

8 December 1994

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE ON NEW STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

The Project to build the first new mainline steam locomotive in Britain since 1960 took a major step forward today when The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust announced that significant progress had been made in the construction of the locomotive's frames, cylinders and wheels.

Frames

The machining of the main frame plates by T M Engineers Ltd of Kingswinford, West Midlands, has now been completed and all holes drilled. The one-piece frame plates are expected to have the set in the trailing end formed within the next week and to be delivered to the temporary frame erection site at the Birmingham Railway Museum before Christmas. The frame erection stands, designed by the Trust and manufactured by Ian Storey Engineering of Morpeth are already on site and awaiting the delivery of the frame plates.

The first four frame stretchers have already been delivered, fully machined, and are awaiting assembly into the frames. Six further stretcher patterns have been passed on to Lloyds of Burton, a subsidiary of William Cook plc, for casting, with delivery expected by January 1995. Work continues on the remaining frame stretchers, with completion expected by February 1995. The patterns for the coupled wheel hornblocks and hornstays are currently being prepared for moulding by Lloyds and castings from them are expected to be completed by Christmas.

Cylinders

Pattern equipment, consisting of two main patterns and 31 core boxes, for the three cylinder Pacific's inside cylinder, has now been delivered by Kings Heath Patterns of Birmingham to the Birmingham Railway Museum, where sections of it are currently on display. Casting of the inside cylinder is due to take place in spring 1995 and Kings Heath Patterns have now commenced work on the two outside cylinder patterns, which are due for completion in May 1995.

Wheels

The modular pattern for the six 6'8" driving wheels of the new Peppercorn Class A1 Pacific has now been completed by Master Patterns, a subsidiary of William Cook plc of Sheffield, and a start has been made on the front bogie and rear cartazzi wheel patterns. The casting of the six driving wheels should take place at Lloyds of Burton over the next few weeks.

Bogie

The bogie side frame plates were delivered from BSD, a British Steel subsidiary, in late November, along with all remaining items of plate for the frames, such as buffer beam and rear rubbing plates. Orders have been placed for the patterns for the bottom centre and frame stays, for the bogie, with delivery expected in January, with casting and machining to follow during spring 1995.

David Champion, Chairman, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, commented:

These announcements are very significant for the whole of the independent railway movement. No other group proposing the construction of a modern steam locomotive since the end of mainline steam construction in 1960 has got this far. A new Peppercorn Class A1 Pacific, 60163 Tornado, is now taking shape before us. The Project is currently around three months ahead of plan, with completion of the locomotive scheduled for the summer of 1998, and by the middle of 1995 the Trust will be in possession of Tornado's rolling chassis.

In order to maintain this rate of progress, more funds are desperately needed. To complete the locomotive within this timescale, the Trust's income must double every year, which represents a continual increase of around six percent per month. We have maintained this rate of growth over the past two years and appeal to all railway enthusiasts who want to see new steam locomotive construction succeed, to put their hand in their pocket and sign up to our Covenant scheme. The cost is only the price of a pint of beer a (£6 per month), but the result is the new Peppercorn A1 Tornado.

Note to Editors

The A1 Class of Pacific locomotives were designed by A H Peppercorn for the London and North Eastern Railway and built in 1948/49. They were the last of the East Coast Mainline's series of thoroughbred express passenger steam locomotives. Examples of all of these Doncaster built locomotives have been saved for preservation, except the Peppercorn A1s which were scrapped, following dieselisation of the railways, in the 1960s, with the last going in 1966. The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust is building a new locomotive, No 60163, in Doncaster, with the money being raised by Deeds of Covenant, at a cost of only the price of a pint of beer per week, and other donations and sponsorship agreements. Completion of 60163 is scheduled for 1998 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the completion of the first member of the Class. Great British companies helping the A1 Project include Macreadys, William Cook plc and British Steel. The Trust also has a Partnership Agreement with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.

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