

Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Since the last report in the January issue of *The Bluebell Times*, Leaky Finders have been busy removing all the remains of stays that lay behind the wasted areas of the steel outer firebox wrapper on the sides and backhead that require replacement. The new outer wrapper boiler platework has been ordered and will arrive shortly at Leaky Finders. A start has also been made on fabricating the new locomotive dragbox.

A number of fittings and certain motion parts have been returned to Sheffield Park and are receiving attention from the railway's full-time staff.

The wheelsets have returned from tyre turning to Leaky Finders premises which is a significant first step in the re-assembly of the chassis.

Back at Sheffield Park, Melvyn Frohnsdorff has worked through some cold days in the winter to successfully free up the tender tank, dismantle and remove all the brake gear, vacuum cylinders and

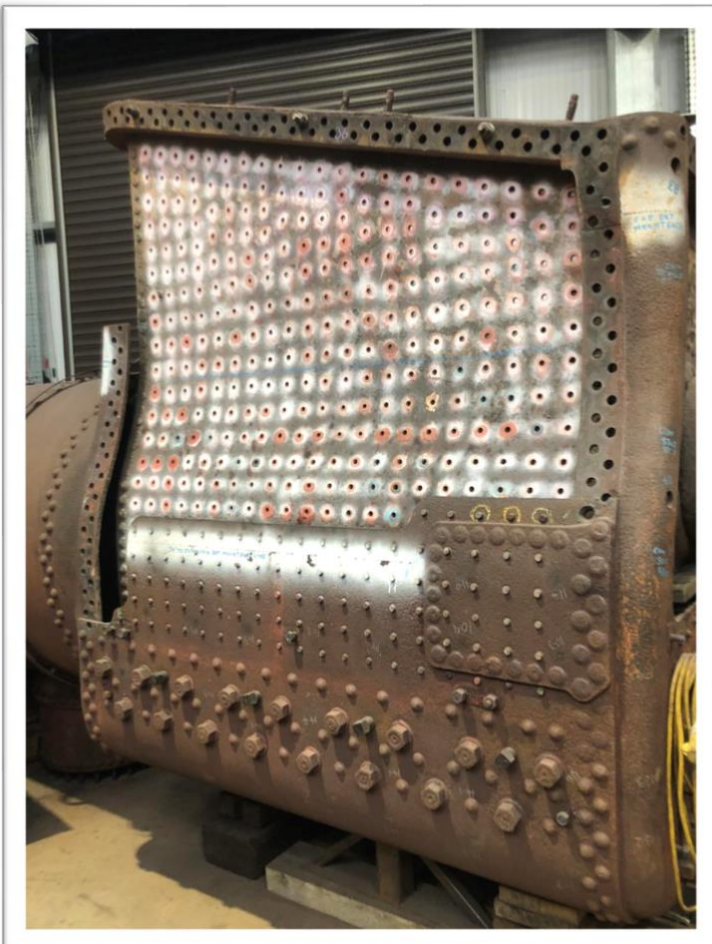
brake cylinders. Our working party has been busy cleaning up all the various components that have been removed and re-painting, as appropriate.

At the time of writing this report an order had been placed with the 4253 loco group (based at the Kent and East Sussex Railway) for the fabrication of a new tender tank, with the old tank about to depart imminently for use as a pattern and for salvage of reusable components. The next job will be to lift the frames and send the wheelsets away for tyre turning and assess what work is required to the dragboxes etc.

541's tender had been detached at Barry and sold off for use as an ingot carrier at a nearby steel works. The tender that accompanies 541 today was an ex-Woolwich Arsenal tender built for use with N class locos and had ended up attached to U class 31625 in Barry and was purchased for use with 541. The tank was thus approximately 100 years old and in need of replacement.

Left: 541's firebox, showing where areas of the steel outer wrapper have been cut away and the stays now all removed.

Photo: Leaky Finders



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 £30,000 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.



Above: 541's tender tank freed up and raised off the tender chassis, awaiting removal.

Photo: Steve Pilcher