

Loco Update: Keeping Up with Daily Running

It's been a few months since I last wrote an update for the eNewsletter, partly because there's been so much other important news and partly because we've been very busy in the Locomotive Works!

As we move out of spring and into the summer, the daily running season has started, and on average between now and October two steam engines a day are required. This roster is usually one large locomotive ("Camelot", S15, etc.) and one medium locomotive (O1, H class, etc.) and on weekends, a third locomotive is required for the Wealden Rambler and Golden Arrow dining trains.

Over the last few months we have only had three or four locomotives available for traffic as we've undertaken repairs to both Q class No. 30541 and BR Standard Class 5 No. 73082 "Camelot". That means S15 No. 847 has borne the brunt of our heavier trains, and the O1 and H class have almost been in continuous service. Despite a quick change of valve head rings on the S15 early one morning, all three engines have performed faultlessly.

I'm pleased to say repairs to the left hand side trailing driving wheelset manganese axle box liner on "Camelot" are complete and the wheelset was reunited with the frames in early May. While the loco was in the Loco Works, a number of other maintenance items were attended to, including replacing some brass bushes on the valve gear and attending to the blowdown valve, before the locomotive officially became the first to use the new

maintenance shed. More about this later. Whilst out of traffic "Camelot's" annual boiler exam was completed and after successfully passing parts one and two, the locomotive returned to traffic on 1 June, 2019.

I mentioned a moment ago the new maintenance shed. This facility, part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), was completed and handed over to the Railway on 17 May, and it was quickly put to use, housing "Camelot" for a boiler washout and for final preparations for its annual boiler exam. I can vouch personally for the new undercover facilities after spending a day working on "Camelot" in the dry while it rained heavily outside! The facility is now fully operational, and it also will provide additional undercover storage for our locomotives.

If you've visited Sheffield Park recently, you'll have noted Q class No. 30541 is back in the Works. This is to complete some minor work to the vacuum brake system and brake adjusters that we didn't get time to do before the loco was required for our Branch Line Gala. Most of the work is now complete, and the locomotive is being reassembled.

Alongside No. 30541 in the Works, BR Standard Class 4 tank No. 80151 is on the cusp of being out-shopped. Now fully painted and lined, the final boiler fittings such as the main steam manifold assembly and smokebox pipework are complete, and the locomotive passed part one of its boiler exam at the end of May. Over the course of June the last details will be completed and part two of the boiler exam undertaken, with a view to out-shopping and entry

into traffic at the end of June. This addition will be a significant boost to the locomotive fleet and provide the Railway with a much-needed economical engine and the Locomotive Department with a much-needed spare engine.

You might think we can then sit back, enjoy a cup of tea, and take breath for a moment? As soon as the Q class and No. 80151 have left the Works, the S15 will enter for a piston and valve exam (P&V), as well as some maintenance work, having completed around 15,000 miles since the last P&V. The O1 will then enter the Works for a P&V exam and attention to some minor matters.

Next in the overhaul queue is No. 34059 "Sir Archibald Sinclair", and work has been progressing in the background on measuring the 2,000-plus boiler stays holes, ordering the stays, taps, and reamers, and discussing with suppliers the specification for the flue and smoke tubes. The first batch of stays has arrived, and they are sitting on the shelf ready to go! The chassis also will enter the Works over the summer so we can review the axle boxes, pistons, and valves, as well as other mechanical items, so the locomotive is in the best condition when it returns to traffic.

Having had a very successful Branch Line Gala, our attention has now turned to our Giants of Steam event in October, and I'm very pleased to announce we have BR Standard Class 7 No. 70000 "Britannia" and LMS Princess Coronation class 4-6-2 Pacific No. 6233 "Duchess of Sutherland" as our visiting guest locomotives. These two

"giants" will run alongside our own locomotives on the 11-13 October, and I'm grateful to the Royal Scot & Locomotive General Trust and the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust for the loan of their locomotives.

Having finished on a high, I hope to see you at the Railway over the summer; otherwise I will definitely see you at our Giants of Steam event in October! Remember, book early to avoid disappointment!

By Chris Hunford, Locomotive Director