CAMBRIAN RAILWAYS
WAGON LIVERY

Cambrian Livery has always been based around Grey, at least as far as can be ascertained. From the 1880s at least, it has been a light to mid grey, used all over, with ironwork painted black. Outside framed stock seems to have come in for more liberal application of black paint, with the outside framing and solebars being coated in it. The ends appear to have received the same treatment also. Roofs, where fitted, were white. All wagons were given a cast oval plate bearing the wagon number surrounded by 'Cambrian' above and 'Railway' below, 'Railways' becoming the norm later on (Rather soon after the error was spotted it is hoped). This number plate was all the ownership marking provided until 1899 when Mr Aston settled upon the new scheme which has become so familiar.

This style brought in the large 'Cam Rys' designation, with the simplified form of the Prince of Wales feathers separating each word. This was painted in white on wagons which were otherwise painted as before, in a light to mid grey with black ironwork. Some wagons had the ironwork on the solebars also painted grey, and then transition to black below solebar level. The Feathers were not necessarily in line with the wording, on 15 ton coal wagons it was positioned above the door.

This style of livery was not entirely universal, covered vans, cattle trucks, gunpowder vans and outside framed brake vans receiving a different style. As before the outside framing was picked out in black, but rather than being emblazoned with the abbreviated title, the full title was spelled out occupying a full plank either side of the central doors, usually 2 planks down from the top. The doors carried the running number and prefix 'No.'. Included here is a photo of a custom lettered van, however it is not known if it entered traffic thus styled.

There were other exceptions. Gas Tanks had the full Cambrian Railways title and the number as for vans, but the number was placed below a feathers motif, and were painted all over black. Gunpowder Vans received all over black livery (some sources claim all over red)

In 1915 with wartime economies it was decided to simplify the wagon livery, at least for those sporting the Cam Rys style, to simply read Cambrian, in white spread across the body. With the wagon pool being introduced this has the ill effect of getting wagons misplaced - confusion apparently arriving with the Cambrian Colliery cos wagons, which were similarly lettered but on black ground. To combat this, the word Railways was added in smaller characters below the lettering and to the right of the wagons.

Apart from ownership, other important details were expressed in white on the wagons. Tare was to be found on the lower left, usually on the bottom rail but also sometimes seen on the solebars, or outside framing, or even not at all. Load was shown on the bottom right, on open wagons usually in the form of 'Load x tons', however covered vans were usually labelled 'To carry x tons'. Running numbers were usually painted on the ends centrally, near the top or sometimes dead central, and all carried the cast plates previously mentioned on the solebar.

Some wagons carried the running number painted on the sides also, below the feathers, or to the left hand side if carrying the later style of lettering. This seems to have applied only to larger wagons where space could be found for such things! On brake vans, the number was painted above the lettering rather than below, and single ended vans included the prefix 'No.'

To add some more variety to the mix, Brake Vans (passenger ones also) had their ends painted red until circa 1909. Loco Coal wagons were labelled as such in paint originally, but latterly carried removable boards declaring so.

SOME EXAMPLES:

2 Plank Dropside No. 2399, Built and painted by Pickering in 1902. All ironwork black.

2 Plank Dropside No 927, Built by Oswestry Works in 1899. Tare weight was on the solebars, squeezed into gaps between the crown plates ans washers.

4 Plank Open No. 2333 As running c.1920. (Built by Pickering 1902). Tare weight is assumed to have been on the curb rail as with Load, obscured by weather and dirt. This wagon carried a removable board marked' Loco Coal Only'.