



News

Issue 3 Spring 2020



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The 4253 'Final Push' Appeal

Please, please, help us get YOUR loco back into steam - we are nearly there!

Shares cost £250 each and you can pay in one instalment or by monthly standing order.

If choosing to pay by monthly standing order we would prefer if this could be over a maximum of ten months, i.e. £25 pm, given the short timescales involved.

However, any monthly amount between £10 and £25 (or more!) will be gratefully received and existing standing order amounts can be adjusted with your bank.

Please go to this address for more information and how to pay:

www.4253.co.uk/Become_A_Shareholder or contact Charlie on: 07747 545720

4253 mourns the passing of a very dear colleague

THE start of a new year saw mixed emotions for all involved in 4253. There was a very high point and sadly a very low point. The low point was the sudden and unexpected death of our dear friend and long time colleague David Dee.

Dave was known by everyone within 4253 as well as the wider railway and was part of our team working on the restoration - and had done so from the early days of the project. We have dedicated this edition to him with an article by Martin Chudley outlining his unstinting involvement in the project from its inception, as well as many years involved with and working for, the K&ESR. Dave will be sadly missed by all that knew his happy smiling face.

Although certainly overshadowed by this sad event, the high point was the removal of the boiler and its transport to the HBSS workshop in Liverpool together with the launch of the 'Final Push' appeal to help pay for it all. The appeal has been progressing steadily but please, please think about buying another share in your loco to help get it back into steam. Have a look at the appeal



Photo by kind permission of Evans + Hulf

panel at the top of this page to see how you can help raise the necessary final amount required. ***The directors thank you for your continued fantastic support.***

There are three major things that have enabled this giant leap with the boiler to happen: the first is the continued generous financial support of you, the shareholders; secondly is the organisation and drive of the 4253 Company as a whole, and thirdly the dedication of the

many volunteers who turn up to Rolvenden each week to convert shareholders' money back into a 103 year old working steam locomotive.

Restorations on this scale and complexity are certainly not for the faint hearted. The amount of organisation, attention to detail, working hours and skills the project has acquired over time is quite awe inspiring and although those of us that have worked on the loco over a number of years can get quite blasé about things, when you stop to think about it, it's a staggering undertaking and an achievement of major proportions for all shareholders.

In the preceding nine years shareholders have brought a drive and consistent determination to this project that I would argue has not often been matched for any undertaking of this type in the UK before - and all done without any major benefactors. Going from a rust-ridden lump of iron on rusty wheels, to a steam locomotive that, by the end of the year, will basically only need its boiler to be a completely restored locomotive, is a testament to all those involved. Working out of a 'workshop' that would not look out of place in a third world refugee camp, great engineering has ensued - which makes the ongoing achievements of this enterprise even more remarkable.

To all shareholders I say please help with our appeal. This 80-odd ton locomotive will stand testament to the support, determination and abilities of all involved over the years and will remain so for the decades and generations that come after us.

Dave Farnham

Dave Dee . . . and 4253

By Martin Chudley

THE precise time at which Dave joined the 4253 team is lost to this author. However sometime in 2013 seems to be about right. As with every new recruit, Dave was welcomed in and then, once it was obvious that he knew which end of a hammer to hold and that he could be trusted with pointy things, he was set to work.

Personal note: I was lucky to have joined 4253 a few weeks earlier and, finding that we had a lot in common, Dave and I paired up for a lot of the work.

So much so that Charlie christened us 'The Chudley Brothers'. I greatly value the time I had to be mates with Dave and that name will always give me enormous pride.

At that time, the bunker had been finished and the tanks were in the early stages of being dismantled. Also there

was much grinding and fettling to be done on the frames. One of Dave's first jobs was lying on his back under the loco cylinders beating the rust and scale off with a needle gun.



Dave and Martin working on the cab end of one of the tanks in the early stages of assembly in 2013. The 'bunko-booth' has now changed out of all recognition.

Taking up a large area of the makeshift shack that had become known as the 'bunko-booth', the bunker was looking splendid. The quality of work was a bit intimidating for us newbies, so we were slightly relieved to be given pieces of the old tanks to work on, grinding off rivet heads and punching out old rivets.

Because of the lack of space, work on the tank dismantling and the subsequent construction was partially an outdoor operation. Soon enough though, the 4253 'can do' spirit had brought about a new concrete floor area and the expansion of the bunko-booth had taken another step.



In his usual place . . . inside the tanks!

Dave played a big part in the construction of the tanks. He became adept as a rivet 'holder-upper' while Henry (the qualified person) knocked down the rivets and he soon progressed to using the rivet gun to do the knocking down and found himself an important member

of a crack riveting team. Dave was hugely and genuinely proud when Henry told him that his riveting was “not bad”.

Dave was of small enough build to be able to get inside the tanks for some rather tricky riveting operations. At some point whilst in a tank, a red hot rivet was dropped and bounced off Dave's face. This event became an oft-repeated pub story and he always said it was a shame that it hadn't left a scar.



Dave was part of the ‘crack’ hot riveting team.

There were very few areas of the work on the loco that Dave didn't have a hand in. He felt pride in the significant amount of work he contributed to the weeks of effort put into removing the stays from inside the firebox. On each step of the process he paid keen attention to the guidance from Henry. It was a matter of principle to him that the work was done to the highest standards possible. If Dave believed he could not do proper justice to a job, then he would not take it on. Though it has to be said that there was a vanishingly small number of tasks which were problematic for him. Early on in his time with 4253, as the boiler was being dismantled, Dave squeezed inside to help remove the tubes. Once all the tubes had gone we were left with



If you look closely you can just see Dave on the other side of the boiler tube plate, shovelling out a mountain of scale.

a 2 foot deep layer of limescale which, somehow, had to be removed. He loved relating the tale of how he filled 23 wheelbarrows through a superheater hole in the tube plate using just a 4" wide stove shovel. It did take us most of the day!

The 4253 team members pride themselves on the quality of banter available in the bunko-booth. Dave was an active contributor in this area! Feigning a temper tantrum after being sent for a spanner only to be told 'oh we don't need it now', he became embroiled in 'Spannergate!'. As with many memories revisited in the pub, this one did not go away.

Anyone who knew Dave will be aware of how easy it was to become friends with him. He soon made friends



The ‘Chudley Brothers’ in action with the mag drill on the boiler.

across the 4253 team and beyond to the wider railway community at Rolvenden.

From time to time the 4253 team loans out its skills and personnel to help with tasks in the shed at Rolvenden or the carriage shed at Tenterden. Dave was always up for meeting new people and joining in with a winning smile to help out. His riveting skills were put to use on the floor of the GWR Railcar, and only days before his passing he was in the carriage shed riveting on part of a DMU bogey.

Dave's smile, his cheeky charisma, his twinkling sense of humour and his dedication to a job well done make his loss very hard for regulars at Rolvenden and for the project overall. All those who had the pleasure and privilege of working (and drinking) with Dave now strive to put their best into the project as a tribute to his memory.

**We miss
you Dave.**



Graham Williams - a Volunteer's View



Graham, well ahead of the game against Coronavirus! This was taken during one of his many wire brushing moments when the loco's wheels were being prepared.

I STARTED work on 4253 in October 2013 having retired from the railway the previous August after 43 years, finishing up as a train driver at Ashford - I've never been too far from a railway!

For many years I have also been a volunteer on the K&ESR as a guard and inspector but I was looking for something else to do, although I've never done any work like this before.

One of the first jobs I got, with a few others, was painting the jib of the breakdown crane red! Something about "Henry time" Charlie said? I can also remember one afternoon being in between the 4253 frames outside the shed with a grinder, taking off rivets flat to the frames. When I arrived the side water tanks were being built, with holes being drilled in the plates, lots of them. Also at this time we were concreting the floor space to make our work area bigger, so I helped with that. As most of the riveting was done on a Sunday and I only came along on Tuesday, I didn't get to see much of it done but a board was set-up with how many rivets were put in place on each day.

As time has gone by I have cleaned and had endless hours grinding and wire brushing; I have tapped, drilled, painted and helped with making egg timers and clocks to sell at fund raising events. Sometimes I think: 'haven't we done that job before', but I just get on with it! I have also had a few mistakes over the years. One was getting a tap snapped off in an axle box that took a few days to get out again! Another, when I was tapping the baffle that goes on the bottom of the smoke box door, I went too far, so one turned into a bolt! That didn't go down too well with Henry our chief engineer!

I think one of the great milestones to happen to the loco was getting the wheels under the frames in 2017. We had been waiting since the wheels returned from South Devon Railway in 2014, so that was a great achievement for everyone involved and a major step forward in the project.

After a few years I did get to do some riveting on the cab with Dave Dee but you never know what you will be doing from one week to the next. Over the years the group have helped with a new smoke box for loco 6619, prepared the bodywork on the Ruston diesel for painting, prepared and painted loco 25, helped with the GWR railcar and done a lot of work on the 350 diesel shunter and recently helped with the overhaul of the DMMU.

So what next for me? Major work on the boiler has started and I'm looking forward to putting 'my tubes' in the boiler and the steam test!

But after 6 years that jib may need repainting. . .

Graham Williams

Flat Out with the Final Push Appeal!

ALTHOUGH we are really pleased with the response to the appeal and very grateful for the share sales since launching in January, we still have a way to go to raise the funds necessary - **not only to complete the boiler but the loco as a whole.**

PLEASE HELP . . . WE'RE NEARLY THERE!

GWR 4253 Progress Report

THE boiler is now the main focus for all shareholders and we are conscious that a lot of you will be wanting to know how things are going with it and what progress is being made. To this end an inspection visit is planned hopefully towards the end of this month and the editors have decided to do a special *Boiler Progress Newsletter*. The visit will enable us to talk to the guys at HBSS who are doing the work, and then report to the shareholders as to exactly what is happening.

Please see the latest photos at the end of Kelvin's accompanying Boiler History file.

***LOOK OUT FOR THE NEXT
SPECIAL BOILER REPORT!***

All the latest details of work can be followed weekly on either www.4253.co.uk or Facebook: 4253 Locomotive Company or Twitter: @GWR4253