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**CEREMONY MARKS START OF ERECTION OF NEW STEAM
LOCOMOTIVE 'TORNADO'
RAF hands over locomotive's crested nameplates**

The Project to build the first new mainline steam locomotive in Britain since 1960 took a major step forward today with a ceremony to mark the erection of the frames of the new A1 class locomotive Tornado. The ceremony, hosted at Birmingham Railway Museum by The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, the registered charity building the new locomotive, was attended by representatives of many of the companies supporting the Project, including British Steel, BSD Steel Service Centres, Macreadys, William Cook plc and Black Sheep Breweries.

Richard Tesh, member of the management board of BSD Steel Service Centres, the British Steel subsidiary responsible for the profiling of the 50ft long frames, cracked a specially brewed bottle of Black Sheep Real Ale over the main frames and commented:

"Today's ceremony is the steam locomotive equivalent of a ship's keel laying ceremony. I am delighted, on behalf of both BSD and British Steel, to be marking the start of the erection of 'Tornado', a new steam locomotive which will truly be the best of British engineering, combining as it does the best of both traditional and high-tech engineering methods. We look forward to supporting the Project as it works towards completion of the new locomotive in 1998 and call upon other engineering companies to see what they can do to help make the Trust's dream a reality."

Group Captain 'Raz' Ball, Station Commander, RAF Cottesmore handed over to the Trust Tornado's two nameplates - one with the crest of RAF Cottesmore and the other with the crest of the Tri-national Tornado Training Establishment based there - both painted by groundcrews at the RAF station. He added:

"I was delighted to be invited to become involved with the Project, particularly as the locomotive will perpetuate the name of an aircraft and its crews which have become and will remain the backbone of Europe's support for NATO well into the next century. The nameplates carry the badges of the Tri-national Tornado Training Establishment and Royal Air Force Cottesmore, which I command. More than any other station, RAF Cottesmore can claim to be the home of the Tornado, as aircrews of the Royal Air Force, the German Air Force, the German Navy and the Italian Air Force have been converted to the Tornado GR1 here since 1981 when the aircraft first entered service with the three nations."

Also present at Birmingham Railway Museum was 60103 (alias 4472) Flying Scotsman, the sole surviving ex-LNER Gresley A3 Pacific and 'distant cousin' of 60163 Tornado. Following the ceremony, with the kind permission of its owners Sir William McAlpine and Peter Waterman, Trust's guests had an opportunity to drive Flying Scotsman within the Museum's yard.

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

"This ceremony marks a significant milestone 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. Thanks to the tremendous support of our covenantors and sponsors, 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. The finished locomotive will truly be the best of British engineering and a tribute to all of the RAF aircrews who fought in the Gulf War.

“In order to maintain this rate of progress, more funds are needed. We are now appealing to everyone who want to see new steam locomotive construction succeed, to put their hands in their pockets and sign up to our Covenant scheme. The cost is only the price of a pint of beer a week (£1.50 per week, collected monthly), but the result is the new Peppercorn A1 Tornado.”