

# 1466 On Track to Steam for Great Western Society Diamond Jubilee

April 19, 2021



Work on the Great Western Society's first locomotive, No 1466, is continuing at Western Steam Engineering with the iconic GWR 0-4-2T on track to return to steam at Didcot Railway Centre later this year following the most extensive overhaul she has received since 1961.

A key milestone came at the end of February when, following completion of horn grinding and overhaul of the locomotive's axleboxes, the 1946-built locomotive was reunited with its wheels. "The wheels themselves have been extensively refurbished by South Devon Railway Engineering with new tyres have been fitted," explained 1466 Projector Manager, Phil Morrell.

He added: "A brand new bunker has been made and both side tanks have been extensively overhauled with much new plate work, making them as good as new. As regards the running gear, the inside valve motion has been overhauled and machined or replaced where necessary."

Other work completed to date includes refurbishment of the rear drag box, manufacture of a new steel cab floor, refurbishment of the springs and repair of the front sander linkage. The piston rods have been successfully tested using Magnetic Particle Inspection and refitted, and the front buffer beam has been

refitted together with the buffers and draw gear at both ends.

“It’s great to see such good progress,” said Head of Visitor Experience and Marketing, Graham Hukins.

“We’re looking forward to having 1466 back in action as we mark our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary – after all it was the engine that led to the creation of the Society. But there is still much to do, and we need a final push to raise the funds to finish the job – donations can be made via our Diamond Jubilee Fund at [bit.ly/DRC-60Fund](https://bit.ly/DRC-60Fund).”

Phil outlined the outstanding tasks that need to be completed before the locomotive can return to Didcot, “The next stage is to make the locomotive into a complete rolling chassis with all its motion, lubrication and vacuum systems along with their associated pipework and fittings. Once this is complete the focus will turn to the boiler.

“As the smokebox was in a very poor condition, a new barrel has been sourced as well as a new door and various other smokebox fittings which have been manufactured and supplied by SDRE. A replacement front tubeplate and front barrel section have also been sourced and manufactured ready to be fitted while, at the firebox end, about three quarters of the backplate will be replaced. About 12 inches of outer wrapper on both sides will also be replaced along the bottom of the foundation ring and the bottom 12 inches of throat plate. That’s before the usual replacement of a number of side stays, crown stays and new tubes.”

Graham concluded, “As the GWS embarks on the next chapter of development, this thorough overhaul should see 1466’s long term future secured meaning she will be at the heart of Didcot’s operations for many years to come.”

The Centre reopened on 14 April and Steam Days operate at weekends and Wednesdays allowing visitors to explore almost two centuries of railway heritage set across 21 acres. Steam trains will be running on the Centre’s demonstration line offering unlimited rides aboard a train of beautifully restored vintage carriages with each group allocated an individual compartment for their trip – further details can be found, and tickets booked, at [www.DidcotRailwayCentre.org.uk](http://www.DidcotRailwayCentre.org.uk).

*Photo credit: Ed Freeman*