The Bluebell Standard

Newsletter of the Bluebell Railway Standard Class 2 Project Issue 6 Autumn 08

Locomotive Report

This is the sixth issue of our report and newsletter for supporters of the project. Whilst the warmer weather and longer days have enabled the working group at Sheffield Park to progress with parts to extend the frames for the hind pony truck, we have had to adjust to the resignation of Colin Turner from the Bluebell Railway Locomotive Workshop staff. Colin remains in touch with the project from his new base in Axminster and has continued to give us invaluable advice and guidance. We wish him and his family well for the future.

The immediate target continues to be to complete the rear frame extension. Derek Barlow has completed machining all six of the fabricated rear stretchers.

Trial assembly of the two stretchers to rear of firebox

The longitudinal stays for the hind drag-box were successfully hot bent and the complete drag-box, which weighs 335kg, has now been welded and is ready for machining the five flange faces and the centre opening. Derek will start on this as soon as a suitable machine is available.

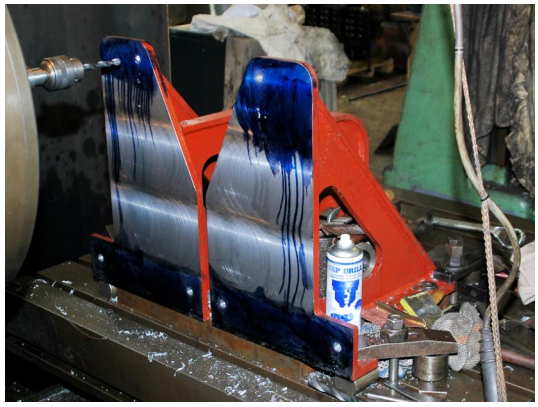
Hind drag-box ready for welding

The hind buffer beam plate, which was supplied laser cut, has been marked out and holes drilled for most attachments and stiffening angles and gussets. We await a set of buffers and housings before completing this. All the hind buffer beam angles have been cut to length and drilling is in hand.

Following doubts about the dimensions of the two buffer beam rubbing plate castings, which have been in store for some time, it was decided to obtain a drawing from BRSLOG. This revealed some discrepancies which could not be corrected. Roy Stirling has agreed to modify the pattern in preparation for ordering two new castings.

Drilling has speeded up following the acquisition by the project of its own 110V magnet base drilling machine. This can handle broaches up to 75mm diameter and with an MT3 taper and four speed gear box is proving really useful.

The two hind buffer beam corner gussets were delivered at the beginning of August. We had these made to our drawings to reflect the changes in standard plate thicknesses since the originals were designed. As usual, Fleet Tip did an excellent job for us. Both gussets have been machined and part drilled for assembly.



Machining hind buffer beam gussets

Looking ahead to the erection of the extension assembly Alan and Steve are preparing a movable shelter which is designed to keep the worst of the weather off an area behind the frames. We also now have a framework to create a sheltered working area

local to 84030's parts container and a store thanks to Norman.

Bill and Ron have used the warmer, and sometimes drier, summer weather to needle gun and paint the inside of the existing frames and the stretchers. There is more to do.

Nick continues with machining brake pins. In the near future we will have a batch ready for hardening.

Since deciding to cast the pony truck frame and cradle, work has started to create the frame casting drawing, which is not available from any of the known sources. The general arrangement drawing of the BR Class 2 rear pony truck, a BR drawing of the rear pony truck cradle, as well as dimensioned sketches and photographs of an LMS Ivatt Class 2 tank engine, which has the same rear pony truck, are all sources of information enabling us to discover and cross-check the casting dimensions. It is hoped that this work may also assist the group recreating the BR Class 3 Tank Engine, another lost class.

The final check and review of the drawings for the left hand and right hand tank supports, which will be needed after frames have been extended, are on hold for the time being, although both could be completed quite quickly as soon as we are ready to get a firm quote and purchase them.

Work Planned

The immediate programme is the completion of the frames, including the frame modifications, mainly to the hind end, and the addition of the rear extension as well as the replacement of the front drag-box, which is also in hand. Very shortly, the frame extension plates, which were water-jet cut to the correct profile will be put onto trestles for marking out and drilling. Setting these up with the drag-box, stretchers and buffer beam will be a major step forward.

Completing the frames with both drag-boxes and buffer beams will be a very important tipping point for the project.

Leading on from there will be the fabrication, machining and fitting of the left hand and right hand tank supports and the completion of the work on the main axle boxes and the purchase and machining of castings for the rear pony truck, together with fabrication of the associated reins and under-frame.

Fundraising

We continue to raise funds for the project through e-bay sales and at Horsted during the main Bluebell event week-ends (£217 in April, £354 in July and £141 in October). We have purchased our own tables to set up a display stand to promote the project and attract supporters as well as to offer donated items, mainly books, for sale at bargain prices. All this has only been possible due to our supporters' generosity. We are also very grateful for the generous support we are given from other areas, including £354.70 from the organisers of the Toy and Collectors' Fair and £1,192.55 from the organisers of the Autumn Steam Gala) and of course the Trust. We also sold a surplus item to the Bullied Society for £308.

Thanks are due to all the working volunteers, to the workshop staff and to those on other projects, particularly from the Atlantic and Sir Archibald Sinclair groups, for their willing help and advice. We are particularly grateful to our donors, to whom this newsletter is really addressed, and to those who help in so many ways in support of our publicity and fund raising efforts.

Steve manning the 84030 stand at Horsted Keynes

We are benefiting greatly not only from the Trust's agreement to process regular and occasional financial contributions from taxpayers of £20 or more to the Project as charitable gifts but also for their grant towards the Project.

It is not just that there is no surviving example of a British Railways Class 2 Tank Engine; 84030 will be exactly right for the Bluebell Railway's operations in terms of its versatility, power, economy and reliability.