

On Sunday 17 October the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre is holding a special Steam Day to mark the retirement of its flagship locomotive Metropolitan Railway No 1 for its 10-year overhaul.

Farewell to Metropolitan No 1

Constructed in 1898, Class E 0-4-4T No 1 was purchased by the London Railway Preservation Society (later the Quainton Railway Society) in March 1964 and has been a star performer at BRC since the opening of the Centre 41 years ago, as well as featuring on the "Steam on the Met" events promoted by London Transport in the 1990s.

With its boiler ticket expiring early in 2011, 17 October will be the last chance to see this beautiful locomotive in action until after completion of major overhaul work.

BRC chairman Allan Baker said "The cost of overhauling Met No 1 is being assessed and will require substantial funding to be in place before work can start. It is likely an appeal fund will be launched once the assessment is completed in the New Year."

Met No 1 was one of 111 engines built for the Metropolitan Railway - the last at Neasden Works - and was designed to operate from Baker Street to Verney Junction via Aylesbury.

However, when the line from Baker Street to Rickmansworth was electrified Met no 1 use was restricted, and further reduced in 1937 when passenger and freight services north of Rickmansworth passed to the LNER, though Met. 1 still performed on branch lines and performed "standby" duties.

During World War 2, Met No 1 was among the engines that scurried around the capital's railways, clearing rubble and helping to keep the city moving during the Blitz. The remainder of its post-war career was on engineering duties.

To mark this occasion, the Centre will be steaming two other locomotives: 1891-built Swanscombe - the oldest remaining Andrew Barclay in the world - and Sentinel locomotive Isebrook, built in 1926 for the Great Western Railway.