

Lumo celebrates world-famous rail pioneer

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Two Tyneside organisations are set to pay tribute to the company built by world-famous rail pioneer Robert Stephenson.

Lumo, the UK's newest train company, is joining forces with the Robert Stephenson Trust to promote its work in celebrating the bicentenary of the world's first locomotive building works, the Robert Stephenson Company.

Rail pioneer Robert Stephenson opened the world's first locomotive factory at South Street on Forth banks in Newcastle in 1823. He was only 19 at the time. The famous Locomotion No. 1 and Stephenson's Rocket were both developed at the site, which is now the Stephenson's Quarter.

And with Lumo's head office, "The Lighthouse", sitting on the site of the original factory and in front of its iconic Boiler Room, it is promoting a series of events to mark the Robert Stephenson Company's bicentenary. To kick off the celebrations, Lumo staff have designed a commemorative plaque that will be displayed on a train and at its office.

Martijn Gilbert, Managing Director of Lumo, said: “We’re proud of our North East roots here at Lumo, at that we’re based on a site with such great historical significance for the railways, both nationally and globally.

“Innovation has been at the heart of our ethos since we launched. The work of Stephenson & Co. was very much about imagining rail and one of our guiding principles is to re-imagine rail, so we have that in common, even though we are 200 years apart.”

Donald Heath, chairman of the Robert Stephenson Trust added: “Robert Stephenson was arguably the greatest of Britain’s many nineteenth century engineers, excelling as both a mechanical and a civil engineer. The creation of Robert Stephenson & Co, and the opening of the ‘locomotive factory’ in 1823 was a milestone, not just in Robert’s career, but also in the development of railways worldwide.

“The works built the best early steam locomotives, including ‘Locomotion No 1’ and ‘Rocket’, and went on to supply locomotives across the world. We are delighted to have the support of Lumo in celebrating this most important anniversary, which commemorates achievements that started two centuries ago here in the City of Newcastle.”

With celebrations planned to run from 28th January to 25th March, Lumo is spreading awareness of The Robert Stephenson Trust’s exhibition and series of lectures in Newcastle’s ‘The Common Room’, in Neville Hall*.

*The free exhibition in The Common Room will be open from 10am-4pm, Monday – Saturday.

Throughout the period of celebration, a programme of lectures at The Common Room will be held including:

- **Thursday, February 9 at 2pm:** The Art of Robert Stephenson
 - Images of the Man, his Life and Works, by J Michael Taylor MBE, Robert Stephenson Trust trustee.
- **Thursday, February 23 at 2pm:** Stephenson Survivors Worldwide
 - By Anthony Coulls, senior curator of Rail Transport and Technology, National Railway Museum.
- **Saturday, March 4 at 1pm:** The Stanhope and Tyne Railroad Company
 - By Rob Langham, author.
- **Saturday, March 4 at 2.30pm:** Thomas Elliott Harrison – Railway Engineer
 - By John Addyman, president of the North Eastern Railway Association.
- **Saturday, March 18 at 2pm:** Progress in Design and Manufacture: The Steam Locomotive 1825-1830,
 - By Dr Michael R Bailey MBE, railway historian and archaeologist.

Admission for lectures is free, however tickets can be booked in advance by calling 0191 250 9717.

Photo credit: Lumo