

MAUNSELL BRAKE COMPARTMENT THIRD S 2768 S

During March 1931 the Southern Railway's Directors authorised the construction of twenty 4-car sets. They were intended for general use from Waterloo to Portsmouth, or Bournemouth or on West of England services. However, 20 Composite coaches were outshopped 'loose' - before the remaining 60 coaches in the order - which meant that, ultimately, 3-coach sets were introduced.

S 2768 S was built in 1932 at Southern Railway's Eastleigh Carriage Works to R E L Maunsell's design diagram 2102 in Lot No. 633 using a standard 59ft underframe and bogies from Lancing Carriage Works. Steel bodywork conformed to the SR Restriction 4 loading gauge and the interior was divided into three sections. In addition to the Guard's and Luggage compartments there were 6 compartments for 48 passengers. The coach cost about £1,000 to build. Mahogany veneer panelling was used widely throughout including the toilet.

It entered service within Set 232 which comprised Brake Compartment Third 2767; Corridor Composite 5675; and Brake Compartment Third 2768. All twenty 3-coach sets were introduced during April 1932 and, one month later, Set 232 was being used regularly on Portsmouth to Plymouth services.

In 1938 the Southern Railway decided to refurbish some coaches to provide better standards for Bournemouth line passengers. A complete internal refit included stone coloured Rexine fabric being attached to walls and ceilings in the 6 passenger compartments and the corridor. Plain 'bench-style' upholstery was replaced by individual seat backs with scalloped style tops. Unfortunately the moquette proved to be impractical as the design was based on a pale pink background.

Original wall fittings and maps were replaced with prints of famous Donald Maxwell watercolours. An almost unheard of luxury, for the 1930's, was fitted carpeting which covered the linoleum flooring. The introduction of 'Improved Stock' coincided with the late start to the Summer Timetable in July 1938. Southern Railway posters of the time stated "*Try the latest and most luxurious railway carriages yet designed for ordinary fares*".

Part of Set 232's rostered duties included the 07:42 departure from Weymouth. Two additional coaches from Swanage were added to 232 after its arrival at Wareham. On arrival at Bournemouth Central a six-coach set, which had originated at (now demolished) Bournemouth West, coupled on for the remaining journey to London. This 11 coach service became the weekday 08:40 "Bournemouth Limited" which covered the 108 miles to Waterloo in 2 hours non-stop. The empty stock was then taken to Clapham Yard for cleaning and servicing before it formed the Down "Bournemouth Limited" leaving Waterloo at 16:30 and arriving at Bournemouth Central at 18:30. This non-stop service ceased at the end of September 1939.

Set 232 was then utilised on South Western Division's general workings. It was noted on

the 12:30 Waterloo – Weymouth and 17:37 Weymouth – Waterloo diagram from time to time. In October 1945, Set 232 was strengthened to five coaches with the inclusion of Corridor Composite 5639 and Corridor Third 1817. This did not last long as these two coaches were removed during 1948.

By September 1956, Set 232 was noted on Eastern Section workings to Ramsgate, Tunbridge Wells, Brighton and Eastbourne. In 1960 Set 232 was diagrammed on Reading-Redhill-Tonbridge and Oxted Line services. During 1961 it was seen on Brighton – Horsham trains.

The introduction of diesel electric multiple units to Oxted services from 1st January 1962 resulted in large scale withdrawal of steam-hauled coaches. Coach 2768 was taken to Longhedge Works where the interior was stripped out before conversion to a Mess & Tool Coach which it included the installation of a slow combustion stove. It was allocated to Southern Region Central Division's Signals and Telecommunications Department, early in 1963, with the Departmental Service number ADS 70172.

After 18 years use by S&T it was declared surplus to requirements and condemned. The Southern Steam Trust tendered for this coach in September 1981 and brought it to Swanage in January 1982. It was repainted externally but no restoration was undertaken. Unfortunately it's bodywork condition deteriorated to such a point that it had to be dismantled leaving just the chassis and bogies. Certain key components were retained for use on other Maunsell carriages or as patterns.

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