

LSWR Coach bodies

The Swanage Railway has three six-wheeled LSWR coach bodies dating from the later part of the 19th Century. These have been grounded for many years, with the long term objective of restoring them on new or adapted underframes to run as a vintage train.

Early London South Western Railway (LSWR) coaches like those on other railways drew heavily on stage coach design and were usually mounted on 4 wheel chassis. These continued to be built until the 1870s. From the mid 1870s, six wheel chassis were employed in an attempt to increase capacity usually by use of an additional compartment. All were wooden bodied, timber panelled with raised mouldings to cover panel joints and fitted with timber boarded roofs covered in canvas. They were mounted on pitch pine underframes, later superseded by steel.

On the LSWR, 6 wheel coaches continued to be built until the early years of the 20th century, albeit for secondary duties. The LSWR and Southern Railway 'cut and shut' many old 6 wheel coach bodies on to bogie underframes, while others like these three examples were sold to householders as holiday bungalows or out houses.

The Swanage Railway Stock Book, by George Moon and Robin Brasher, has been extensively drawn upon for the individual coach histories. For further information on LSWR carriages, reference should be made to the series on LSWR Carriages by G R Weddell. The photo is by Mike Stollery.

LSWR Tri-composite no. 2296



2296 at Harman's Cross, 13 September 2009

2296 was built in 1891 to Diagram 229 as a 32ft long tri-composite coach, i.e. accommodating all three classes of passenger in the one coach. Originally numbered **49**, it had five compartments arranged in the order 3rd – 2nd – 1st – 1st – 3rd. These seated 10, 8, 6, 6, and 10 passengers respectively. One way of distinguishing the class of each compartment is by their widths - the first class being wider (and more luxuriously appointed) than the 2nd, which in turn was wider than the 3rd class. While the doors and windows are of the same width, the different compartment widths can be discerned by examining the width of the panels between them.

At some point the second class compartment was down-rated to third, with an increase in capacity of two, and the coach given its present number 2296. In December 1922 it was withdrawn and sold for use as a summer chalet in a garden at Worth Matravers, where it remained until rescued by the Swanage Railway where it arrived in April 1983.

It is currently used as a station store at Harman's Cross.