

LSWR SIX COMPARTMENT THIRD (Body) No. 0695

LSWR Coach bodies

The Swanage Railway has four 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 six-wheeled underframes to run as a vintage train. Early London South Western Railway (LSWR) coaches like those on other railways drew heavily on horse-drawn stage coach design and were usually mounted on 4 wheel chassis.

These continued to be built until the 1870s. From the mid 1870s, the six wheel chassis was 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 They were mounted on pitch pine underframes although these were later superseded by steel.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 the four examples on the Railway, were sold to householders as holiday bungalows or outhouses.

0695

This coach body was built in 1885, by Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co, to LSWR's design diagram DB 66. The vehicle entered traffic as a 34ft long six compartment third class coach on suburban services. It's first number was 911 although this changed to 695 at a later date. In December 1904, it was cyphered (i.e. written off the books) and, being not completely worn out, was placed on the duplicate list with number 0695.

Before 1900, coaches were normally lettered L&SWR usually towards the left with the vehicle's number in small size numbers towards the right with class lettering THIRD etc., in door waist panels. Between 1900 and 1912, LSWR in small letters was used, usually in the centre of the vehicle with the carriage number towards each end. From 1912 onwards, larger (4") size company initials were used, in the waist panel at the centre of the vehicle with the coach number just to the right of the initials in larger size numbers.

In December 1904, 695 was 'cyphered' (written off the passenger carrying books). As it was not completely worn out, 695 was placed on the duplicate list being given the number 0695. It was finally withdrawn, after 36 years of service, in 1921 and, apparently, the body sold to a Miss Cathcart of Ashbury with the chassis and wheels being scrapped by the LSWR. She had it moved to Highcliffe near Christchurch where all the interior was removed to create an open area. An outbuilding was attached at some stage and, thus modified, served 55 years as a holiday chalet until 1976.

It was then acquired and transported on Saturday 8th May 1976, becoming the first

item of 'rolling stock' bought for the Swanage Railway. It remains in private ownership on loan to the Swanage Railway Trust. Fortunately, LSWR works drawings have been located to aid 0695's future restoration. Initially, it was taken to Corfe Castle, then to Swanage in May 1980, where it was used as a store for many years. In December 2009 it was moved again to its current position, at Norden, for the use of personnel working at Norden.

Information compiled by Peter Sykes 24th September 2021

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