

K&ESR: Railcar W20 restoration gathers pace with compliance appointment

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The restoration of Diesel Railcar W20 at the Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR) has reached an important stage with the appointment of an Independent Competent Person (ICP) to oversee the project in terms of traction and rolling stock compliance.

Cambrian Transport Services Limited* has been awarded the contract and has handed the task to their Senior Traction & Rolling Stock Consultant Steve Beck, BSc CEng MIET AMIMechE. Steve has 53 years of experience in the maintenance, overhaul, and service introduction of a variety of different types of rolling stock, specifically Electric and Diesel Multiple Units, including 27 years with British Rail and 15 years with Consultancy WS Atkins.

His initial inspection of W20 concluded that all the work carried out to date has been done to a good standard – welcome news for the team of dedicated volunteers who have been working tirelessly on the current phase of the project since the Autumn. He did, however, identify a few additional matters that should be addressed and these have been added to the project plan.

After successfully ensuring a weather-resistant and structurally complete exterior before Christmas, the

latest phase has included the following work:-

- Restored air vents have been fixed to the roof
 - The saloon glazing and frames have been completed, along with the installation of the sliding top window vents
 - The roof has been fully insulated and materials for the internal ceiling panels have been approved
 - The saloon light fittings have been carefully refurbished and are ready for installation
 - The gearboxes, which were fully restored a number of years ago, have been removed, checked and reinstalled
 - A replacement heating system has been approved and contracts have now to be agreed to supply and fit the system
 - Heavy duty cabling in poor condition, perished wiring and flexible conduit have been removed, ready for replacements
 - An external contractor has started work to ensure precise fitting of the cab ends and domes
- W20 is being temporarily moved out of the Carriage & Wagon workshop at the end of January to enable winter maintenance to take place on the Wealden Pullman set. Minor work will therefore continue at Rolvenden until W20 returns to the Tenterden at the beginning of March, when the new heating system will be fitted by contractors.

Meanwhile the '20 for 20' fundraising appeal, launched in September, is also on track, having recently reached 90 per cent of its original target. The aim is to raise a minimum of £20K to not only complete the restoration, which will need to include any new issues discovered along the way, but also hopefully deliver an additional sinking fund that will provide for the future conservation of the railcar. Anyone wishing to donate can do so via the links on the K&ESR website - www.kesr.org.uk

***Cambrian Transport Ltd** was formed in the mid-1990s and comprises a group of senior railway staff with expertise in all aspects of railway engineering and operations. Their mantra is: 'from heritage to high-speed' and, true to this, they are currently involved in a range of projects including the renovation of steam locomotives through to the upgrading of high speed trains.

Photo credit: Chris Mileman