

4709

Calling all hands



4709 – Churchward’s giant 2-8-0 is poised to gather significant momentum in the coming weeks, providing the group can recruit a number of additional volunteers.

“Here’s an opportunity to contribute to a unique preservation project. Because of COVID and the manifold challenges in-gathering resources, 4709’s birthing process has taken way longer than we anticipated. We’re through the worst of that and now need to recruit additional skilled hands and minds to get 4709 done.”

That’s the word this week from Paul Carpenter.

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4709 boasts two brand new, fully machined cylinders, a renovated and re-engineered pony truck and counterweight and the early elements of its new braking system. “All of these critical front end elements are waiting to be mounted on the chassis, after which we will be able to wheel 4709 and move onto the next phase of the programme.”

Paul admits that despite the group’s best efforts, progress has been slow; “Until now, 4709 has been run by a tiny group of dedicated people. Despite that, we’ve persevered and to achieved a huge amount in recent months. The proof? The twin castings for the cylinders, plus any number of other components, including the pony truck, which is about to have its axleboxes re-metalled. Plans for the next major step – the smokebox are just about to get underway.”

With several high profile overhaul and new build projects nearing completion, Paul is hoping to attract volunteers from other preservation locos. “Those are critically important people with skills that are hard to find in this day and age. We’re hoping that by encouraging them to now join 4709, they can become part of a unique project and make a significant preservation contribution at the same time.”

Recent updates and 4709 project news is here: <https://www.4709.org.uk/4709blog>

Volunteers will initially be needed at Tyseley on Saturdays only. To volunteer, or request additional information, please use this form: <https://www.4709.org.uk/contact>



Before and...



...after

Forming an orderly queue pays dividends



Big and powerful the 47XX might have been, but when it comes to getting stuff done, there's always a queue and irrespective of our (potential) might, we have to remember to take our place.

Readers outside the UK have been known to shake their heads at us Brits, standing in an orderly line and getting murderously het-up at other folk that push into our queues. But fear not, when the chips are down, we're pretty undemonstrative and likely to simply shrug our shoulders at the poor manners of our neighbours.

Which gets me back to our own queue. More than a decade ago, when 4709 got started, our thinking was to use external contractors to do the bulk of the engineering work, including the cylinders, boiler and tender.

That's been a decision of mixed success. That we have the front end of the loco almost ready for assembly is as much a testament to determination as it is the skills and commitment of the partners we've worked alongside to reach this milestone.

Every step has entailed a queue, or lengthy wait of one kind or another.

Anyway, good sense prohibits us from discussing the many obstacles we've encountered and (finally) started to overcome. Internally, there's talk of a book about building 4709 – a record of meetings, hours on the phone, suppliers' broken promises about any and everything and generally, frustration levels that would have likely killed-off a less determined team. That's still a while off, but for the preservation community, if it ever gets written and published, it'll be a best seller. There was also COVID to contend with – and I for one am not convinced that we're not done with that yet. No matter. We've beaten it once...

So, we're now at the starting gate. 4709's chassis will shortly get bearings, cylinders, a pony truck, the skeleton of its braking system and soon after that, wheels. Just about everything is complete, or nearly so. The programme says we ought to have a wheeled loco by year's end.

Here's hoping, Ed

Bringing up twins

Casting our cylinders using polystyrene patterns has been discussed elsewhere and at great length. The parents amongst you will doubtless know that like a young human, a raw casting needs attention, loving care and honing into an acceptable shape.

4709's twins – identical in every respect – were left to cool for more than a week after they'd first been cast and before the sand could be broken away from the still red-hot metal.

Next was stress relieving for the new metal; re-heating both castings to almost red heat once more and controlled cooling in a huge temperature controlled furnace.

More cooling and finally, the twins were off to be machined – again, a difficult and lengthy process, given their massive size.

Spotted under a tarpaulin at Tyseley this week are our twins, freshly delivered and soon to be siamesed into a single 5.3 tonne unit, ready for installation between 4709's frames.

Waiting to join them are new piston and cylinder covers and valve liners which completes the list of cylinder components we need.

While all this is going on and once the extension frames and cylinder block are in installed and aligned, the new leading frame stay will also be machined and fitted.

We'd initially planned to use the leading frame stay from donor loco no. 4115, but quite early on, discovered it was much too light. At 6 cwt it was barely a sixth of that required by a 47XX 2-8-0 (2 tonnes) and had to be replaced. Like the cylinders and other work, this was carried out by Roach Engineering in Birmingham.

Masterminding the coming together of the entire front end of 4709 is Mike Solloway, who recently replaced 3850's cylinders and now brings his extensive experience to 4709. Mike lives in the Midlands and will make a profound impact on 4709's progress.



One of 4709's newly cast and machined cylinders spotted at Tyseley this week

4709

4709 memorabilia

I think there must be something in the water down on the coast. Since retiring down south, Paul (Carpenter) has been given several unique items of 47XX and railway memorabilia, by generous donors, intending the sale of their prized possessions and the proceeds being used to in the effort to get 4709 built.

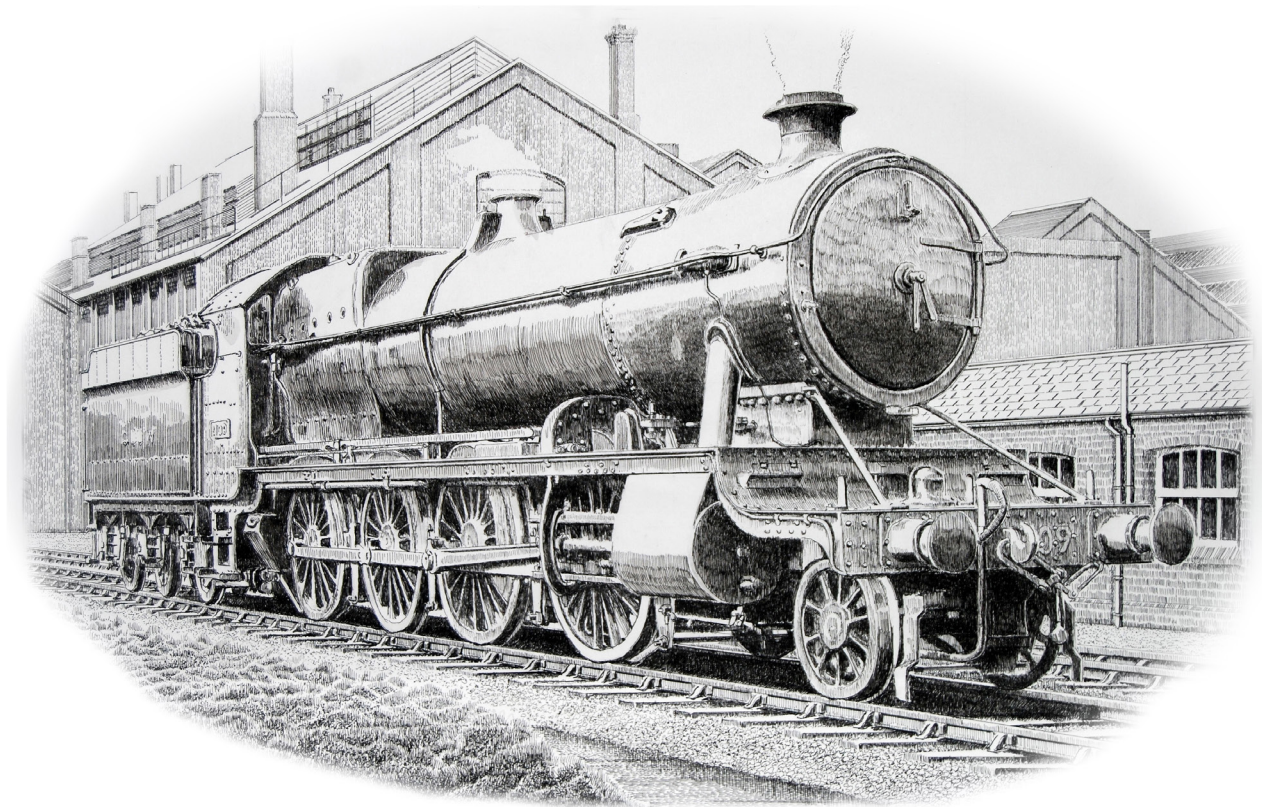
To date we have:

- A wonderful collection of drawings by Simon Bowditch
Simon has given us something like 30 images and we are told that he has even more. We're thinking of selling the prints and also offering scanned copies of each, in PDF format for printing by a bureau, or at home
- The original drawing by Simon of 4709 – see the image below
- O Gauge electric model of 4709

Would you like one or more of these unique items? Are your walls begging for some 47XX images? Would your workshop look better with a scale model mounted on the wall?

We're looking for interesting ways to auction and/or sell these unique items. Perhaps you have an idea that is both interesting and likely to maximise the income towards 4709?

What do you think?



Simon Bowditch's rendering of 4709

Donations

When complete, 4709's motion will be part donor-sourced and part new. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the donor locos have been very generous, but we still require 8 rods, the largest of which are the coupling rods themselves.

The quotes are in and we're looking for just over £90k, to forge and machine these vital components, ready for fitting to 4709's new cylinders and rolling chassis.

If you've had any involvement, or interest in railway preservation, you'll know raising money is one of our most important activities. We also think that there isn't a better way to ask for donations than to lay out the options and let you - the donor - decide how much and how often sending us money is the most preferable. To get 4709 in steam, we'd like to ask for a minimum donation of £25. One-offs are great, but a regular commitment gives us the ability to plan and know our funding is (and will be) in place.

Yes! I'd like to donate

Once-off donation of £

*Cheques and POs should please be made payable to the Great Western Society Ltd, 4709 project**

Banker's order to make regular payments

Name:

Address:

Post code:

e-mail:

GWS membership no.:

To: The Manager, Bank:

Address:

Sort code:

a/c no.:

*Please pay to National Westminster Bank a/c 06710646, sort code 54-30-33 for the credit of the Great Western Society Limited, 4709 Project**

The sum of £

In figures:

On:

Monthly until:

Date:

Signed:

Gift Aid can boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. It is claimed by the Great Western Society Limited from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address (above) will identify you as a UK taxpayer.

I want to **Gift Aid** my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future, or have made in the past four years to the Great Western Society Limited. I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of **Gift Aid** claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

NB! If you pay income tax at the higher additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all **Gift Aid** donations on your self-assessment return, or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

Please contact the GWS if you wish to • change this declaration, or • change your name and home address, or • no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains tax.

* This order is in addition to any other standing instruction in favour of the Great Western Society.

Please complete and return this form to Richard Croucher, 4709 Project, Great Western Society Limited, Didcot Railway Centre, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7NJ, or by e-mail to richard.croucher@ntlworld.com