

Flying Scotsman: The Legend Lives On

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will discuss steam routes, The National Collection as well as providing case studies of the key engineers, locomotive development and the career of this celebrated train. Keith Langston goes into fantastic detail in explaining locomotive classes, accessible for readers who are new to this aspect of the transport industry. ***LNER A3 Pacific No 4472 Flying Scotsman departs from Chinley and takes the Hope Valley line to Sheffield at Chinley North Junction with an enthusiasts' railtour to York on 29 September 1979.*** **BRIAN SHARPE** Chapter 1 **FLYING SCOTSMAN Why is this the best-known steam engine in the world?** No 1472 was the third of a class of steam locomotives that was eventually to number 79 engines, and did not originally even carry a name. The Great Northern Railway A1 4-6-2, though, was the biggest express steam engine ever to have been seen in Britain at the time. It was No 1472 that was chosen to be displayed at a major exhibition at Wembley in 1924, and for this it was given the name *Flying Scotsman*. It hauled the London & North Eastern Railway's first King's Cross-to-Edinburgh non-stop express in 1928, but was beaten by a slightly longer Euston-to-Glasgow non-stop run by the London Midland & Scottish Railway's Pacific No 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* in 1936. It officially broke the 100mph barrier in 1934 but unofficially this speed had been achieved 30 years earlier. An identical engine to *Flying Scotsman* soon eclipsed its speed record with a 108mph burst of speed in 1935. *Flying Scotsman* was perhaps becoming the best-known of the class of 79 LNER A1s, but none of its record feats actually stood for long. In 1935, the A1s were superseded by the A4s, streamlined engines with more speed and power, and these raised the speed record first to 112mph, and soon to 126mph. From then on, *Flying Scotsman* was just one of many engines that played a vital part in hauling East Coast Main Line expresses between King's Cross, the north and Scotland, for another 30 years, but it had no more claim to fame than any of the others. It still had its name, though, and, when the final curtain came in early 1963 and the engine was withdrawn from service by British Railways and expected to be scrapped, it was purchased by a businessman who had every intention of keeping the engine running. *Flying Scotsman* certainly had claims to fame from the early years of its main line career, but it was 1963 when it really started to hit the headlines – after it had retired. This might not have happened had the engine not had such a memorable name. *Flying Scotsman* has now become the one steam engine in the world of which everyone knows the name, and which most people would even recognise. It was briefly the only main line steam engine running in the whole of Britain, and it has travelled across the Atlantic and across America. It has circumnavigated the globe, steamed across Australia, broken the record for a non-stop run with steam (again), and been sold for easily the highest price ever paid for a steam engine. But it has had its down side, too. It has had several owners, some of whom have bought it on the strength of its earnings potential, based on the name *Flying Scotsman*. This value has perhaps been overestimated, and two of *Flying Scotsman's* one-time owners have been bankrupted. It has been said that *Flying Scotsman's* fame is such that it should have been preserved by the nation anyway. A large number of steam engines was preserved 'officially', and many are now on display in the National Railway Museum at York, but *Flying Scotsman* was simply not considered unique or historically important enough at the time. The streamlined A4 Pacific No 4468 *Mallard* was chosen, along with Gresley's V2 2-6-2 No 4771 *Green Arrow*. *Flying Scotsman* was not sufficiently different from these two to justify its preservation. Now, of course, its ongoing 40 years of fame (if not fortune) has earned it a place in the National Railway Museum collection and, after an unprecedented fundraising campaign and a National Heritage Memorial Fund grant, the museum was able to clear the enormous debts of the engine's owning company and acquire *Flying Scotsman* for the nation, and for a British public who clearly hold the engines in high esteem. If it had not acquired fame, largely as a result of its name, in the 1920s and 1930s, then maybe Alan Pegler would not have had the enthusiasm to purchase it in 1963. If it had been scrapped, what would then have become Britain's most famous steam engine? The question is asked whether *Flying Scotsman* can run for ever. The answer is probably yes, at a price. Like any steam engine, it is a mechanical object, built of steel. As parts wear out they are replaced. Little of the original engine now exists and there has been much rebuilding and improvement carried out, before and after 1963. The legend that is *Flying Scotsman* can run for ever; it will be apple green, numbered 4472, carry the famous name and be recognisable as the ultimate in British express steam design elegance. It may not be all the original steel, but the legend that is

Flying Scotsman goes far beyond its physical characteristics. **THE GREAT Northern Railway** Britain's railway system was built by numerous independent companies, many of which were to amalgamate into larger organisations bearing the well-known names of the late 19th century. These independent companies were to last until 1923, when the 'Grouping' was to form the 'Big Four'. One of the early railway companies, the Great Northern Railway, had as its aim the building of a railway from London to York, by the shortest possible route. It was relatively late in setting out to achieve this, and other companies' trains were already running between the two cities, but by a very circuitous route through Rugby and Derby. ***The Great Northern Railway's main line ran from King's Cross to Doncaster, with branches to Cambridge, Nottingham, Skegness and Grimsby. The map shows the routes remaining open in 2005, with the Grimsby line and other routes in Lincolnshire having closed by 1970. Also shown are heritage lines and preservation centres, of which only the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway at Ludborough, near Louth, is located on former Great Northern Railway track.*** The Act of Parliament authorising the construction in 1846 actually included two different routes, and the first section to be started was the line from Peterborough to Lincoln via Boston. In 1850 the line south was opened from Peterborough to a temporary London terminus at Maiden Lane, with the better-known King's Cross station, located in a then very disreputable part of London, opening in 1852. Lincoln to Doncaster via Gainsborough was not completed until 1867 so, for a short period, the GNR's expresses to the north ran via Boston to Lincoln, then over the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway to Doncaster via Retford. So much for the direct route to York! By the time King's Cross opened, though, the GNR's 'towns line' from Peterborough to Doncaster, via Grantham, Newark and Retford, had been completed. The GNR never reached York, though; it made it only as far as Askern Junction, just north of Doncaster, from where its trains ran over Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway tracks to Knottingley, then over part of the North Eastern Railway to York. The Great Northern Railway is known for its main line, as this was the route taken by the Anglo-Scottish expresses, one of which was to become known as the 'Flying Scotsman'. Its expresses also ran to Grimsby on its own East Lincolnshire main line and to York, Leeds, Harrogate, Manchester, Stafford, Liverpool and Yarmouth, partly using other companies' routes. The company also carried very heavy coal traffic south from Yorkshire, much of it later running over the line owned jointly with the Great Eastern Railway from Lincoln to March. Today, apart from the main line north from King's Cross, little of the 1051 miles of the GNR survives. Most of its Lincolnshire lines closed in 1970, apart from the Skegness branch. The Peterborough-to-Doncaster-via-Lincoln line sees an hourly one-coach train, and branches from the main line still serve Cambridge and Nottingham. The Great North Eastern Railway Company's electric service from King's Cross to the north and Scotland is recognized as one of Britain's premier express train services, using the original GNR main line as far as Askern Junction, its coaches originally all bearing the legend 'The Route of the Flying Scotsman'. ***GNR Stirling 4-2-2 No 1, in steam at Loughborough on the Great Central Railway in 1981. BRIAN SHARPE*** How great was the GREAT NORTHERN? Britain's first public steam-hauled railway was the Stockton & Darlington. The Liverpool & Manchester moved the story on, but the early independent railways all had one thing in common, they had quite unimaginative names, like the Bristol & Exeter Railway. As they grew bigger though, they coined names like the North Eastern or the Midland, and as they grew even bigger, the prefix 'Great' became popular, with the Great Western being quite an apt description of that railway, while the Great Northern was really a bit of an exaggeration. It was neither great in the way that the GWR covered the whole of western England, nor was it really northern, as its main line to the north ran only as far as just beyond Doncaster. ***GNR 1897-built directors' saloon coach No 1283 normally on the Bluebell Railway, but seen on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in 2005. BRIAN SHARPE*** It was the Great Northern Railway's public relations exaggeration in terms of its name, where the myth actually appeared to be more important than the reality, that really set the scene for the building of the world's most famous steam engine. Competition was fierce, especially for Anglo-Scottish passenger business in the 19th century. Trains ran from King's Cross, the GNR terminus, and Euston, the LNWR terminus, via the east coast and west coast routes respectively, to Aberdeen. The east coast partners of Great Northern, North Eastern and North British railways, and their west coast opposite numbers, the

London & North Western and Caledonian railways staged the 'Races to the North' in 1888 and 1895. Despite the route being longer and hillier, the west coast alliance won the race both times. But it was the GNR which was the senior partner in the east coast collaboration and, although it was on the losing side, its contribution should not be underestimated. The track on its main line was some of the best in the country. Its engines were among the fastest and most reliable, and its coach designs were adopted as standard for the 'East Coast Joint Stock' fleet which was used on Anglo-Scottish services. Despite the public relations 'spin' its choice of company name implied, the Great Northern was one of Britain's railway companies that rarely gave any of its engines names. Perhaps its best-known 19th century engine, the pioneer Stirling 8ft Single, is simply known as No 1. **Herbert Nigel Gresley ENGINEER** Herbert Nigel Gresley was born on 19 June 1876 at 14 Dublin Street, Edinburgh, one of three children of the Rev Nigel Gresley and his wife, Joanna, whom he had married in 1864. After leaving Marlborough College, the young Gresley was employed as an apprentice by the London & North Western Railway at Crewe, on his 17th birthday, working under the much-feared Francis Webb. Gresley was described as 'more ponderous than talented' at Crewe, but he was certainly ambitious. In 1898, he moved on to the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, where he first worked in the drawing office. There were unconfirmed reports that, in that year, a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway steam engine, 4-4-2 No 1352, allegedly exceeded 100mph on a run between Liverpool and Southport. These types of engines were known as 'Highflyers' and the young Gresley certainly seems to have been what modern management jargon refers to as a high flyer himself. In 1900 he was appointed running shed foreman at Blackpool, and soon afterwards promoted to assistant manager at Newton Heath carriage works in Manchester.

From hauling the first non-stop express from London to Edinburgh in 1928 and breaking the 100mph barrier in 1934, to being sold in 1963, and to its final home at the York National Railway Centre, The Flying Scotsman has a rich and, at times, controversial history.

It has travelled across the USA and steamed across Australia, changed owners and color and sold for the highest price ever paid for a locomotive. Relive the great age of steam and follow the making of the legend that is apple green and called Flying Scotsman. An informative and highly illustrated account of British Steam engines and railways, which includes concise, appealing articles on locomotive development and industrial progress.

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