

Alan Hyde from the national Railway 200 team recaps on this year’s bicentenary celebration so far and what’s coming down the tracks in this landmark year for a British invention that changed the world. It’s not too late to join the history-makers and help with adding a new chapter to rail’s revolutionary story

Railway 200’s unique exhibition train inspires new audiences



Image: Jack Boskett/Railway 200

What a year so far, but much more to do!
It’s been amazing to see the partnership-based approach of Railway 200 bring the industry together in new and imaginative ways, raise staff pride, reinforce rail’s relationships with the communities and people it serves, and develop new progressive partnerships with other sectors and organisations. This is all in recognition of the railway’s role in shaping people’s lives and livelihoods, and as an engine for growth, powering prosperity, social mobility and community cohesion.
Much of the support for Railway 200 has come in three main areas: branding (our logo is freely available for non-commercial purposes); shared storytelling; and activities and events.

It’s great to see the Railway 200 logo on national TV and cinema advertising, and outdoor posters, as well as countless other examples. This helps to give the campaign visual coherence.
The 200th anniversary has rekindled a desire to share stories – past, present and future-facing – about railway people and rail’s impact and influence. We’d love to feature many more stories on our Great Rail Tales podcast series, available on Spotify and other podcast platforms.
There have already been well over 2,000 activities and events from the hyper-local to the international, and from the personal to the popular. This has included a Whistle-Up of 200 locomotives across five continents, a mega rail sale, a commemorative

coin from The Royal Mint, a merchandise range, train namings, festivals and galas, competitions, talks and presentations, floral displays, a train maze, open days, trade shows, a Railway 200-inspired Community Rail Week and much more.
Following an incredible team effort, the Railway 200 exhibition train, Inspiration, successfully launched at Paddington at the end of last month before opening to the public at Severn Valley Railway on its 60-stop, one-year tour of Britain. Huge thanks to Railway 200’s host partners for helping to publicise and organise each event.
As Britain’s newest visitor attraction and the only exhibition train on the network, the initial reaction has been very positive.



Image: Jack Hall/PA Media Assignments

The eye-catching, four-carriage train, powered by a loco, is emblazoned with the words Past, Present, Future and Together. Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum and supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and generous funding from Porterbrook, Inspiration is packed with interactive hands-on displays and exhibits showcasing railway innovation and promoting a diverse range of rail careers for the next generation of pioneering talent.
The train includes a Partner Zone, a flexible exhibition space. You can register your interest here: <https://railway200.co.uk/inspiration/register-interest-in-the-partner-zone/>
For more information on Inspiration visit <https://railway200.co.uk/inspiration/>
We look forward to welcoming you onboard.
In the meantime, as we build to September – the anniversary month – please look out for Alstom’s

The Greatest Gathering in Derby, Bluebell Railway’s festival in Sussex, the National Railway Museum’s 50th birthday and the re-opening of Station Hall, and the nine-month S&DR200 festival (www.sdr200.co.uk) in County Durham and Tees Valley, which commemorates the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway on 27 September 1825.
The Rail Delivery Group will also be launching a Railway 200-themed World Cup of Stations competition this autumn. And keep your ears open and eyes peeled for more broadcast media coverage, including exciting collaborative projects on BBC Radios 2 and 3, a two-part BBC TV special with Michael Portillo, and documentaries on Channel 4.
It’s never too late to contribute to the rich tapestry of activity across the UK. For more information, including how to get involved, visit www.railway200.co.uk



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