

Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Since the last report good progress has been made at Leaky Finders with the loco's overhaul. New boiler plate has arrived for the sections cut out of the sides of the outer wrapper and both sheets have been shaped, weld prepped, trial fitted and are now waiting to be welded in place. Stay holes have been marked out on both sides.

A new throat plate pressing was due to arrive in mid-May.

Remedial work on the inner firebox is being assessed and about to start, particularly around the stay holes.

New plating for the loco's rear drag box has been fabricated and is in the process of being riveted together.

As regards the tender tank, work is proceeding very well at the Kent & East Sussex Railway, where the 4253 loco group are fabricating the new tender tank.

All the new steel plate for the new tender tank is now on site. The 'well' underneath the tank has been fabricated. The coal space is under construction and lockers rivetted together.

Back at Sheffield Park, Melvyn has been busy working towards 'freeing up' the rear drag box on the tender frames as this (like the front drag box) also needs to be replaced.

He firstly needed to remove the rear steps and is now moving forward to cut away various strengthening plates between the inner and outer frames before being able to free up some of the rivets holding it in.

Meanwhile other working group volunteers have progressed cleaning and painting the inner frames, most of which have now had two coats of primer and first coat of grey undercoat. Also a lot of accumulated gunk has been cleaned off the wheelsets.

The tender frames were due to be lifted in May and the wheelsets despatched to the South Devon Railway to enable the tyres to be turned.



Top: New boiler plate awaiting welding into place on 541's firebox outer wrapper.

Bottom: New backhead plating being trial fitted

Both photos: Leaky Finders



Left: Progress with cleaning and painting 541's inner tender frames.
Photo: Steve Pilcher

Below: New well for the tender tank being fabricated by the 4253 group at the K&ESR.

Photo: 4253 group



THE Q NEEDS YOU!

The [Maunsell Locomotive Society](#) has agreed to try and raise £40,000 towards the cost of overhauling the tender and providing a new tender tank. The Q is an ideal size and economical loco for Bluebell operations. It fits in well with the 'Southern' image, and it did actually operate in the vicinity.

Online payments to the appeal can be made by clicking the [DONATE](#) button on the Bluebell website and following the online payment instructions. Select Q Class 541 Overhaul in the drop-down box.

For those who prefer to use cheques, please send a cheque, made payable to the 'Bluebell Railway Trust' (and a [Gift Aid Form](#) – if appropriate) to the Bluebell Railway Trust, Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield TN22 3QL. Please add a note to say it is for the 541 Overhaul Appeal.

At the time of writing, over £35,000 has been put in place towards the target of providing £40,000 towards this project. As ever, a very warm 'thank you' to all concerned who have generously contributed thus far. Please consider assisting reaching the target of £40,000 – and thus play a part in getting this very useful loco, back in action at Bluebell.