

## Whistle Off! [C1]

La celebrazione di "Railway 200" rende omaggio all'impatto trasformativo della ferrovia sulla connettività e sull'industria mondiale.

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The commercialisation of **steam-powered** transportation set the world in **motion**. While **steamships** transformed maritime trade and made long-distance travel more reliable and accessible, steam locomotives **enabled** faster and more efficient movement of **goods** and people. This year marks the bicentenary of the first **steam-powered** public railway that made its **carbon-fuelled** debut in the north-east of England in 1825. The event is celebrated across Britain with a year-long programme of activities and exhibitions called Railway 200. To find out more, Speak Up contacted Alan Hyde, Railway 200's head of marketing and communications. We began by asking him why it is such an important anniversary to commemorate. **Alan Hyde (English accent):** It's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to celebrate an industry, a sector, that has changed the world forever. And I think it's not too exaggerated to say that certainly the role of the railways in the Industrial Revolution is very much **akin to** the invention of the internet in the digital age, both of which have been hugely transformative, have connected people and communities in all sorts of ways. Obviously the railway is born in Britain, rolled out across the globe. It's created countries, you think of the US and India and other countries that perhaps wouldn't be the countries they are today without the advent of the railways. And it's still a force for positive change today as it's become more **digitally-driven**. So I think it's important that it's not a sort of a **rose-tinted** retrospective on the past, it's very much trying to show that the railways' pioneering pedigree is **alive and kicking** today and is shaping the **brave new world**, particularly here in the UK, where the industry is going through structural change to become simpler, better and greener.

## CHAIN OF INNOVATIONS

As Hyde explains, one twenty-six mile railway line in the north-east of England formed part of a chain of innovations that was to transform first Britain and then the world. **Alan Hyde:** The date that is being marked, I ought to say, is the 27th of September 1825, in the north-east of England. But there were other key milestones before that that are recognized. So it's quite difficult to say when the railways was [were] born, because obviously the horse and cart on tracks carried coal and other cargo before 1825, but it's widely regarded as the birth of the modern railway, and it's transformed the way we live. Most people in the UK don't probably realise the products and services they enjoy every day, much of that is brought to them by rail freight. So we're trying to convey that story, from wine to toilet paper to carrying biomass to power stations to help keep the nation's lights on. Railway towns like Doncaster, Swindon, Crewe and elsewhere, York, which wouldn't be what they are today as big tourist centres and centres of commercial enterprise without the railways. And also coastal resorts, because the railways created mass tourism, and you've got resorts around the UK, and indeed I'm sure around the world, like Bournemouth, Blackpool, where the factory would shut and people would then go en masse by train to coastal resorts and enjoy the seaside. So, economically, it contributes a massive amount to local, regional and national economy.

## POPULAR CULTURE

British people young and old are renowned for their love of trains. Some lucky ones own quite sophisticated train sets, and railways feature prominently in books and in films, from The Railway Children to Harry Potter. As Hyde explains, trains are both culturally and environmentally significant. **Alan Hyde:** There's also the heritage railway sector, which in the UK is very strong, many of which are charities, but they carry millions of people a year on some of the most spectacular scenery across the UK. So culturally, the railways has [have] shaped our cultural landscape. It's inspired, down the ages, generations of artists, musicians, filmmakers. You only have recently to think of the Hogwarts Express with Harry Potter. And environmentally, many of the railways actually have become green corridors with particular sorts of

flora and fauna along the track side, which in the days of steam, often the railways acted as pollinators, carrying pollen from one part of the country to another and creating new biodiversity.

## COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

So, is there any event from Railway 200 that Hyde would particularly recommend? **Alan Hyde:** It'd probably be remiss of me to pick [one]! There's a brilliant event in Derby, which is the new home of the railway in the UK, by Alstom, one of the world's leading train manufacturers. And they're organising four days of fun-filled excitement with a vast array[of exhibits]. They're calling it "the greatest collection of trains and rail exhibits and associated activity," and expecting lots of interest and lots of people to come along to that as well. But there's a long list. Nothing is too big or too small. We know of one lady who's going to be knitting a jumper with the Railway 200 logo. That in and of itself is just a lovely contribution.

## PEOPLE-CENTRED

Railway 200 is also aimed at interesting young people in working with the railway industry, which has pledged to become net zero by 2050. The railways offer a wide range of careers, as they touch on many aspects of British life, says Hyde: from heritage and tourism to engineering and environmental jobs. Most importantly, Railway 200 aims to show the pride, passion and professionalism of those who choose to work in the industry.

**Alan Hyde:** We're supplementing the industry's efforts to try and showcase what a fantastic place the industry is to build a career for people of all backgrounds. Around the globe, we're all competing for the same talent one way or another, so we're very keen to get the next generation of pioneering talent to consider a career in the railways. We're shining a spotlight on some of the more hidden roles in the railway. So it's not just the roles that most people see, like a train driver or a guard on the train or somebody on the platform, but it's the fact that there are ecologists, there are hydrologists, there are drone pilots, there are coders... there are all sorts of other roles. In the UK the railways employs [employ] about three

hundred thousand people, so obviously a significant industry with lots of opportunity to build a rich and rewarding career. Hence, education skills being a key theme for us. So, obviously the challenge is to get a good intake of younger people, as I say, from all backgrounds, to join the industry.

## THE FUTURE OF RAILWAYS

European visitors may be shocked at the expense and inefficiency of British trains. This is because the railway system is so old, Hyde explains. It is difficult to update and hard to decarbonise. So what will the future of British railways be like? **Alan Hyde:** Who knows? Imagination runs riot... We know it will be a much greener, simpler railway, certainly here in the UK, a better railway. I mean, the railway is very popular. It's obviously, like many parts of the economy around the globe, suffered through the effects of Covid, when people weren't travelling. But its sort of innate attraction [is] undimmed. There'll be lots of competitions, lots of invitations to people and school groups to use their imagination and try and sort of design the train of the future and what a new railway station might look like while still respecting the past. 'Cause in the UK, there's some really good examples. You have to think of Saint Pancras, for example, which is wonderful, in London, and other stations, old Victorian stations that have been beautifully restored and modernised. So, who knows what two hundred years will look like? But certainly it's about making progress, making fares more simple and less complex to understand, making sure trains run on time more often and making the journey experience even more wonderful. It's a wonderful, wonderful industry. And I think, it is an opportunity whilst taking the public on a journey, as it were, without being too clichéd, but sort of recognising the railway's not perfect, but it has a brilliant story to tell and it needs to shout about that long, loud and proud to convey how it has shaped people's lives and created the UK that we all we all know today.

## A BIT OF "INSPIRATION"

One of the highlights of Railway 200 is the exhibition train Inspiration, with an estimated 400,000 people set to visit. Inspiration travels across Britain

**wowing bystanders** with its **eye-catching** livery. For its lucky passengers, there are four carriages to visit, each dedicated to a particular free-of-charge exhibition: one is about railway technology and innovation; another is an interactive family-oriented environment; a third focuses on the diverse and sometimes surprising **array** of careers in the railway industry, from engineers to architects to guards and drivers; a fourth is used as a flexible exhibition space depending on where the train is travelling to next. On the train's travel itinerary are mainline stations across the nation as well as heritage railways connected to the rail network and freight depots along the way. [www.railway200.co.uk](http://www.railway200.co.uk)

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# Glossary

- **shining a spotlight** = puntare i riflettori su
- **whilst** = mentre
- **wowing** = stupirsi
- **eye-catching** = accattivante
- **elsewhere** = altrove
- **has pledged** = impegnarsi
- **be knitting** = lavorare a maglia
- **bystanders** = passanti
- **steam-powered** = a vapore
- **scenery** = paesaggio
- **to convey** = trasmettere
- **to power** = somministrare energia
- **remiss** = negligente
- **showcase** = esibire
- **coders** = programmatore
- **trains run on time** = circolare in modo puntuale
- **alive and kicking** = vivo e vegeto
- **rail freight** = portare merci
- **undimmed** = intatta
- **steamships** = barche a vapore
- **cart on tracks** = carri su rotaie
- **enterprise** = impresa
- **array** = varietà
- **jumper** = maglione
- **is also aimed at** = avere come obiettivo
- **as it were** = per così dire
- **digitally-driven** = guidato dalla tecnologia digitale
- **milestones** = pietre miliari
- **rose-tinted** = di colore rosa
- **enabled** = rendere possibile
- **akin to** = simile a
- **keen** = entusiasta
- **Hence** = quindi

- **carbon-fuelled** = a carbone
- **regarded** = considerare
- **brave new world** = un mondo nuovo e migliore
- **ought** = dovere
- **coal** = carbone
- **train sets** = modellini di treni
- **intake** = entrata
- **fares** = tariffe
- **motion** = far partire
- **goods** = merci