

BR MK I TOURIST SECOND OPEN No. 4349

Built for British Railways by the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. at their works in Middlemore Road, Smethwick. 4349 was constructed as part of Lot No. 30207 which comprised 100 carriages numbered 4258 to 4357. This batch was ordered by BR on 3rd January 1955 and the last vehicle of it was completed on 6th October 1956. Therefore, 4349 would have been outshopped a little earlier.

The BR TSO carriage had a standard design (Diagram 93) which lasted for several years during which many hundreds were built. They were all fitted with 64 seats arranged in open saloons of 16 'bays' of 4 seats and steam heated radiators underneath them. Two toilets were fitted at one end either side of the coach end vestibule/corridor connection. The coach was carried on two BR I bogies which were vacuum braked.

TSOs were used widely across the BR network although 4349 was allocated initially to the North Eastern Region and formed part of the Inter City services based there. It was believed to have been withdrawn, due to more modern stock being introduced, in late 1980 – a working life of around 24 years.

It was purchased by the London Midland & Scottish Steam Preservation Group (LMSSPG) in 1981 before being moved to Swanage. Restoration to full passenger carrying condition was undertaken including external painting to original BR Maroon livery with black and yellow lining. The original number of M4349 was applied at the same time.

More recently, 4349 has undergone work to its 24 volt lighting system. The original dynamo system worked well at main line speeds – but not nearly so well at up to 25mph on a heritage line. This arrangement has been replaced with a 240v mains input being converted to 24 volts DC to charge batteries overnight. Then an inverter converts 24v DC back to 240v AC to power modern low wattage lamps. This allows lighting to last for many more hours from the battery's charge.

4349 has been on the Swanage Railway for around 40 years or, roughly, almost twice as long as BR ownership.

Information collated by Peter Sykes 17th September 2021
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