

M.E.N. MONDAY, JULY 26, 2010

I bought Fred's engine to get me to the boozer!

■ Dibnah's treasure sold at auction for £240,000

■ Steam fan promises to keep 1912 icon running

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A MILLIONAIRE businessman has paid £240,000 for Fred Dibnah's steam engine – and says he will use it for trips to the pub.

Steam enthusiast Michael Oliver has ensured the famous Aveling and Porter engine will stay in the north west.

Steeplejack Dibnah bought the rusted engine in 1979 and spent 25 years restoring it.

He used the 1912 engine to collect his MBE from Buckingham Palace, and it was later used to carry his coffin on a poignant final journey through the streets of Bolton in November 2004.

Mr Oliver, 72, from Knutsford, Cheshire, whose

firm Oliver Valves builds components for oil and gas firms, said: "I'm going to use it to go to the pub. There's no point owning something if you don't use it."

Fierce bidding at the specialist steam auction in Cambridgeshire smashed the locomotive's guide price of £140,000.

The engine will join a number of items in Mr Oliver's collection of industrial items, including Second World War aircraft engines and vintage motorbikes. Mr Oliver said he hoped to display his new acquisition at steam shows.

He said: "It is the most famous steam engine in the world."

"Fred Dibnah is a cult figure and national institution. It is vital his engineering

genius and his priceless contribution to our cultural heritage continues to be celebrated for years to come."

Bolton-born Dibnah enjoyed TV success with a series of shows which praised Britain's industrial achievements.



ICON The 1912 engine restored by Fred Dibnah, right, and new owner Michael Oliver, left

