

LSWR FIVE COMPARTMENT SECOND No. 4550

LSWR Coach bodies

The Swanage Railway has three 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 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 They were mounted on pitch pine underframes although these were later superseded by steel.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 three examples on the Railway, were sold to householders as holiday bungalows or outhouses.

4550

This was built as a five compartment second class coach in 1891 to Design Diagram 7. It was one of the first vehicles constructed at LSWR's Eastleigh Carriage & Wagon Works which had only opened that year after everything was transferred from the original works in Nine Elms. It was one of five built as replacement bodies re-using 32ft 2ins underframes. These five were numbered 37, 86, 179, 192 and 221, and all were converted to third class in June 1909 except no. 179 which was done during December 1910.

Surviving LSWR records contain discrepancies so it is not possible to establish, with any certainty, which of these five has survived. What is known is that the survivor carried the number 1512.

In October 1920, no. 1512 was converted to a fruit van and renumbered again to 4550. It was withdrawn from revenue earning service and, like no. 2296, was sold to a purchaser in Worth Matravers in 1922.

In 1983 it was acquired for the Swanage Railway, together with 2296, and was located adjacent to sidings at Swanage. Some of the original windows are still etched with the word "SMOKING" - a sign of very different times.

On 4th December 2017 it was craned onto a 'Dolphin' flat wagon to be taken to Corfe Castle where it currently resides being used mainly for Carriage & Wagon stores.

