Aston Martin's century story will be told

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And now the story of the craftsmen and women who built the cars, as well as never-before-seen documents, will be revealed in a unique exhibition, made possible by a £71,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT) - based at the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, near Warwick - will make publicly accessible for the first time the unique collection of the Aston Martin company historian, the late Roger Stowers. The project will enable current and past company workers to record their own stories and explain the craftsmanship involved in handling raw materials such as aluminium sheets and leather hides to build and furnish the epitome of British motoring glamour.

The information amassed by Mr Stowers during his 35-year career – a staggering 1.7 million cubic centimetres - was originally held by Aston Martin but donated by the company to the BMIHT when he retired in 2001.

In addition to original build records, photographs including images of the workforce and car production, design and engineering drawings, company accounts and contracts, the collection also includes Mr Stowers' own correspondence with customers including Royalty and VIPs. Film buffs will also be interested to see documents relating to the car's TV and big screen appearances, including the James Bond film franchise.

The display of the Roger Stowers Collection material and the stories of Aston Martin employees will be combined to create a two-year exhibition at the Heritage Motor Centre where the world's largest collection of historic British cars is displayed. A virtual online exhibition will also be created.

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "This project will give a unique insight into the car manufacturer, its workforce and its hand-built vehicles recalling years of superb design and craftsmanship."

For The British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, Tim Bryan, Head of Collections and Interpretation, said: "We are delighted to receive a Your Heritage grant to fund our project, enabling the trust to share a valuable archive collection with a wider public audience and provide the opportunity for Aston Martin workers to create a historical record of the craftsmanship employed in the Company's first 100 years."

Notes to editors

The Heritage Motor Centre is home to the world's largest historic collection of British cars and draws together the collections of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust. The car collection boasts over 250 cars which span the classic, vintage and veteran eras and includes iconic cars such as: Austin 100 HP, Land Rover No1, Morris Minor No1, the first and last Mini, MG old No1, the Thunderbirds Fab1 car and the Jaguar 2000 Formula 1 car.

The Heritage Motor Centre is a not for profit organisation which donates all its profits to the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, an educational charity which preserves and cares for the vehicle collection and an extensive motoring archive. Registered Charity No.286575.

The British Motor Industry Heritage Trust has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a number of projects over the past decade including the Nick Baldwin Collection, Longbridge and Solihull travelling exhibitions and in 2007 a

HLF grant of £1.7 million enabled the centre to re-develop its museum, constructing a new mezzanine floor and three interactive exhibitions. Last year, the centre was successful in securing a further £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant, to design a new collection centre, which will display its reserve collection.

Further information

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