



Date: 16th September 2008

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**PRESS CALL: Great Central Railway, Loughborough Central station,
9.30am, Monday 22nd September**
Full details, contacts and address at the end of this press release.

BRAND NEW STEAM ENGINE READY TO PULL FIRST EVER PASSENGER TRAINS

Book a seat in railway history, Monday and Tuesday 22nd and 23rd September 2008

An exciting moment in the history of Britain's railways has finally arrived. It's happening at the Great Central Railway. The country's first brand new steam engine to be built for the main line, since 1960 is now ready to pull passengers. The locomotive, named "Tornado" has been at Leicestershire's award winning heritage line for the last month. It has performed faultlessly through a series of trials and tests and has now been declared fit by the government's railway inspectorate to pull passenger trains.

"We're honoured to be involved in running the first passenger trains with Tornado," said GCR president Bill Ford. **"This is our year of Express engines and Tornado is top of the bill! The engine has been attracting international media attention and our phones have been ringing off the hook with people wanting to know when they can ride behind it. The good news is the date has finally arrived!"**

The engine has been built by the AI Steam Locomotive Trust, an independent group of railway enthusiasts based in Darlington. The AI Class of Pacific locomotives was 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 Main Line's series of thoroughbred express passenger steam locomotives. Examples of many other Darlington and Doncaster built locomotives have been saved for preservation, but not the Peppercorn AIs which were scrapped. It has cost £3 million to build and taken 18 years to complete.

The engine will pull its first trains on Sunday 21st of September. These are exclusively for the supporters of the AI Steam Locomotive Trust who have financed the construction of "Tornado". **The first public trains are due to run on Monday 22nd of September. They will depart from Loughborough Central station for the roundtrip to Leicester and back at 10.15am, 12.15pm, 2.15pm and 4.35pm.** This will be the very first time fare paying passengers will have experienced the thrill of riding behind this new and very powerful loco.

On Tuesday 23rd of September, Tornado is expected to pull trains at the same times.

"It's naturally a really big milestone for us and for the engine." said Mark Allatt, chairman of the AI steam locomotive trust, **"In fact, it's the day we've been working towards for so long. The engine has performed so well in tests, it's great that we can finally start pulling real passengers. We'll spend the next three weekends doing just that at the Great Central and then we're off for the national main line network. It is a real chance for people to be part of history."**

The engine was tested at the Great Central Railway because the heritage line has permission to run non passenger services at up to 60mph. Bill Ford concluded, "We're also offering a very limited number of places to drive the locomotive truly the stuff childhood dreams are made of. The international attention that Tornado has attracted has really been waving the flag for the Great Central Railway and tourism in Leicestershire."

ENDS. WORDS: 532

PRESS CALL DETAILS:

The press and media are invited to travel on the first trains with Tornado.

Please arrive at the Great Central Railway's Loughborough Central Station, (Great Central Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1RV) at 9.30am.

The first train is due to depart at 10.15am and return to L'bro station by 11.30am.

Interviews with representatives from the AI Steam Locomotive Trust and the Great Central Railway will be available. You are respectfully requested to bring identification.