

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAINTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURE. 1947

Foreman Painter Hampton Load

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The amount of detail information recorded regarding the painting and finish of buildings and structures is very meagre and consequently personal recollections have played a large part in assembling this section of the register. Only one official publication has been traced which admits that the G.W.R ever painted any of its buildings.¹ However all the details that follow have been corroborated by the study of countless photographs.

The styles described must be regarded as only typical of Great Western practice for the methods employed themselves lead to variations between district and district and even between stations. Many readers will no doubt confirm this from contradicting evidence they hold themselves.

The basic colours in use for many years were two shades of stone, known officially as "Stone No.1" and "Stone No.3" which throughout these notes will be referred to as Light Stone and Dark Stone respectively. The shades were produced by adding various quantities of burnt sienna pigment to a white lead base. The mixture was left to a foreman on the job who was provided with a colour tint card by the authorities at Swindon.² There is immediate possibilities of infinite variation depending on such factors as the individual's colour sensitivity, the effects of weather conditions and the age and cleanliness of the tint card. No doubt there were occasions when the card was mislaid and the mix was by guess and by God.

Further anomalies have arisen probably through the foreman using his own discretion as to which colour to use for certain parts of buildings, possibly through mis-interpretation of the somewhat vague instructions issued. For some structures no guidance was issued at all.

From the evidence that has been studied, and this concludes valuable recollections by former employees of the Railway, it appears that the stone colour-scheme was standard by 1888 at the latest and possibly dates from the earliest days. Chocolate was another basic colour although in limited use and from about 1931, maroon-brown was introduced for items subject to heavy wear such as stair risers and the lower planks of wooden buildings. It tended to replace chocolate in exterior applications and with weathering was not easily distinguishable from it. The "stone scheme" outlined above, with the addition of chocolate and maroon-brown was the standard structure livery until 1946. In that year, possibly in the interests of post war economy a scheme which was basically all-cream was introduced, the colour being applied to all exterior paintwork except parts of signal boxes, nameboards and plates.

Not many stations were re-painted in this style, for with nationalisation in 1948 the brown and cream livery was introduced. Despite statements to the contrary, even from railway sources, brown and cream was never a structure livery in G.W.R days. What lingers in people's memories as brown and cream is in fact the stone and maroon-brown combination in various stages of weathering. It is known that as late as 1954 stations were still being painted in some areas with the stone colours.

An exceptional colour-scheme, about which little is known, was used on three stations in the Oxford district, Yarnton, Eynsham and South Leigh and on numerous stations in former Cambrian territory (eg. Borth, Barmouth Junction, The Tanat Valley Line and occasionally in the Oswestry district). This used two shades of blue-green but the precise colour cannot now be matched. Why this was done is conjectural; it could have been an experiment to test a projected new standard. Finally there were cases where idiosyncratic finishes were applied to certain stations to please the local landlords or land owners. Culham was finished in a single shade of light green for such reasons.

External painting was expected to last four or five years before re-painting was necessary and weathering in this period depended very much on the location. A coast station would suffer from the high ultra-violet concentration in the light and weather to a totally different shade to that of a station in a smoky, sulphurous industrial suburb or one in a quiet country branch line.

In the detail notes which follow all buildings and out-buildings on the railway followed the pattern set out for station buildings and all references to brick structures may be taken to apply also to those built in stone. Particular details are not repeated, e.g., awnings are dealt with separately and not mentioned with every type of building on which they may have been used.

¹Signal Department painting circular, 1907.

²Information supplied by Civil Engineering Department, B.R., Western Region.

STATION BUILDINGS

Exterior

Timber built

Light stone

Walls; door panels; barge boards.

Dark stone

Outer frames of buildings; door and window frames; mullions and window sills; gutters; rain heads and down pipes.

White

Window frames and the framing of glass.

Brick built

Light stone	Window frames; window sills; and mullions; door panels; barge boards.
Dark stone	Any structural woodwork on the outside of the building; gutters; rain heads and down pipes; door frames and doors (except panels); wooden plinths at ground level; ironwork on windows (bars etc.)
White	Window sashes and the framing glass

Maroon-brown had similar uses in both types of building and was generally used in place of dark stone for door frames and the doors except their panels, ground level plinths, the lower framing or the bottom four or five planks on the timber structures, rain heads and down pipes and occasionally instead of light stone on window frames.

It was generally the rule that raised framing of any kind was finished in dark stone, any paneling being in light stone. Sometimes the framing and paneling were false, the effect being produced by the use of the two colours. Any peculiarities in the painting style at a particular station were usually perpetuated in all the buildings there. Except perhaps the signal box, the maintenance of which was the responsibility of a different department.

Interior

Light stone	Walls from sill height; window frames; (the shade was creamier than that used for exteriors.)
Chocolate	Lower walls; skirting boards; doors and frames.
Black	Fireplaces; metal chimneys and vents; mantleplaces.
White	Window sashes and framing of glass; ceilings.

Furniture was either chocolate or darkly varnished. Floors were mainly unpainted bare planking. In small stations only the Station Master's office, booking office (not the booking hall) and waiting rooms were privileged with brown linoleum. The barrier near the booking office window was unpainted. There were other interior painting schemes but the above can be taken as a basic guide. There is evidence of blue-green for walls and the same colour with maroon-brown, the latter replacing chocolate in the description above.

Signal boxes

Exterior

Light stone	All body woodwork above floor level; door panels.
Dark stone	Mullions; fascia and barge boards; gutters and down pipes; casements (under portion) and sills; finials and roof ventilators; steps; strings; middle rails and newel posts.
chocolate	Doors (except panels); rain- water casks.
White	Window sashes and the framing of glass.
Black	Hand and guard rails; miscellaneous ironwork (rod and wire opening support, etc).

Timber boxes were chocolate below floor level. When the under-portion was much over 8'0" high, that portion between the floor and the 8'0" mark was painted the same colours as those given above. It was sometimes the practice to paint the plank to which the box name-plate was affixed chocolate, this band being continued right round the sides of the box.

Some timber boxes had the lower half painted light stone, the chocolate being confined to a strip one or two planks wide at floor level all round the box. A number of brick built boxes had light stone barge boards instead of dark stone. Maroon-brown generally replaced chocolate for doors (except panels) and sometimes dark stone for door frames. There is evidence that , on smaller boxes, the lower halves were painted maroon-brown instead of chocolate but this did not apply to larger boxes.

Interior

Light stone	Walls above tops of cupboards; door panels (including locker and cupboard doors); shelves and all woodwork above sills.
Dark stone	Mullions; corner posts, door frames; coupling and rafters.
Chocolate	Floor to window sills inclusive; walls to tops of cupboards; lockers and doors (except panels)
White	Window sashes and framing of glass. Sometimes the centre section of vertical framing on sliding windows was black – this would be where the signalman placed his hand to open the window.
Black	Stools; desks; instrument shelves; notice boards; finger plates; grates; stoves; mantelpieces; brackets and wire adjuster stands; floor coverings varied from scrubbed bare boards to dark brown linoleum domesticated by embellishments provided by the signalman. There is no evidence that maroon-brown was used in signal box interiors.

Goods sheds

Exterior

Timber sheds were creosoted or, occasionally tarred. A few examples had painted walls, the style being similar to timber station buildings. With creosoted or brick sheds the style of the other woodwork (e.g. ; windows, doors, etc.) followed that for brick station buildings. Large end doors had dark stone framing with light stone panels inside and out. Roof-light frames were dark stone and white window framing while girders and other ironwork were black.

Interior

Walls were whitewashed throughout which quickly became dirty, noticeably along the top edges of the bricks or planks. The lower six feet would often give the impression of being black. All roof wood and ironwork was whitewashed but the floor boards, wooden platform and steps were unpainted. The crane, if provided, was medium grey. Doors were the same as the exterior.

Locomotive sheds

Exterior

These buildings were usually finished in the style of brick station buildings with large end doors to a similar style as those of goods sheds. Roof ventilators were dark stone and ironwork black.

Interior

All colouring was generally quickly lost in a thick layer of soot! When newly painted, doors and windows were the same as the exterior. Cupboards, shelves, lockers and the like could be either chocolate or unpainted.

Footbridges

Light stone	Exterior woodwork and paneling (except panel framing); interior of sides; underside of roof including ironwork.
Dark stone	Outside panel framing; "T", "H" and "L" girder roof support columns; inside skirting of footways; flat top of sides of open bridges; gutters and down pipes; wooden stair risers; exterior mouldings below roof (if fitted, about 6" wide); window frames and roof-light glazing bars.

The outside of the roof was black gas tar which rapidly weathered to grey. Steps and floor planks were unpainted. Exposed footbridges had the handrails painted black while the covered

ones left them unpainted. Maroon-brown was used for metal handrails, stair risers, the flat top of the sides and the corner girder supports for the roof at the entrance to the stairs.

Station and Goods Shed awnings and Roofs.

Light stone	All woodwork including valance boards, underside of awning or roof but excluding top moulding of outside of awning edge.
Dark stone	Support columns; roof girders, trusses and all ironwork; top moulding of awning edge; roof-light window frames and woodwork; gutters and down pipes; any panel framing or moulding attached to the valance or the end of an awning or roof.

Maroon-brown was used only for gutters and down pipes.

Gentlemen's Lavatories

Light stone	Inner panels of screens, inside and out; all inside woodwork including doors and panels; cisterns and down pipes.
Dark stone	End support; top moulding and panel framing of screen, inside and out
Black	Iron work and fittings, except cisterns and down pipes.

Porcelain fittings were not painted and pipes and associated fittings were often of polished copper or brass. The outside of a roof was black gas tar which rapidly weathered to grey. Maroon-brown was only used for the end support of the screen and perhaps for closed doors.

Corrugated Iron Sheds (Including "pagodas")

Light stone	Walls inside and out.
Dark stone	Window frames and doors; gutters and down pipes.
White	Framing of window glass; sliding panel in windows.

The outside was black gas tar which rapidly weathered to grey before the inevitable rust obliterated all traces of paint. Sometimes the lower 18" of the outside wall were black; gutters and down pipes were occasionally light stone. Maroon-brown was used only for doors.

Platform surfaces

There were many variations the most common being:

- (a) Sandy-grey paving stones usually sandstone 3'x2'.
- (b) Medium-grey asphalt.

- (c) Loose gravel.
- (d) Wood planks, 8" to 9" wide, at right angles to the rails.
- (e) Blue-grey paving bricks, about 10"x4", with a diamond ridge pattern.

Platform edges were generally one of the following:

- (a) Concrete slabs about 3' 6" x 2' 6" or slightly larger; the longer dimension parallel to the rails.
- (b) Diamond ridge pattern slab, similar to the paving brick, about 1' 6" x 6", the large dimension at right angles to the rails.
- (c) Paving stones similar to those used for all over surfacing.
- (d) A single row of bricks with the longer sides at right-angles to the rails.

The white border to the edges of platforms was introduced first during the 1914-18 war, allowed to lapse and re-introduced in 1939 and continued in use since then.

Water Cranes

- Light stone** All metalwork except as below.
- Dark stone** Lower 5' 0" of column, often scalloped, end portion of swinging arm; rotation rings; stay wires and valve fittings.

The flexible hose was of canvas. Maroon-brown was used later in place of dark stone.

Water Tanks

- Light stone** All metalwork, girders and tank supports.
- Dark stone** Borders of tanks, usually with reversed radius corners; valve fittings; footways and platforms; lower 4' 0" of support columns.
- Black** Ladders.

Conical towers were similar but exhibited two variations. The tank itself was either all light stone or divided into four panels with painted dark stone framing with reversed radius corners similar to the rectangular tanks.

Doors and windows in brick water towers were identical to brick station buildings. Water trough storage tanks were finished in the same style as other water tanks. The lower 4' 0" of ladders were painted white from about 1915. Maroon-brown was later used to replace dark stone in all applications.

Level Crossings

Light stone	Woodwork and pipe rails.
Dark stone	Iron fittings; columns; lamps; gate wheel and gear in signal box.
Red	Gate targets; gate stops; locking and ground connections, the latter rapidly dirtying to a black-brown.

Turntables

Light stone	Panels between girders.
Dark stone	Girders and stiffening members.
White	Stopping lever and hand rail.

There were exceptions where all steelwork was painted a grey similar to wagon grey. Plank floors were unpainted and handrails, apart from that by the stop lever black. Maroon-brown was used in place of dark stone for girders and stiffeners.

Bridge Steelwork

Usually black but occasionally a medium-grey like aluminium paint. Steelwork mainly below eye level was generally black. That easily seen was usually grey, but there were exceptions.

Cattle pens

Woodwork was either unpainted or creosoted. Ironwork black quickly rusting. Whitewash much in evidence.

Buffer Stops

Rails and Iron fittings were black, the buffing face of the stop showing many variations – all red, all white or three equal bands of white red white. Some private siding stops were red all over.

Lamps and Lamp Standards

Metal standards

There were two common variants:

- (a) All dark stone, including lamp housing.
- (b) All light stone, except lamp housing, base and decorative collars which were dark stone.

Wooden standards

The column was light stone and the lamp housing dark stone. Wall mounted lamps and those on footbridges could be either light or dark stone. There were many examples of metal and wood column lamps where the lower 18" of the column was black. Lamp housings were occasionally black.

Station Nameboards

Wooden nameboards had raised white letters and framing on a black ground. Support posts and brackets were usually dark stone but examples have been noted in light stone. A few nameboards in later years had maroon-brown backgrounds. A later pattern of board, the later introduction of which is unknown was enamelled with white letters on a deep-blue background. Very early nameboards had dark letters on a pale background. The shades used are not known but were probably the standard stones.

Notices

Station notices, "Waiting Room", "Ladies" etc, had raised white letters and framing on a black ground. Where the notice was mounted on a post the latter was painted light stone with the lower 18" dark stone, later maroon-brown. Where they were mounted on doors (e.g.; "Station Master") they were finished sometimes with a light stone surround and dark stone background with white letters.

Signal box nameplates had raised white letters on a black background. Prohibition notices had either raised white letters of the standard type or were enamelled plates with white letters on blue grounds. The G.W.R was unique in the form of notice at the top of platform ramps where certain words were emphasized by making them larger than the remainder of the message, e.g. "PASSENGERS MUST CROSS THE LINE BY MEANS OF THE FOOTBRIDGE". A later pattern of station sign, used generally in the larger stations, had light stone frames with the lettering enamelled in blue on a white ground. These signs were either hung from the platform awning girders or were hinged and mounted over the doorway of the service they advertised.

Fences and Gates

Fences and gates were usually light stone with black hinges. It was also the practice to paint black any part of the gate that would be handled in normal use. There is evidence that some stations had white fences. Dark stone was sometimes used for gate and fencing support posts, being replaced by maroon-brown in later years. Iron spiked fences were black and fences outside station limits were usually unpainted.

Station Furniture

Seats	Dark stone or chocolate, in later years replaced by maroon-brown.
Barrows	Dark stone or chocolate with lettering or monogram in light stone.
Firebuckets	Red, lettered in black. G.W.R. Those in signal boxes had the additional legend "signal Department", with the station name below.
Posterboards	The surrounds were dark stone, the surface black when new.

Miscellaneous

Loading gauges	White with lower 18" of post dark stone, later maroon-brown. Ironwork on wooden posts and fittings on metal posts were black.
Yard Cranes	Medium grey all over.
Point Levers	The guard rail and lever white. The type with a heavy circular weight were black with the weight white.
Mile Posts	White letters on a black background. The post was either unpainted or finished white.
Gradient Posts	