

BR MK I TOURIST SECOND OPEN No. 4961

Built for British Railways at their Carriage & Wagon works in Wolverton on the northern boundary of modern-day Milton Keynes. 4961 was constructed as part of Lot No. 30690 which comprised 108 carriages built in three consecutive tranches. They were ordered by BR on 29th June 1960 and the last vehicle was completed on 21st April 1962. It is believed 4961 would have been outshopped around the end of 1960.

The BR TSO carriage had, by this time, evolved into a slightly different standard design (Diagram 89) which lasted for several more years during which many hundreds more TSOs were built. It seems passengers had become to prefer the open, rather than compartment, stock.

They were still all fitted with 64 seats arranged in open saloons of 16 'bays' of 4 seats and steam heated radiators underneath them. Wooden wall panelling had been replaced by Formica laminate panelling. Two toilets were fitted at one end either side of the coach end vestibule/corridor connection but tungsten filament lamps gave way to fluorescent tube lighting. The coach was, by now, carried on two bogies of a Commonwealth design which were vacuum braked. These were more robust, and heavier, for higher main line speeds.

At some stage in it's main line career, BR overhauled the vehicle and at the same time fitted air braking and Electric Train Heating thus making the coach both Dual Braked and Dual Heated. TSOs were used widely across BR network and formed part of the nationwide Inter City services network. It was believed to have been withdrawn, due to more modern stock being introduced, in late 1980 – a working life of around 20 years.

4961 was purchased by Waterman Railways, owned by music entrepreneur Pete Waterman, during 1994 after a working life on the main line of around 33 years. It was stored on Crewe Basford Hall Yard sidings for a couple of years before being moved to Crewe Brook Yard sidings. From there it was purchased and moved to the Swanage Railway by 1999 where it was restored to operational condition.

It has been in one of the operational sets ever since apart from periodic repaints, maintenance, etc. More recently it was registered with the Office of Roads and Rail for main line use and was first deployed in the consist on the successful test run of Maunsell Class U No. 31806 to Yeovil Junction and return on 13th April 2016.

Information collated by Peter Sykes 17th September 2021

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