

YOUR CARRIAGE AWAITS...

SAPPHIRE 3069

Sapphire 3069 is part of a batch of eight First Class Saloons (Nos.3063-3070) and sister to Ashdown (3064 who is currently in service on the Wealden Rambler Tea Train) ordered in May 1954 and completed by August 1955 at Doncaster Works for the Southern Region of British Railways. It was painted in carmine and cream livery (also known as "blood and custard"), was fitted with steam heating, vacuum braking and ran on BR1 bogies.



These carriages were reserved for boat train and other special traffic duties, principally the Ocean Liner Express services which were operated between Waterloo and Southampton docks to convey passengers to and from the passenger liners which at that time were still the normal method of long-distance travel. Most of the shipping companies had a named train run in connection with their sailings - "The Statesman" (United States Lines), "Union-Castle Express", "Holland-American" and the "Springbok" are examples, but perhaps the most prestigious was "The Cunarder". This was

an all-First-Class train composed mainly of Pullman cars, but usually with one or two Mk.I Ocean Liner saloons in its formation, which ran in connection with the sailings of the Cunard liners Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth on the Transatlantic service.

These were the days before the widespread availability of comfortable air travel. Piston-engined aircraft such as the Boeing Stratocruiser (operated by BOAC) could make the London to New York journey in 17 hours with refuelling stops. However, any self-respecting transatlantic traveller would choose the United States (built 1952 for the United States Lines and holder of the Blue Riband) or the two pre-war built Cunarders. It was only the emergence of the British-built, jet-engined Comet 4 airliner (BOAC) and Pan American's Boeing 707, with their 6-7 hour eastbound crossing inaugurated in 1958, that began tempting travellers in numbers away from the sea voyage.



Sapphire, the carriage that you will be travelling in, arrived at the Bluebell Railway in March 2019 and following a lavish revamp was entered into Golden Arrow service on November 2019.

In May 1975 she was allocated to ocean Liner duties once again but in 1983 was purchased by the Venice-Simplon Orient Express as a reserve carriage and within a year was repainted into 'Pullmanesque' Livery and named 'Saloon Car No 1'.