

Rail industry comes together to enable Flying Scotsman visit to the south west

May 2, 2023



Network Rail has worked with partners from across the rail industry to upgrade the track and restore St Blazey turntable to its former glory in preparation for Flying Scotsman's visit Cornwall.

The turntable is an important part of Cornwall's industrial heritage and on Sunday (30 April) the world-famous locomotive was turned around at St Blazey so that it could make its return journey to Bristol.

It marked the first time that the St Blazey turntable had the honour of assisting Flying Scotsman.

Engineers from Network Rail used some of their dedicated volunteering days to help with the refurbishment of the turntable, working with MPower Kernow CIC, a social enterprise dedicated to providing unique technical training for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The project was also made possible by a generous grant from Railway Heritage Trust and companies such as Quattro, Ground Control and GPX, who provided equipment and staff free of charge.

Volunteers from Network Rail teams based in Exeter, Par and Plymouth assisted with the track

refurbishment.

Daniel Parkes, Network Rail programme manager who worked on the project, said: "It's been absolutely incredible to see so many people and companies from across the industry and beyond come together to refurbish the track and manage logistical challenges to enable the return of the turntable at St Blazey to working condition and former glory.

"The generosity of those involved is amazing – from people volunteering their time, to the provision of equipment free of charge, everyone has pulled together to ensure this historic locomotive gets a fitting welcome in Cornwall.

"I'd like to thank my colleagues at Network Rail, Railway Heritage Trust, MPower Kernow and all the companies who donated the use of their equipment and staff. It's been such a pleasure and an honour to work with every single one of you to achieve this fantastic goal."

Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, Chair of Network Rail, said: "It is great to see Network Rail teams working with partners to bring an important piece of railway heritage back into operation, and I am confident that it will be of real benefit to Cornwall.

"As we approach the 200th anniversary of the first passenger rail journey in 2025 it is important that we continue to support the reuse of historic railway infrastructure to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the romance of travelling by rail, and in the case of the St Blazey turntable, to support education, training and railway industry jobs through MPower Kernow. Thank you to everyone who's helped, and in particular DB Cargo, and our great Network Rail volunteers."

Tim Hedley-Jones, director of the Railway Heritage Trust, said: "We are pleased to have supported Network Rail and MPower Kernow with this project to restore the listed turntable at St Blazey and bring the Flying Scotsman to Cornwall. It is good to see railway heritage fostering collaboration across the railway industry."

On Sunday Flying Scotsman was hauling 'The Royal Duchy', a train organised by heritage rail tour promoter The Railway Touring Company. Kelly Osborne, The Railway Touring Company's managing director, said: "Congratulations to MPower and Network Rail for spearheading this initiative to ensure that Flying Scotsman could be turned at St Blazey.

"The turntable refurbishment is excellent news for steam operations and opens up opportunities to run more steam hauled trains on Cornwall's railways. We have plans for The Royal Duchy hauled by other historic locomotives to travel this route again in July, August and September and the working turntable will facilitate those visits and others in the future. Well done and many thanks to all those who sponsored this project and to those who worked hard to make it happen."

Photo credit: Network Rail