# Steam Engine Enthusiast Awarded British Empire Medal for Heritage Railway Services



Peter Best, a steam engine restoration enthusiast from Tetbury, Gloucestershire, has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for his services to steam and heritage railways. Best, 69, has purchased and restored 11 trains with his own funds. He previously served as chairman of North Yorkshire Moors Railway and has also been involved in the restoration of British canals, including a successful Lottery Fund application for the Cotswold Canals.

Best's passion for trains began in his childhood. He bought his first train, a Garrett steam traction engine, in the 1980s. His latest project, restoring the Black 5 steam locomotive, incurred a cost of around £600,000. Despite the financial loss, Best finds the joy and pride from seeing young people enjoy his trains rewarding enough.

A widower with children and grandchildren, Best is currently assisting the North Yorkshire Moors with several projects and is cautious about undertaking future restorations. Drawn to the noise, smell, and "raw energy" of steam engines, Best feels a strong sense of duty to preserve these historical machines for future generations.