



GWR Steam Railmotor and Trailer Project

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Historic moment as boiler united with Railmotor engine unit



Persistent November drizzle did nothing to dampen the great sense of occasion when the vertical boiler for the Great Western Society's rebuilt Steam Railmotor No. 93 was lowered into the bogie assembly for the first time at Tyseley on Tuesday 27th November.

Members of the project team gathered at Tyseley Locomotive Works in Birmingham to witness the historic moment when the boiler was united with the newly-built power bogie – the first time such an ensemble had been seen since the mid-1930s. To date, more than £350,000 has been raised and spent on constructing the new power unit for the Railmotor which will replace the one scrapped at Swindon when Railmotor No. 93 was converted to Auto Trailer No. 212 in 1935.

The power bogie and boiler will eventually be installed in the 1908-built railmotor body, which is currently at the Llangollen Railway workshops with 'matching' trailer No. 92 undergoing intensive restoration thanks to a £768,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Historic moment as boiler united with Railmotor engine unit

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GWS Chairman Richard Croucher said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund grant has meant that work on the bodies of the Railmotor and Trailer can advance far faster than we ever thought possible and our challenge now is to try and have the power unit complete for 2009/10 when it is anticipated that work on the coach bodies will be finished. The power bogie and boiler assembly may look reasonably complete and it undoubtedly represents an important milestone in the project, but in reality there are many quite complex items still to manufacture and fit.”

Construction of the power bogie and boiler has been funded so far by members of the Great Western Society and the public, together with a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. ‘We believe we need about another £60,000 to complete the job,’ Richard added. “Now that people can see that the whole project really is going to ‘happen’ we hope they will continue to support us generously.”

After the boiler lifting ceremony Dennis Howells, engineering leader for the power bogie, showed the group many of the boiler fittings and bogie parts that have already been made and then detailed the items that still have to be tackled. These include the eccentrics and various linkages in the motion, the reversing and braking mechanisms, the sandboxes and boiler cladding. The sandboxes alone each comprise over 25 separate parts which have to be hand made and finished!

It is hoped that the power bogie and boiler can be moved to Didcot Railway Centre during January, enabling visitors to take a close look at what has been achieved while work continues. When the Railmotor body is ready it is planned to move the power bogie to Llangollen where it will be trial fitted and any final adjustments made before the launch of the Railmotor and Trailer.

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