



PRESS RELEASE: National Transport Trust Awards 2025

Simon Hartshorne wins restoration award for his Baby Deltic Locomotive Recreation

The recreation of the long-lost British Rail Class 23 “Baby Deltic” locomotive has led to Twyford, Derbyshire-based Simon Hartshorne being announced as a winner of a Restoration Award at the National Transport Trust’s (NTT) annual awards. Unable to attend the awards ceremony, Simon’s award was collected on the day by his colleague Richard Senior.



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NTT Awards Director Paul Brooks comments, "This is one of the most technically ambitious and historically meaningful projects in recent railway preservation. Only ten of these compact diesel-electric locomotives were built in the late 1950s as part of British Rail’s push to modernise. Known as the Baby Deltics, they were powered by a 9-cylinder Napier Deltic engine and were intended to be a smaller, more versatile counterpart to the now-famous Class 55s. Though innovative, they had a short working life, and by the early 1970s, all had been scrapped. Not one original Baby Deltic survived — until now.

"Simon, alongside a small and determined team of volunteers, set out to reverse that loss. Working primarily at Barrow Hill Roundhouse, they undertook the extraordinary task of building a working Baby Deltic from scratch. Using a shortened Class 37 chassis as the base, the team sourced the only surviving 9-cylinder Napier Deltic engine and engineered the rest — from recreating the bodywork to fabricating entirely new cooling systems and adapting bogies and control gear.

"This wasn’t just a cosmetic replica. Every element of this project has been driven by accuracy, functionality, and an uncompromising standard of historical fidelity. Components from numerous donor locomotives were adapted, custom-built assemblies were fabricated to original specs, and engineering challenges — such as fitting the compact Deltic engine and redesigning internal layouts — were solved

with creativity and professionalism.

"The result is not only technically impressive, but emotionally resonant. For railway heritage, the Baby Deltic project restores a lost link in the story of British diesel development. And for younger generations, it demonstrates that major heritage engineering projects can still be led by skilled volunteers working together.

"Now more than 85% complete, the locomotive is close to running and has already become a focal point in the heritage diesel community. Its public debut will be a major event — the first time a Baby Deltic will move under its own power in over 50 years.

"For engineering excellence, vision, and sheer tenacity, we are proud to honour Simon Hartshorne with this award."

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The National Transport Trust

Founded in 1965, (as the Transport Trust), the National Transport Trust is the UK's only national charity established to promote and encourage the preservation and restoration of Britain's unique transport heritage in all its forms – by air, land (road and rail) and water (sea and inland). The Trust is managed within a very streamlined structure, with the Board of Trustees representing the wider interests of the nation, for whose benefit the Trust exists.

Help us to help them

In order to help the UK's preservation movement the Trust depends on its members and therefore encourages all those who share our aims to join us. Membership of the Trust is open to private individuals and affiliated organisations. You can help us to help others too; become a member, donate to the trust or you might even consider leaving the trust something in your will. This last part is vital to our work, see here for more: [National Transport Trust legacies](#)

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