

BR MK I RESTAURANT MINIATURE BUFFET

M1865

M1865 was built as part of Lot No. 30702, at British Railway's Wolverton Carriage Works, being outshopped in August 1952 and allocated directly to Midland Region services. This batch of 18 Restaurant Miniature Buffet (RMB) vehicles [no. 1865–1882] was ordered in June 1961 with deliveries completed by May 1962. The design by BR draughtsmen was designated Diagram 99 as 1865 had Commonwealth bogies whereas Diagram 98 RMB vehicles had Mk I bogies.

The Classification of Restaurant Miniature Buffet was generally shortened to "RMB" when being discussed. This design of Refreshment vehicle was based largely on BR's 64 seat MkI Tourist Second Open design. A total of 84 RMB's were built in 5 Lots by BR Wolverton between 1957 and 1962.

Like it's class mates, M1865 weighed 38 Tons with steam heating and vacuum braked. 44 seats were installed, being laid out similar to the 4-seat bays of TSO coaches. However, two full seating bays next to the centre transverse vestibule were built as vacant spaces to create areas for the bar/ counter as well as standing room for passengers.

Water heating was provided by a bottled gas system with racks installed under the sole bar to contain the bottles. Another bay of 4 seats were omitted, the other side of the transverse central vestibule, to create space for a separate storage area provided with a lockable sliding door.

RMBs were seen as an economical way of providing light refreshments on services where a full meal service could not be justified. They were designed specifically for one person operation and allocated throughout the various BR regions so could be seen on trains from Thurso and Wick to Penzance. In May 1982, M1865 was transferred to Scottish Region for seven months before moving on to Eastern Region in December 1982.

E1865 was withdrawn temporarily during January 1991 before being re-instated in August 1991. At some stage BR had added Electric Train Heating equipment and it's current set of BR4 bogies replaced the earlier Commonwealth bogies. The original tungsten lamps were replaced with fluorescent lighting at probably the same time. E1865 was withdrawn from Capital Stock in April 1992.

E1865 was purchased privately and delivered to Swanage during April 1993. It arrived in very faded/work-worn paintwork of the former Network SouthEast livery. Restoration to operational condition took some time before it entered service in 1996 being outshopped in the Swanage Railway's Green livery and numbered S1865. Initially it was used as the 'support vehicle' for the "Bird's Nest" buffet coach then located at Swanage Platform One. Later it was used occasionally on service trains.

Eventually it was installed on an isolated piece of track at Norden opening as the "Norden Nest" in May 2004. Beforehand, all interior lighting was converted to 240v as well as provision of numerous mains sockets ready to supply connections for a water boiler, microwaves, refrigerators and freezers. Also, as braking equipment was no longer

needed in this location it was all removed to be added to C&W stores. A mains water supply was connected plus a soak-away drainage installation provided for the site.

After trading successfully for 12 years, the “Norden Nest” closed on Sunday 1st November 2015. S1865 was lifted from its isolated position on Friday 4th March 2016 and moved to sidings at Norden. This was to provide an adequate line of sight from Norden Station through the approach to the level crossing known as “Norden Gates”.

A tandem-lift was used for this removal – Diesel Electric 15 Ton crane 'FBC1' and 45 Ton Steam Crane DS 1561. The latter crane was kindly manned by personnel from the Mid-Hants Railway as they had a similar steam crane with staff currently authorised to use it.

S1865 is now stored awaiting a decision on its future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Swanage Railway Stock Books

Preserved Coaching Stock of British Railways – Part One BR Design Stock

by Peter Hall and Peter Fox (Platform 5 Publishing – 1994)

The Railway Heritage Register Carriage Survey Project:

<http://www.cs.rhrp.org.uk/se/CarriageInfo.asp?Ref=2699>

Revised by Peter Short 15th September 2021

Information further updated by Peter Sykes 17th March 2024