

The British Railways Standard Class 2MT Tank Engine Project



Standard Class 2MT Tank Engine on Display at Willesden Shed

Background

For those not familiar with this project below is a brief summary of how it all started. The engine originally started life as a tender engine number 78059 before, after a very short life, it was scrapped as part of the British Railways modernisation programme.

The engine was secured by a group of people for the Bluebell Railway from Woodam Brothers scrapyard in Barry in 1980 some 17 years after it was initially scrapped, by this time it no longer had a tender and quite a number of items had been stripped off. As there were already a number of Class 2MT tender engines in the preservation world it was decided to covert the engine into a tank version as none of these had made it into preservation and they had been used on the Southern Region of British Railways whereas, the tender version had not.

Under British Railways 30 of the tank engines were made 84000-84029 the class being a development of the Ivatt 2MT tank engine. As the Bluebell project was for a new tank engine it took the next number in the series and became 84030. Further information on the Class 2MT tank engine and the progress to date can be found on the Bluebell website.

The Next Key Moves

After many years of work we have now reached the next critical stage in getting this engine into service, there are 2 key objectives the first being to get the engine frame located on a level site and under cover and the second is to get it onto its wheels.

The engine is currently located on open rough ground next to the Atlantic House which makes it very difficult to work on (especially in the winter) plus the engine is out in all weathers. The intention is to temporarily move the frame then level this ground area before laying a short length of track and lifting the frame back, ideally onto a couple of bogies so that it can be moved without having to get a crane back in. Preparations for levelling the ground are scheduled to start in April/May. Once this is completed and the engine is back alongside Atlantic House, we will erect a cover over the whole engine. This will be the poly-shed from Horsted Keynes used there during the restoration of the LBSCR milk/fruit van. The aim is to have all this work carried out before next winter so that work can be carried on all year round, the engine is under cover and real progress can be made.

The second objective is to get the frame onto its coupled wheels. The completion of the two trucks will follow. The wheel sets are all ready for fitting but having been machined at Swindon Works, the restoration of the axleboxes will require the bearings to be built up and machined in addition to the replacement of white metal. New horn guide liners are being manufactured as the originals were badly corroded. The liners will be attached in our Workshop but will be ground off-site. The aim is to complete this work this winter.

Why Not Join Us

As you can see there is a lot of work to get the engine onto its wheels and in the dry let alone everything else to get this very useful 2MT tank engine into running order and earning its keep hauling trains along our track, as you may well remember the usefulness of the Ivatt 2MT tank engine when on hire to the railway during the tip removal waste to the Ardingly branch. A group of dedicated volunteers meet every Thursday and new volunteers are always welcome to get 84030 running, as you can see there is plenty to do!

The Class 2 Working Group