

BRITISH ROAD SERVICES – unravelling liveries and lettering

Various informative and well-illustrated books have been published on various aspects of BRS, with A Pictorial History of BRS; BRS – The Early Years 1948-1953 and BRS Parcels (all available from Nynhead Books) being the most well known, plus the two editions of the Ian Allan ABC of British Road Services spotters books of the early fifties.

All of these are very well illustrated, but what isn't explained is that many of the images are of very early liveries and 'one-offs' when experimentation was being practiced all over the country, before a detailed colour and lettering layout had been formulated. I believe scant regard has previously been paid to livery detail and lettering conformity.

About 1950 a very detailed manual was supplied to all operating units (depots) and usually held in the paint shop, which had to be followed to the letter. In the early '70s I leafed through a well worn copy of this manual at the BRS fleet engineers' office in Canterbury, with whom I had just set up a BRS preventive maintenance contract for the local fleet of Bedford, BMC and Ford artic's that I managed for Alfred Button (later Booker Distribution).

The BRS Canterbury branch had originally been C&G Yeoman, road transport contractors who were compulsorily purchased in 1949, becoming IA East Kent Group and in 1952, 60F East Kent Group when the South East and South West divisional boundaries were changed. Jack Pilbeam, Yeoman's fleet engineer continued with BRS retiring in 1985.

Jack Pilbeam became a close personal friend and with sight of the long gone manual and his personal knowledge imparted to me over the years, I hope I can bring a little more clarity to what for many, appears to be a complete minefield of conflicting data.

Please use the following information in conjunction with the accompanying price list Sheet No. 10a. This information and our BRS transfer range is correct for the period 1949 to 1953, but some lorries would have still been running with this signage for a further three to four years.

BRS transfers for 1953 to mid-sixties are available from Fox Transfers 01530 242801.

There were eight geographical divisions, please refer to the main map showing the boundaries and letters (A to H) allocated to each division. In 1952 the South Eastern and South Western boundaries were changed (for an unknown reason), please refer to the map shown on the right for the post 1952 boundaries. Surely only a government organisation could refer to Kent, Surrey and Sussex as being in the South West of the UK!



Within these eight divisions there were 214 different 'groups' or areas. Our transfer sheets offer 70, which we have tried to spread as evenly as possible geographically throughout the eight divisions.

For simplicity, the names within each division will be referred to as a 'depot'. Two white and one black depot code number/divisional letter accompany each pair of depot names to form the first part of the fleet no. on both sides of the cab (white) , and on the left side of the rear lower white painted cross-member (black).

For example, let us 'sign write' a vehicle for the Midlands Division at 26E Stafford Group. The depot code/divisional letter (white 26E) is fixed to each side of the cab: On a forward control cab, forward of and level with the bottom of the door; on a normal control cab, on the lower section of the door, or if applicable the panel below the door. STAFFORD GROUP is affixed amidships of the side rave on a platform body; 2ft (8mm) up from the bottom line of a box van; midway top to bottom of a drop side or tipper. The word 'GROUP' was dropped after April 1952, but we have added 'GROUP' to at least four depot names in each division for use as desired.

The rear lower cross member should be painted white on all BRS vehicles which was an additional aid to safety, and the black 26E fixed to the left side.

BRSX Fleet numbers: Select and cut out a single black and one pair of white numbers, which were issued sequentially at the depot. Add after the 26E has dried on both sides of the cab and to the rear.

Divisional door roundels TFR46 (Nut Brown background) for Midlands Division are required. The Lion & wheel symbol is handed and should be facing forward, positioned in the centre of each cab door.

BRSI This should be applied directly to the cab roof if deep enough, above the windscreen on open rigs and tractor units. It was not BRS practice to use separately fitted headboards unless the cab roof was too shallow for the wording to be seen.

BRS2 For use on the front bulkhead of all box vans. BRS wording on a van bulkhead takes precedence; do not duplicate a BRSI on the cab roof also. BRS wording was not used on the rear of box vans or tailboards.

The above principal also applies to meat haulage and parcels vehicles if the box van was a fixed body. Both of these branches also operated platform lorries and trailers for carrying lift on/off containers. These vehicles displayed BRS on the cab roof and on the front bulkhead of the container.

BRS LIVERIES

<u>TYPE OF TRAFFIC</u>	<u>CAB</u>	<u>BODY</u>	<u>CHASSIS</u>	<u>WHEELS</u>	<u>WINGS</u>	<u>REAR CROSSMEMBER</u>
GENERAL HAULAGE:	RED	RED	RED	RED	BLACK	WHITE
VANS & PARCELS:	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	RED	BLACK	WHITE
MEAT HAULAGE:	BLUE	CREAM	BLACK	RED	BLACK	WHITE
TIPPERS:	GREY	GREY	BLACK	RED	BLACK	WHITE
SPECIAL TRAFFIC:	BLUE	BLUE	BLACK	RED	BLACK	NOT APPLIC.

Refer to Guild info. sheet 5 for colour shades and mixing quantities for the above colours

LIVERY LAYOUT

FRONT: Small BRS wording (BRSI) on cab roof open vehicles. Large BRS wording (BRS2) on vans
 CAB SIDE: BRS symbol (lion facing forward) door centre. Depot code/div' letter/fleet no. bottom of door or on ¾ panel
 BODY SIDE: Depot name on side rave (flats); centre of dropside or lower ¼ of van body
 (The word GROUP following the depot name began to be dropped April 1952)
 REAR: Possible use of large BRS (BRS2) on rear of some dropsides and vans, but not sanctioned in manual
 REAR CROSSMEMBER: Painted white for safety reasons. Depot code/ div' letter/fleet no. in black on nearside.

The following prefix/suffix letters were added to fleet no's. for Parcels vehicles, drawbar & artic' trailers respectively

A P T letters: P34A237 = parcels depot prefix; T67C17 = drawbar trailer prefix; T6D28A = artic trailer prefix/suffix.
 Four of each A;P;T; letters are included with BRSX fleet Numbers.