

## RAILWAY YORK

### The Railway King



York's great railway age began with one man – George Hudson. Originally a draper in College Street, Hudson cannily invested a £30,000 legacy in the North Midland Railway, and eventually entered politics and became Lord Mayor. His finances were later subject to scrutiny and he fell from grace, but not before turning his pledge to “make all t’railways come to York” into reality.

The first railway line, laid in 1839, was just 15 miles long and the first journey was accompanied by much pomp and ceremony: to ensure a good crowd the day was made a public holiday. A year later, York had a direct rail link to London, which made the London to York stagecoaches obsolete. When George Hudson fell from grace, his portrait was removed from the Mansion House and George Hudson Street was renamed Railway Street. Hudson died forgotten and in poverty.

Without any of the coal deposits found elsewhere in the county, York was hardly affected by the Industrial revolution. The confectionery business – with the names of Terry and Rowntree at the forefront – helped to bring jobs and prosperity to what was, in the early years of the 19th century, still a small market town. Georgian York was popular with the fashionable set. But it was the coming of the railway that helped to transform York into the bustling city we see today.

York's first station was built in 1839 and designed by George Stephenson. The present magnificent edifice dates from 1877. When opened it was the largest in Europe. It is regarded as one of the finest examples of civil engineering to be built during the Victorian era. The city is still a key junction on the main east coast line, and still home to the headquarters of various rail companies, including GNER and Arriva Trains. The railway industry continues to be a major local employer. Regrettably the tradition of carriage building in York came to an end in 2002. Next door to the Railway Station the Station Hotel opened just a year after the railway station, now renamed the Royal York Hotel.

## National Railway Museum

The city is therefore a natural setting for the National Railway Museum, the finest and largest collection of all things rail-related in the world, boasting a host of record-breakers and history-makers, and attracting nearly a million visitors each year. The museum houses the first national collection to be sited outside the capital city of London. Visitors can enjoy over 100 engines, interactive displays and lavish exhibitions, which include nearly 180 tonnes of archive material – including posters, works of art, film and photographs. The Museum is a fantastic free day out with an action-packed events programme running throughout the year.

### Inside the museum

The Museum is home to a wide range of railway icons and literally millions of artefacts, from **Mallard** – the world's fastest steam engine – to a lock of Robert Stephenson's hair. Many of the NRM's vast collection of locomotives and engines are on display in the Great Hall, helping to illustrate the development of the railways from **Rocket** to **Eurostar**.

Permanent displays include the jewel in their crown – Palaces on Wheels. Based in the Station Hall, this exhibition features Royal saloons dating back to the Victorian era, giving visitors a rare glimpse at the sumptuous bedrooms, dining rooms and day saloons that really were palaces on wheels.

In the early 1930s train travel was considered to be at its peak with sophisticated meals, and fine company. However, behind this decadent exterior there was a desire for speed!

At a time when two companies owned the railways in the North of Britain, swiftness was the way in which to prove their superiority. A challenge began between London Midland & Scottish (LMS) and London North Eastern Railway (LNER) to get to their northern destination quicker. During one speed run, the 1923 Doncaster-built Flying Scotsman became the first engine to be officially timed in the UK at more than 100 miles per hour.



In 2004 the NRM acquired the world famous **Flying Scotsman**. The locomotive, famous for being the first steam engine to officially travel at 100mph, was saved for the nation following a massive public appeal, amid fears that the Doncaster-built icon would be sold abroad. The Flying Scotsman Story is a £700,000 permanent exhibition, which tells the remarkable history of the locomotive, the people whose lives it has touched and the famous London-Edinburgh express from which it takes its name.

**The Works** is home to three fantastic galleries – The Workshop, The Working Railway and The Warehouse – the extension opened three more chapters in the story of the train and is hands-on fun for all the family.

An award-winning exhibition with the only **Shinkansen** Bullet Train to be on display outside Japan and the first railway vehicle built and run outside Britain to enter the National Collection is in the Great Hall. It offers visitors an opportunity to take a seat inside the 82ft long Series 0 and find out what makes it one of the great engineering icons of the modern age.

The **Duchess of Hamilton** exhibition displays the restored locomotive in her original streamlined form. Built in 1938, the locomotive is a stunning piece of Art Deco opulence that flew the flag for Britain in America where crowds gasped in amazement at her sleek lines and fashionable carriages. Her livery was changed to black when she returned to a war-torn Britain but has now been fully restored to her former glory.

Step on board a historic railway carriage and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of a **First World War ambulance train**. Ambulance trains carried millions of sick and injured soldiers to safety throughout the 1914-1918 conflict. Join us to discover this untold story, by moving through the carriage and exploring a ward, a pharmacy and a nurses' mess room.

The NRM has an ever-changing programme of special events, including regular visits by 'Thomas the Tank Engine' and 'Sir Topham Hatt, The Fat Controller'.

To help bring the displays to life and answer visitors' questions, a team of Explainers is always on hand throughout the Museum. The education department has a pre-bookable teaching service for schools, including a session in the Interactive Learning Centre. A schools coach is available for picnics and a number of coach parking spaces are provided. A range of special packages is also available for Group visits, including guided tours, refreshments and coach parking.

The NRM's vast archives include 1.4 million photographs, 15,000 books, 230,000 engineering drawings and 7,000 historic railway posters. From 2008 these invaluable items have been accessible without an appointment in the Museum's state-of-the-art research centre, Search Engine.

## Information for visiting

The Museum is open daily from 10am to 6pm, except December 24, 25 and 26. Entrance to the museum is free for everyone.



## North Yorkshire Moors Railway



Several charming steam railways are within easy reach of York, such as the North York Moors Railway – film location for the hugely popular film Harry Potter and the Keighley – Haworth line, which featured in the original film of The Railway Children. Climb aboard a steam or heritage diesel train and ride like Harry Potter for the ultimate trip through Heartbeat country. Enjoy stunning scenery along 18 miles of railway through the majestic North York Moors, and continuing through to the popular

seaside town of Whitby. Try a unique on board dining experiences while taking in iconic Yorkshire scenery.

**Press Contact:** Laura Strangeway, Tel: 01751 473799, email: [laura.strangeway@nymr.co.uk](mailto:laura.strangeway@nymr.co.uk)

### For more information

Visit [www.visityork.org](http://www.visityork.org)

Twitter: @visityork #yorkadventure #onlyinyork #visityork

**Media contact:** Kay Hyde, Head of PR & Communications.

Tel: 01904 554451 Email: [Kay.Hyde@makeityork.com](mailto:Kay.Hyde@makeityork.com)