

Brunel returns to Bristol Temple Meads station

September 29, 2021



The statue of Isambard Kingdom Brunel has been unveiled at its new home outside the Passenger Shed at Bristol Temple Meads station.

Mr Brunel now stands outside the very building he designed – which formed part of the original GWR terminus station building at Bristol Temple Meads.

The statue of Mr Brunel was originally presented to Bristol by the Bristol and West Building Society. It was created by John Doubleday and first unveiled in the city on 26 May 1982. It was then moved from its original site at Broad Quay in 2006, the bicentenary of Brunel's birth and was most recently located outside the offices of Osborne Clarke in Temple Quay.

Not only is the statue now fittingly located outside Brunel's iconic station building at Bristol Temple Meads, but it is bookended by another statue of Brunel, by the same artist, located at London Paddington station at the Eastern end of his great railway.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel's legacy is synonymous with the city of Bristol. One of the most versatile and audacious engineers of the 19th century, his winning designs include the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the SS Great Britain, the world's first iron-hulled, screw propeller-driven steamship now docked in Bristol.

Brunel's contribution to the railway cannot be understated. He was responsible for the construction of a network of tunnels, bridges and viaducts for the Great Western Railway (GWR).

In 1833, Brunel was appointed GWR's chief engineer and began work on the line that would link Bristol with London. In addition to viaducts at Hanwell and Chippenham, the Maidenhead Bridge and the Box Tunnel, Bristol Temple Meads station was among his most impressive achievements.

When Bristol Temple Meads' railway opened in 1841, it transformed the city of Bristol making business and leisure travel easier and cheaper via the railway and created jobs for thousands of people.

Today, Network Rail is continuing Brunel's legacy. Through the [Bristol Rail Regeneration programme](#), Network Rail is investing in the railway in Bristol and Bristol Temple Meads station, to ensure it is fit for 21st century rail travel and to support the millions of passengers who use the station and railway in Bristol every year.

Andy Phillips, Network Rail station manager – Reading Station and Bristol Temple Meads Station, said: "We are delighted to have rehomed the statue of Mr Brunel to the location of one his finest accomplishments, Bristol Temple Meads station.

"The statue is spectacular and is accompanied by a wall plaque which tells the story of Brunel and his original station. It is fitting that passengers entering and leaving the station via station approach road will be able to enjoy the statue and understand the history of Bristol Temple Meads and the role Isambard Kingdom Brunel played in shaping the railway we know today."

Tim Bryan, Director of the Brunel Institute at Brunel's SS Great Britain said: "It is wonderful to see the relocated statue greeting passengers and Bristol people at Temple Meads. Brunel's iconic GWR terminus remains as an enduring symbol of Bristol's rich railway heritage and the connectivity, creativity and innovation of the city, which continues to inspire future generations of engineers and entrepreneurs."

Chris Curling, Deputy Lieutenant for Bristol who unveiled the statue, said: "There can be no more appropriate a location for this magnificent statue of Brunel than immediately outside the very building which he designed and built as the first full-scale railway terminus, and which became the template for railway stations across the world."

Photo credit: Network Rail