

BR MK I CORRIDOR BRAKE COMPOSITE 21205

21205 was built as part of Lot No. 30425 by the Metropolitan-Cammell Carriage and Wagon Company in the West Midlands. This batch of 30 similar vehicles [numbered 21195 – 21224] was ordered on 2nd October 1956 with deliveries completed on 6th September 1958. Therefore 21205 would seem to have been outshopped during the summer of 1958.

Designed under Diagram 171 these BCK vehicles were based on BR's standard 64ft 6in chassis and fitted with vacuum braked BR 1 bogies and steam heating equipment. In addition to the caged parcels/luggage area, an adjoining Guard's compartment was installed with a hand wheel for the parking brake. On the other side of the central transverse vestibule were two First Class compartments for 12 passengers and three Second Class compartments for 24 passengers. At the far end was one toilet compartment.

After 24 years revenue-earning service, during 1982, 21205 was withdrawn from BR's revenue-earning service to be converted for use by their Signals and Telecommunications section as a Brake coach for Departmental train workings. Number DB977094 was allocated for the change of activity but this work lasted only around 3 years as, by 1985, it was noted as 'condemned' in sidings at Basingstoke awaiting disposal.

It had been 'stored' for some time in these sidings so that, in addition to accident damage, it suffered from a lot of vandalism. Other withdrawn coaches were alongside which allowed spares to be transferred to 21205 – with requisite permission. These included various items for windows, seating and doors plus other minor fittings. Having been purchased, 21205 was moved to former coal sidings which had served the CEGB Rye House Power Station near Hoddesdon in Herts with kind permission of the CEGB Estates Manager. It was hauled by 31223 on Saturday 2nd November 1985.

Working parties from the North London Group, and other supporters of the Swanage Railway, were given permission to work on the vehicle. After around 2 years of hard work outside it was moved to the Swanage Railway in 1987 and went straight into revenue-earning service in Southern Region green livery.

During the Winter of 2001/2002, after a further 14 years in traffic, major work was undertaken to refurbish the vehicle again - this time undercover inside Swanage Goods Shed. It was outshopped in lined BR Crimson and Cream livery to match the "Wessex Belle" dining rake with which it was allocated most of the time.

Information collated by Peter Sykes 18th September 2021 and updated 7th July 2022