

Title:

Thomas the Train: Anniversary of a Legend

Word Count:

506

Summary:

For those of us who grew up hearing the stories and reading the books, Thomas the Train is a living legend. Learn more about the lovable train that celebrated its sixtieth birthday in 2005.

Keywords:

thomas the train, thomas the tank engine, friends

Article Body:

For those of us who grew up hearing the stories and reading the books, Thomas the Train is a living legend. On 2005, Thomas and, of course, his friends celebrated their sixtieth birthday. Back in 1945, in England, the Anglican reverend Wilbert Awdry started the Railway Series by writing the first book. From that moment on, an entire generation of children has learned to love the beautiful adventures lived by Thomas the Train and his group of human-faced friends.

When he was a little boy in Box, Wiltshire, in his father's vicarage (his father was also a clergyman), Wilbert Awdry dedicated his nights listening to the sounds made by the trains of the Great Western Railway running along the main line. This main line went between Paddington to Bristol, and passed near Vere Awdry's (Wilbert's father) house. He spent hours imagining the "conversations" between those trains. He may not have realized it yet, but Thomas the Train was already being born.

In the year of 1943, reverend Awdry's son, Christopher, happened to be ill in bed. As with every child, he was very active and being in bed was frustratingly boring for him. As an attempt to entertain his son and keep him amused, Wilbert started making up stories about a locomotive named Thomas the Train. As an easy way to remember some basic information and preserve uniformity between the stories, he wrote down some of the attributes of his characters on a piece of paper; this way every story he told little Christopher was consistent with the previous one. That was a need, since Christopher's inquisitive nature and intelligence (he was just three years old, by the way) made him pick up differences between versions when he asked his father to re-tell him a story.

Having everything written on paper, Reverend Awdry easily remembered every detail of the adventures of Thomas the Train and his friends.

By the time of 1945, a retired businessman named Edmund Ward was looking for a diversion when he heard about Wilbert Awdry's stories. He decided to publish the first book. The first Thomas the Train book was so successful that Mr. Edmund Ward had to come out of his retirement to satisfy the increasing demand.

The success of the Thomas the Train and Friends' books was amazing. Reverend Awdry had to write a high number of new stories in order to fulfill the people's expectations.

After having written twenty-six books, Wilbert decided that he was too old to continue writing. His son Christopher took up the series, then. Thanks to his efforts, there are now a lot more stories in addition to those original 26.

Thomas the Train stories will live in our hearts forever, filled with adventures and healthy entertainment not only for children, but for not-so-young parents too, who sometimes are even more excited about a new Thomas the Train book than the kids themselves. Happy birthday then, to Thomas the Train and all his friends, and let there be many more adventures coming soon!

Copyright © Jared Winston, 2006. All Rights Reserved.