

Flying Scotsman Saved for the Nation

05 April 2004

Flying Scotsman, the world's most famous steam locomotive, will stay in Britain.

Image



The Flying Scotsman in Doncaster

The National Railway Museum (NRM) has won its battle to save the historic rail icon following an overwhelming show of public support. A successful bid was put forward on behalf of the nation with the help of a major £1.8million grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).

LNER locomotive No 4472 Flying Scotsman was designed by Sir Nigel Gresley and built at Doncaster Works in 1923. It was the first steam locomotive to officially break the 100mph barrier in 1934 and was sold into private ownership by British Rail in 1963.

An initial £365,000 was raised through the NRM's public appeal and, as pledged, Sir Richard Branson matched this £365,000 on behalf of the Virgin Group. A further £60,000 donation by the British public raised the total to £790,000, leaving enough funds to keep the locomotive running on Britain's railway for years to come.

Stephen Johnson, Head of the National Heritage Memorial Fund said: "We all love trains and we are chuffed to have helped save the Flying Scotsman for the nation to enjoy. What better way can there be of using money from the NHMF than to help save this great piece of British engineering in memory of those who saved the country."

"The NHMF was established to save items of national importance that are at risk. Helping to buy a steam locomotive is definitely a first and serves to reinforce the need for a fund that can act quickly and decisively to help prevent the loss of our heritage - whether that be a work of art, a building or an engineering icon."

Sir Richard Branson, Chairman of the Virgin Group, added: "It would have been a tragedy to see such an important part of our heritage sold abroad. As many of the British public are aware we tried desperately, and unfortunately unsuccessfully, to save Concorde from a similar fate.

"It has been an honour to play a part in saving a truly iconic feat of British engineering for millions of people to enjoy for generations to come by continuing to run Flying Scotsman on the national rail network. It is a real pleasure to support the valuable work of the National Railway Museum and the British public in their bid to ensure that Flying Scotsman has a secure future in this country."

Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport: "The age of steam is one of this country's greatest gifts to the world. The Flying Scotsman stands today as a visible reminder of our proud industrial past. But it is loved for so much more. From Brief Encounter to Auden's Night Mail, the romance of train travel is a part of who we are.

"It is a tribute to the National Heritage Memorial Fund and to the support of so many others that the Flying Scotsman will now remain in this country, and in use, to be enjoyed by this generation and generations to come".

Meanwhile, plans to put the legendary locomotive on display at the National Railway Museum between rail operations were also boosted further today with the announcement of a £500,000 grant from the regional development agency, Yorkshire Forward.

The money will be used to create a special exhibition dedicated to the 81-year-old icon for thousands of fans visiting the award-winning family attraction every year.

Brian Greenwood of Yorkshire Forward said: "Flying Scotsman was built in Yorkshire and it is only fitting that the world's most famous locomotive should find

a home in our region at the world's biggest railway museum. We are looking forward to seeing the engine in action again on Yorkshire tracks and to helping the NRM create an exhibition telling the story behind the legend."

Locomotive No 4472 was put on the market by Flying Scotsman plc in February amid fears that the national treasure may be destined for sale overseas. A deadline of 2 April was set for sealed bids by their advisers GVA Grimley, who managed the tender process.

Peter Butler, Chief Executive Officer for Flying Scotsman plc, said: "I am pleased that this icon of British engineering will now be in the National Collection. I look forward to seeing her out on the mainline for many years to come.

"Private owners and Flying Scotsman plc have run her for 41 years and she has done us all proud. We hand her over in better condition than she has been since 1963, when she was last in public ownership, and we wish her well."

Summing up the race to secure Flying Scotsman for the nation, Andrew Scott, Head of the National Railway Museum, commented: "This has been a tremendous victory for the nation. There can be few national treasures capable of stirring up such a passion and a will to succeed, but Flying Scotsman has certainly proved to be one of them.

"In the few short weeks since we launched our appeal, we have received literally thousands of donations and messages of support from people of all ages and backgrounds. The strength of feeling among the British public has been truly staggering and we can't thank them enough.

"We look forward now to seeing Flying Scotsman take its place as the star attraction at our Railfest celebrations to mark the bicentenary of the train next month – what better way could there be to launch the UK's biggest rail festival than the arrival of the world's most famous locomotive?"

Lord Waldegrave, Chairman of the National Museum of Science and Industry Trustees added: " This is great news for the National Railway Museum and for Britain. The Flying Scotsman has found its true home. I would like to pay tribute to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, to Sir Richard Branson, and to the innumerable members of the public who have made this triumphant outcome possible, and I would like warmly to congratulate the Head of the NRM and his staff who worked flat out to make it all happen."

Notes to editors

Railfest, from 29 May to 6 June, will be one of the biggest rail festival ever staged. It will celebrate the bicentenary of the world's first train with locomotives, engines, rolling stock and modern traction representing 200 years of rail progress in the UK. A traditional fun fair, live theatre and music, historic film shows and a Great Railway Bazaar will also be on offer to more than 60,000 people expected to attend the NRM event in York.

The National Railway Museum (NRM) in York is part of the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI), along with the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television (NMPFT) in Bradford and the Science Museum in London.

Directions: [Multimap link to National Railway Museum](#)

Local Directions: As you turn down Armstrong Way, pass the security lodge. At the end of the road, turn right into Collett Way. On the left hand side - between two buildings - there are a set of gates. Access to the site is through these gates. Travel down this road, and follow the road up to the right, through another set of gates, and into the yard. The sheds are approximately where the Barratt Industrial Park lettering is on the multimap map.