

Paul Ramsden, managing director of Rampart, was on hand to greet a party of 16 Burton Railway Society members who assembled in the Company car park off London Road, Derby. First we looked at the very long-term projects stored outside in the yard, these included: a Southern Region manager's saloon; a South Eastern brake van; and, a gunpowder wagon. At the end of the line was a woebegone diesel shunter, 08536, which was in store and didn't belong to Rampart.

Moving inside Paul explained that all the Brighton Belle carriages had been moved up to Barrow Hill so that concentrated restoration could take place there. A tight deadline was in place for this project as all the carriages were required back on the mainline in June 2012. However some decorated pieces of woodwork belonging to the set were still stored at the rear of the Derby workshop.

The first vehicle we examined was W1666, a Mark One Kitchen Car, which Paul explained dated back to 1961 and had been constructed by the Pressed Steel Group. It was in for a heavy body repair. Prior to dispatch back to the customer, the vehicle would be fitted with air brakes, through-wired for central locking and repainted. Rampart favoured brush painting rather than spraying and all lining was done by hand. All the kitchen equipment would be replaced before returning to service. It should be back on the mainline by Easter 2012.



Mark One Kitchen Car W1666

Photo: Rodger Smith

Next to the kitchen car was a S.R. Open Third, number 1346, that had arrived the previous week from the Swanage Railway.

The vehicle which had been designed at Eastleigh with room for 56 seats, dated from 1933. Prior to going to Swanage and after finishing in use on the main line, it had been converted into a classroom for use at Clapham Junction. It was timber-framed with metal cladding. The bottom tie rail had rotted away as had most of the floor, but on a positive side the roof was in good condition. 1346 was labelled, "Not to work between Hastings & Tonbridge". The heavy work on the body will be carried out by Rampart's workforce of ten, but the interior restoration will be down to the volunteers at Swanage.



SR Open Third no.1346

Photo: Rodger Smith

We all thought this was a smart move on Swanage's part, because the heavy body work would have taken volunteers months, if not years, to do. We all agreed to look out for it when it has been returned to service on the preserved railway.



Paul Ramsden, managing director of Rampart

Photo: Rodger Smith

After an absorbing two hours during which we learned a great deal about carriage restoration, it was time to thank Paul for his time and patience with the group. The visit was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Report by Mark Ratcliffe