

Flying Scotsman centenary celebrations launched at London King's Cross on station's 170th birthday

October 14, 2022



It's a very happy birthday to a famous elderly gent of the railways, as the [Flying Scotsman](#) started its 100th birthday celebrations today.

The world's most famous steam locomotive, owned by the [National Railway Museum](#), made its first appearance in a year long programme of events to mark its centenary today, with an appearance at London's Kings Cross, which is also celebrating 170th anniversary today.

The double celebration saw the celebrity train puff its way down to the capital, following an overhaul by [Riley & Son \(E\) Ltd](#) in preparation for its busy upcoming anniversary year.



Receiving an anniversary overhaul at Riley & Son (E) Ltd

February 2023 will mark the 100th anniversary of its maiden voyage, when it travelled from the sheds at Doncaster Works. Simply numbered 1472, it was the first locomotive of the newly formed **LNER (London and North Eastern Railway)**. It gained its name in 1924, when it was selected to appear at the British Empire Exhibition in London and was named after the daily 10:00am London to Edinburgh rail service.

As the years passed, love for the iconic engine grew, and in 2004, a campaign spearheaded by the National Railway Museum to save the locomotive for the nation amassed the support of thousands, confirming its status as a national treasure. The appeal to keep the steam icon in Britain was supported by a £1.8 million grant from the **National Heritage Memorial Fund** and the generosity of the public. Its restoration was also completed with the help of a **Heritage Lottery Fund** grant of £275,000.



The programme has been generously supported by Hornby (Lead Sponsor) and has also been made possible thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund

To celebrate its trip to the capital, this weekend will see the loco sitting in a light steam, in pride of place on Platform 8 at London Kings Cross, allowing visitors the opportunity to admire it in all its glory. The ticketed event is sold out, but there are plenty of other opportunities to get up close and personal with this icon of our rails. [A full calendar of centenary events across the UK is available here:](#)

Highlights include:

- the chance to travel behind Flying Scotsman at several locations across the country, beginning with [Swanage Railway](#) in Dorset this October half-term (22nd–26th October 2022) and ending with the Flying Scotsman Centenary Festival at Locomotion in Shildon (20th October–5th November 2023), which will be home to one of the largest collections of historic rail objects on display in the world
- an exciting calendar of mainline tours, with departure points and destinations around Scotland, England and Wales courtesy of our partners at [Railway Touring Company](#) and Riley & Son (E) Ltd
- Visits to Heritage Railways around the UK including the [East Lancashire Railway](#), the [Keighley and Worth Valley Railway](#) and the [Bluebell Railway](#)
- an exhibition of Michael Foreman's original watercolours from Flying Scotsman and the Best Birthday Ever at Danum Gallery, Library, and Museum in Doncaster (11th February–17th June 2023)
- a Centenary Celebration in Flying Scotsman's home city of York (1st–16th April 2023) which will include family activities at York Station as well as the launch of a cutting-edge VR experience at the National Railway Museum which takes visitors back in time to share the locomotive's greatest moments in the last 100 years.

Much-loved author [Michael Morpurgo](#) opened celebrations with a reading from his new children's book *'Flying Scotsman and the Best Birthday Ever'*, to pupils from Argyle Primary School, Camden, at King's Cross. The story tells of a little girl who dreams of becoming a train driver when she grows up

The Flying Scotsman Centenary Programme has been generously supported by [Hornby](#) (Lead Sponsor) and has also been made possible thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Judith McNicol, director of the National Railway Museum, said: "Flying Scotsman is one of the jewels in the crown of our world-class collection, so we are delighted to announce its centenary programme at such an iconic location and on such an auspicious date. Flying Scotsman and King's Cross Station have become associated with the London-Edinburgh route, as beautifully brought to life in Michael Morpurgo's wonderful story, *Flying Scotsman and the Best Birthday Ever*. The centenary calendar has a range of events from free static displays to rail tours, to ensure that everyone across the country has the chance to experience Flying Scotsman during this special anniversary."

Sir Peter Hendy, chair of Network Rail, trustee of the Science Museum Group and chair of the National Railway Museum Advisory Board, said: "It's brilliant to have Flying Scotsman here to help us celebrate King's Cross station's 170th birthday and launch its own 100th birthday celebration too. Since it opened all those years ago, King's Cross has become an iconic London landmark, a backdrop for many historical and cultural events, and, of course, served millions of people travelling up and down the East Coast Main Line. Although an icon of the steam age, today it's never looked better, and is absolutely fit to serve the railway's growth and sustainability aims the Government have given us."

"King's Cross and Flying Scotsman have a glorious history, and it's important we look back and celebrate that, but we're also reaching out to the next generation, both to travel by train and to get inspired by engineering and technology."

Jemima Wade, headteacher at Argyle Primary School, adds: "We're thrilled to be amongst the first to see Flying Scotsman start its centenary year celebrations today. To see the locomotive up close and to hear a

special reading from Michael Morpurgo – a favourite author for so many of us – is a once in a lifetime experience. One that is sure to stay with our Year 1 pupils for life, and – who knows – may even inspire future careers in engineering and on the railway!”

Stuart Gray, operations manager for Riley & Son (E) Ltd, said: “Riley & Son (E) Ltd are proud to present ‘Flying Scotsman’ to the nation fresh from a comprehensive overhaul which will see it fit and ready to undertake a range of exciting events across the country in its 100th year. Putting the programme together with our partners at the National Railway Museum and Railway Touring Company has taken a great deal of work and we are excited to share it with you all.”