

# The Return of a Legend

By Rebecca Griffiths

Following a ten year operational hiatus, Flying Scotsman, the world's most iconic locomotive, took to the tracks again.

Designed by Sir Nigel Gresley, Flying Scotsman was built at Doncaster Works, costing approximately £8000, and unveiled to the public on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1923. Amongst her many achievements, Scotsman was the first recorded locomotive to achieve speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour on the East Coast Mainline on 30 November 1934. The locomotive also set a record for the longest non-stop run by a steam locomotive when it ran 422 miles on 8 August 1989 in Australia. In 1928 the Scotsman became the first engine to run a non-stop service between London, Kings Cross and Edinburgh giving rise to a service which runs to this day in honour of this feat.

Flying Scotsman was retired from regular service in 1963 after covering 2,076,000 miles though continued to gain fame as a heritage engine, appearing at preserved lines throughout England as well as touring in America, Canada and Australia.

In 2004, following a national appeal to save Scotsman from private ownership, she was acquired by the National Railway Museum using £415,000 in public donations, a £365,000 gift from Sir Richard Branson and a £1.8m grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Shortly after this however Scotsman was found to be in desperate need of an overhaul. Thus followed another public appeal which raised much of the £4 million required to keep Scotsman steaming.

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016, after 10 long years, Flying Scotsman returned to service for a week long run on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Here she was greeted by hordes of enthusiastic onlookers of all ages, each in awe of this amazing feat of engineering.

Over 8000 tickets were available for haulage behind Scotsman and all were sold out with a matter of weeks. My husband and I were lucky enough to be amongst some of the first to enjoy this amazing experience. Looking glorious in her livery of British Railways green and donning her BR service number 60103, the newly refurbished Scotsman tackled the challenging line of the NYMR faultlessly and made a stunning spectacle for the hundreds of people lineside between Grosmont and Pickering. Being part of this event, on board a 'living' legend steaming her way across the rolling moors, beautiful at the best of times, it was certainly easy to see why steam engines, and the Flying Scotsman in particular, continue to capture the imagination of young and old alike.

Once finished with her busman's holiday on the NYMR, Flying Scotsman will be on display at the National Railway Museum and embarking on a program of mainline and heritage rail tours. For more information see: <http://www.flyingscotsman.org.uk/events/scotsman-on-the-tracks/>.