

BULLEID BRAKE THIRD Semi-open S 4366 S

Frames and bogies were constructed at Southern Railway's Lancing Carriage Works. Bodywork and fitting-out was undertaken at SR's Eastleigh Carriage Works to design diagram 2123 in Lot no. 3240. The finished carriage was 64ft 6in long and 9ft wide. Seating capacity of 48 third class passengers was divided into two compartments [total of 16 people] as well as an open saloon of four bays [32 people] with all seats covered in uncut moquette.

The underframes and bogies were of a standard design but some changes were made in the vacuum braking system. The object of reducing weight meant that the normal arrangement of two 22 ins diameter brake cylinders with brake shafts was changed. In these sets one 30 ins diameter "Prestall" brake lever cylinder, made by the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Co., was installed. It was also hoped this might reduce on-going maintenance but, after a while, most were re-fitted with two sets of brake gear with a single reservoir left intact. One toilet was fitted between the saloon and compartments. The Guard had a roof mounted periscope to see the line ahead or behind.

Although completed just before Nationalisation S 4366 entered service in February 1948 so it's 75th Birthday is early 2023. It formed part of Bournemouth Dining Set 298 [there were eleven such sets 290 - 300] from new and would have worked between London Waterloo and Bournemouth with occasional usage to Weymouth but never, it seems, on the West of England line to Exeter. The original rake for Set 298 consisted of Brake Third semi-open S 4365; Corridor Composite S 5748 with the Third class section adjacent to the Brake; Restaurant First S 7685; Kitchen Restaurant Third S 7889; Open Third S 1459 with Brake Third semi-open S 4366 on the far end.

In BR (S) Carriage Working Notices for week ending 15th September 1952 show 2 of the eleven 6 car sets being listed as 'spare until further notice' and set 298 was one of those sets.

Southern Region altered Set 298 in 1962 by replacing the Bulleid Restaurant First S 7685 with a BR Mk1 equivalent. The substitution of BR MK1 BCK S21269, in June 1965, allowed S 4366 to run as a 'loose' vehicle but Southern Region decided soon after to abandon all fixed sets. Coach S 4366 was withdrawn from Capital Stock in May 1966.

Soon afterwards it was purchased by the MoD, along with S 4365 and S 4367, for use at a number of their bases. Around November 1967, S 4366 was renumbered "RCT 2" on moving to Long Marston. Later it received designation "ARMY 5201" and was noted in use on 7th October 1972 by members of the Industrial Railway Society on an official visit. The Luggage area had been changed by then, and the corridor connection replaced by large windows, to create an observation saloon area although the remainder of the interior was left largely intact. Unfortunately the change to this end has weakened the structure and years of open storage has taken its toll.

At some stage, near the end of it's long Army 'career', S4366 was moved to MoD Depot Kineton in Warwickshire from where it was purchased. On Monday 25th March

1985 it was purchased from the MoD and moved to Swanage on Wednesday 1st May. After enduring further years of out door storage, it's condition had deteriorated further. On Tuesday 15th December 2009 a lorry moved S 4366 to undercover safe storage off the railway, to slow down this deterioration. Here it joined LSWR Corridor Third 728 plus Maunsell-designed Brake Composite 6699 and Third Open 1323.

A fund to raise money towards it's eventual refurbishment to passenger-carrying condition was opened. It had been hoped that structural restoration could start in summer 2022 although more funds needed to be raised. Once restored, it is the intention that S 4366 will again run with S 4365 which will be unique in railway preservation.

Eventually, an authentic 4 car set 298, (with the addition of Corridor Composite S 5761 and Restaurant Open Third S 1457) is intended to be formed to recreate a typical matching Bulleid carriage formation used on Bournemouth Line services after the Second World War. S 5761 is currently in passenger service. S 1457 has been sufficiently repaired to serve as the C&W Department volunteers' workshop at Corfe Castle whilst other heritage coaches have their refurbishments completed.

At the end of November 2023, coach S4366 was removed from it's undercover safe storage and transported to Rampart Engineering Ltd which is based at the Barrow Hill Roundhouse Railway Centre near Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Here it will undergo assessment before restoration work commences.

Information collated by Peter Sykes 10th October 2021 (and updated 3rd December 2023)

Updated by Peter Short 16th October 2021