

PRESS INFORMATION - PRESS INFORMATION - PRESS INFORMATION

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£300,000 IN GRANTS TOWARDS NEW STEAM LOCOMOTIVE WORKS IN DARLINGTON
Annual Convention Overwhelming Success

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, the registered charity that is building the first new mainline steam locomotive in Britain for almost 40 years, has been awarded grants totalling £300,000 for phase one of the conversion of the 1853 former Stockton & Darlington Railway Hopetown Carriage Works into the new 'Darlington Steam Locomotive Works'. The grants have been awarded to Darlington Borough Council on behalf of the Trust by the European Regional Development Fund (£150,000), National Heritage Memorial Fund (£100,000) and the Council itself (£50,000).

Phase one comprises the restoration of the south wing of the former Carriage Works, including repairs to the roof and walls, replacement windows, lowering of the floor and installation of pits and securing the site. Tenders for the work are due to be let in December 1996 with completion of phase one due by May 1997.

Commenting on the announcement, David Champion, Chairman of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, said:

"The award of these grants towards phase one of the new 'Darlington Steam Locomotive Works' is a major step forward in the Trust's establishment of its permanent base in Darlington and the re-birth of Darlington Works 30 years after its closure. These grants will be used to restore and convert the building and are not for the construction of Peppercorn class A1 No. 60163 Tornado. We are still actively seeking new Covenantors and sponsors to speed the construction of the new locomotive."

Tornado will be a completely new steam locomotive, built from the original 1940s drawings and is therefore neither a restoration project nor a replica, but the next in the original series, the 50th Peppercorn Class A1.

Annual Convention

The Trust held its third Annual Convention at the Georgian Central Hall in Darlington on Saturday 21 September. Over 200 Covenantors, Sponsors and supporters attended the meeting, hearing updates on the project's progress from the Trust's directors and project managers as well as the announcement of the grant funding. The Convention was followed by a visit to the Timothy Hackworth Museum, Shildon on the Saturday afternoon and the South Tynedale Railway on the Sunday.

Locomotive Works Acquires Diesel Shunter

The Trust has been given on long-term loan a 311HP 0-6-0 Hunslet Gamma Diesel Shunter by the Tanfield Railway (TR). The locomotive was built in Leeds in 1965 and was delivered to the North Durham Area of the National Coal Board where it worked for the next 30 years. On withdrawal from service in 1993 it was donated to the TR. Too heavy for use on the Tanfield Railway, the shunter was coincidentally originally ordered for the NCB by Dennis Champion, father of David Champion, chairman of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust.

The locomotive, which is in working order, will be returned to its original two-tone 'North Eastern Railway' green livery by Trust volunteers over the winter and will be moved to the new 'Darlington Steam Locomotive Works' during early 1997.

Construction Update

Construction of Tornado's frames continues to move forward at Tyseley Locomotive Works (TLW), Birmingham:

a selection of patterns, including those for some of the smaller components required to complete the frames, have been delivered by Coxill Patterns to TLW where tenders are being issued for their casting and machining.

all three cylinders are now with Ufone Engineering for machining, with the middle cylinder currently being worked on. All three should be returned to the Trust by early 1997 for fitting to the frames.

the locomotive's six 6'8" driving wheels have arrived at TLW from Lloyds of Burton-upon-Trent and are awaiting machining and assembly.

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Note to Editors

The A1 Class of Pacific locomotives were designed by Arthur 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 many of these Darlington and Doncaster built locomotives have been saved for preservation, although not 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 Tornado 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. It is estimated that the total cost of the locomotive will be around £1.4 million. Great British companies helping the A1 Project include Macreadys, William Cook plc and British Steel.

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