for this other than there had been an urgent need to complete the pre-production model for the photographic publicity and a heat-printing tool had been hastily prepared using a number of an existing Tri-ang model.

Above: 'the TT-3 bogie luggage van, in maroon or green' as illustrated in Railway Modeller, March 1960.

Far Left: T.85 Utility Van - maroon 46205

Below: Close-up of the 46205 running number.



The Royal Connection

The running number 46205 was that of the BR lined black livery 'Princess Victoria' locomotive and tender which featured in the OO gauge range of that period.