



News

Issue 1 Autumn 2019



Upcoming events: *Tenterden Christmas Market: 22-24 Nov. Santa Specials: Weekends 30 Nov to 22 Dec + 23/24 Dec*



Newly forged draw gear shackles.



Water injector trays, which fit inside the boiler, ready to be fitted.



The condenser coil fitted to the cab roof which is part of the steam lubrication system.



The rocking shaft covers have now been made on site, sitting alongside the brass bonnet.

Editorial by Mark Yonge

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Dear shareholder,

WE are pleased to announce the resurrection of the GWR 4253 Locomotive Newsletter. You have had to wait patiently for a year and we thank you for bearing with us. But no news can be good news because behind the scenes, where things really happen, work has been continuing apace at Rolvenden as you will see from Dave's progress report in this issue.

You will see that we hope to include a readers' forum. We welcome comments, articles, letters and emails for publication and unlike other magazines, are prepared to print these, providing they are not defamatory and in the interest of open debate.

Readers' Forum

Please send your letters, articles, comments etc., by email to the news team: gwr4253news@gmail.com for inclusion in the next issue, or to contact us.



Some of the Tuesday team busy doing nothing - apart from admiring the newly machined eccentric straps.

Our dedicated teams of engineers have been regularly soldiering on and although 4253 is under canvas, a peep underneath reveals how this former rusting hulk is blossoming into a fine looking locomotive. What has been achieved is inspirational and will provide a leading asset to the motive power of the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

We aim to produce this magazine on a regular basis and are sure that there will always be plenty of news to report as the final hurdles are just ahead. The boiler will be the main focus of interest and will be regularly featured in detail as you will see.

Summer Shows



Mayor of Bexhill, Cllr Kathy Harmer, tries her luck on the 4253 tombola at the Bexhill 100 Classic Car Show.

MARK Singleton (Events Coordinator) has been working relentlessly to show 4253's progress throughout the season at leading events in the area. These include The Weald of Kent Steam Rally at Woodchurch and the Biddenden Tractor Festival as well as the Annual Hop Festival at Bodiam in early September. This allows us to raise funds and more importantly, raise the profile of our project as well as promoting the K&ESR. The tombola, run by Colin and Marlene Edwards, information literature, sales of clocks

and egg timers have proved to be most successful. All this has helped gain new shareholders who actively support us and widen publicity. Our thanks to all the stalwart teams who have managed the stands and should any of our readers like to assist in our remaining events for 2019 (see front page), please get in touch.

Restored Safety Valve Bonnet arrives!



Pete Hubbard in action with his buffing wheel, giving the bonnet a final finish.

YOU may have seen on our Facebook or website pages the photo of our new safety valve bonnet for 4253, which was made by Trevor Tremblen, proprietor of *Swindon Copper Boilers*. He obtained the badly beaten up bonnet at an auction and used his skills to reshape, strengthen and paint the bonnet, while keeping it original. A great job and we believe it only proper to give you some background information about him:

Born in 1945, he started work in Swindon Locomotive Works in 1961 as an apprentice Coppersmith in 'K' shop (*coppersmiths and Sheet metal workers*), with time spent in the famous 'A' shop (*erectors, boilermakers, painters, machine and wheels*), working on most classes of ex GWR locomotives including Kings, Castles, Counties, Manors, Granges, Halls etc. He also worked in Swindon Carriage Works attaining City & Guilds in Sheet metal work.

During the 1970's he worked on Oil & Gas rigs in the North Sea as a coded welder on copper and Kunifer 10 pipework.

After becoming involved in model engineering in 1975, and having built a 5" gauge GWR class 45xx and a 7¼" GWR 49xx Hall class locomotive, he established *Swindon Copper Boilers* in 1983 and to date has manufactured well over 1,200 copper boilers in all shapes and sizes and has exported worldwide.

In the full size standard gauge preservation scene he has made and supplied hand bent copper pipework, copper chimney tops, brass safety valve bonnets, nameplates etc. for many ex GWR locos including: 6023 King Edward II - 6024 King Edward I - Foremarke Hall - Kinlett Hall - Wootton Hall - Bradley Manor - Erlestoke Manor - and class 55xx, 56xx, 45xx and 42xx locomotives.



The finished article shining in the summer sunshine, our superbly restored bonnet which will look wonderful on the loco.

Ex Southern Railway engines include Merchant Navy Class Port Line and P&O Line, West Country and Battle of Britain Classes 257 Squadron, Eddystone, Manton and Wadebridge as well as the two 80000 series B.R. Standard Tanks running on the Swanage 'Purbeck Line'.

In 2003, he took on the EU over its Pressure Equipment Directive, which in its original format meant the end of businesses like his. It went as far as the House of Lords and was eventually amended.

In 2012 as a member of the North Wiltshire Model Engineering Society, he was instrumental in the charity fund raising of £5,000 to provide a special carriage capable of providing space for one wheelchair passenger plus parent or carer at the Coate Water Country Park miniature railway. It took just 18 months to raise it with a little help from Puff the bubble blowing railway dragon that he constructed. He is immensely proud to carry on the tradition of Coppersmith for as long as he can.

He is now writing a children's book about Puff; but that's another story . . .

Kelvin Williams

The Brave Robin



SOME species of song birds can prove to be remarkably tame. I have a robin in my garden which closely follows me during the winter months, devouring worms as my digging exposes them. So it is touching to report that the 4253 project site at Rolvenden has had its own tame robin which appeared in the spring. For

some reason only known to her, she boldly entered the workshop and decided that a small drawer of rivets would make an ideal place to build a nest. This was followed by a clutch of eggs and several fledglings with voracious appetites which could be seen demanding food from their mother at regular intervals.

It is astonishing to witness that hammering noises, intensive welding and the presence of several labouring men, seemed not to deter her in the least. Her mode of feeding was to perch nearby on the outside, glance in and then, at a suitable moment when the coast was clear, fly in to the nest with regular food supplies. Charlie Masterson placed a rope across the front of the brood to deter human visits, supplies of rivets being temporarily provided elsewhere. The birds have now flown the nest and it would be gratifying to see if mum Robin returns next year.

Mark Yonge

GWR 4253 General Progress Report



Scott Parker, during a quiet few minutes, melts the white metal thrust faces off the rods - with the Sunday team apparently being caught at a slack moment . . . again.

BECAUSE this is the first newsletter for quite a few months there seems to be rather a lot of catching up to do! I'll do my best to give a general guide as to how things have progressed and hopefully give a more detailed account of latest progress and items of more specific interest in the next issue.

As with any major restoration project of this kind, it tends to go in fits and starts. Charlie Masterson's method of working is to have most elements for the loco made and ready to fit well before they are needed, so that when the time comes we can just fit that particular item or area together. For example, most of the brass work for the boiler backhead has been restored, made or acquired and is ready to fit - all it needs now is for the boiler to be completed to put it all on!

This method of working will ensure there are no lengthy delays waiting for complicated castings or parts to be made or machined at the last moment and in a lot of areas we are very much ahead of the game.



We are way ahead of the game with these gauge frame castings which are currently away for machining.

Given that 4253 Loco Company is never shy when it comes to emptying its shareholders' wallets and bank accounts, true to form we will soon be launching a specific important appeal called 'Stay-With-Us' where you will be able to buy one or more boiler stays - these will go nicely with the boiler tube(s) you purchased a year or two ago. Hopefully this will reduce the not inconsiderable financial burden to the company of buying 899 (. . . yes, 899) copper and steel boiler stays! *Details of how you can buy these will be in the next 4253 Newsletter - stand by your wallets please!!*

The vacuum and injector pipe work has now been completed under the cab floor and the metal part of the floor is now in position with all oil pipes that run from and under the cab now in place and connected. This work involved various flexible, steel and copper pipe work, with connections, flanges and gaskets etc., which were all made, brazed, welded and bent to fit on site by the team. We're always amazed at the amount of varied skills the team has! Now that there is a safe cab floor to stand on, it has enabled the newly refurbished original reverser quadrant cover to be adjusted to size and fitted. Just as a side note, we always like to refurbish any original bits and pieces if we possibly can, rather than make new. A new hardwood curved and varnished guard has been made by Dave Stubbs that fits along the top edge of the reverser quadrant - apart from anything else it will add a touch of class to the cab! Also now fitted in the cab is the condensing coil, part of the steam lubrication system, along with the new exact replacement warning sign which is now in place next to



the water level indicator. All four restored brass window frames, along with new glass, newly made handles and catches have been fitted. The cab reverser lever and sander lever are both connected and working.

Elsewhere, both piston rod swab boxes have had to be made from scratch along with their new copper oil pipes which are now in place. These smear oil onto the piston rods as they go back and forth.

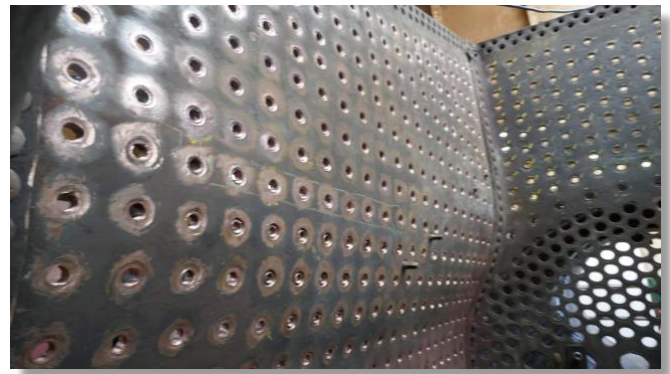
The main driving rods have been exhumed from our Aladdin's Cave storage unit recently, with work started immediately on pressing out old bushes and cleaning the years of grime off. Just as a matter of interest, two of the coupling rods have large spherical joints which allow axle side play and hence operational flexibility for tighter bends - clever stuff.

In common with most 'Barry' rescue locos, 4253 wasn't supplied with any connecting or coupling rods and although a search has been going on for some time, we are still in need of a main connecting rod and a left-hand intermediate coupling rod. If you have one tucked away in your shed or know where either can be found in the undergrowth somewhere, or if you know of someone that might possibly have one, please contact one of the team or email us at gwr4253@gmail.com



The cylinder and valve cladding fabrication, led by Dick Weekes, has now been finished, which involved rolling sheet metal, welding together, drilling, tapping, painting and fitting, along with all accompanying insulation. It's amazing how many bits of metal cladding there are . . . it seems endless! While we are talking about this area of the loco and by the time you read this, both pistons will have been delivered back after being machined and will be ready to fit. All four slipper blocks for the main slide bars have been white metallised and are awaiting final sizing before being machined and fitted.

Ah, and finally, we come to the boiler! This year has already seen great progress with the boiler . . . "hoorah", I hear you all cry? The hundreds of stays that needed to be removed from the copper firebox have been taken out and the threads re-tapped and checked, which required a huge number of man hours and a few weeks' work with two men inside the firebox on each day to complete the task. Although the majority of the threads are in good condition, a number will require the attention



899 firebox stay thread holes - certainly not for the faint hearted!

of a copper welder (which seem to be as rare as hens' teeth), then reamed and re-tapped to size. We are currently awaiting quotes from a couple of copper welders to move this forward and if 'Stay-With-Us' is successful we can then begin to put it all together.

New palm stays (the ones that connect the bottom of the barrel to the throat plate and firebox) have been made and trial fitted.



Palm stays machined and trial fitted alongside the throat plate rivet holes. (The boiler is upside down at the moment).

Two other major steps forward have been the fitting of the new throat plate to the boiler and welding a new boiler barrel section in. The new section has been welded into place by our coded welder Steve Casey, under the beady eye of a boiler inspector and given the necessary approval and paperwork. The throat plate has been 'trimmed' to size, stay and rivet holes drilled, and dressed into its final complicated shape around the front of the firebox, boiler barrel and foundation ring. A lot of heat, very large hammers and a lot of swearing were required to persuade it into its final intricate shape, all under the watchful eye of our Chief Engineer Henry Mowforth. The investment in our electric hoist and mobile gantry has proved invaluable for this task.

Unfortunately there are too many members of the team to mention in this issue as well as the myriad of smaller, but no less important tasks that have been completed on the loco. All the latest details of work can be followed weekly on either www.4253.co.uk Facebook: **4253 Locomotive Company** or Twitter: **@GWR4253**

Great strides are being made towards the day when 4253 is back in steam - and what a day that will be!

Dave Farnham