

Henry Morris report – Felix’s Big Train Adventure

Over the weekend of the 11th and 12th of May 2024, I undertook a journey going from Cambridge to the locomotion railway museum in Shildon, County Durham. I travelled with my father. On the entire journey, I took a complex route, attempting to travel using as many different train operating companies (TOCs) as possible. The purpose of this journey was to analyse and compare the trains on each route and different operators with each other, then give my thoughts about each route or operator.

Day one

Day one took a circuitous route, beginning in Royston instead of Cambridge as [lines south of Cambridge were closed for signalling and further maintenance and upgrade.](#)

The first train of the day was to be the 08.26 great northern service to London Kings Cross; however, it had been cancelled either earlier that morning or the previous day. It is not a good sign for any operator to cancel trains like this as they are neglecting the duties of their franchise, which Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) is payed up to [£31.7 million](#) to operate, over one of the most extensive commuter networks in Britain. This kind of cancellation of trains is almost always inexcusable; in May 2023, the UK government took over the Transpennine Express franchise due to First Transpennine Express (FTPE) having poor running. It was revealed that FTPE had been cancelling trains the day before they ran, resulting in overcrowded services on their, already often insufficient, 3-carriage class 185s and new ‘Nova’ sets for intercity routes.

After the cancelation, it was easy to find a later train to catch as Anglia routes receive a frequent stream of trains to London, serving commuters from such settlements as Letchworth Garden City; Welwyn Garden City; Finsbury Park; Hitchin and Stevenage. The train that we caught was 2R13: the 0744 Great Northern service to London Kings Cross, operated by 700 029, the class of train used exclusively by Thameslink. This meant that the standard class section lacked armrests and plug sockets that can be used for charging devices. This is because they were designed for extremely high capacity routes, giving much standing space, and having plastic flooring instead of carpet, giving a hostile quality, as if you are treated like animals and perhaps slightly encouraging anti-social behaviour (which could be observed in the heavily graffitied toilet). I decided to sit in the declassified rear first class section of the train which did not lack plug sockets or armrests; still, GTR wouldn’t install either in the standard class section.

When the train was brought to a stop on the section between Royston and Hitchin, an automated announcement told us that we were stopped at a red signal, showing the sophistication of the class 700 passenger information in conjunction with the modern signalling systems in the London commuter belt. It also showed how the class 700 was designed only for use on the Thameslink lines as such announcements do not exist elsewhere and would not exist on Great Northern’s more versatile class 387, used across the country by many TOCs.

After arriving into London Kings Cross from the East Coast Mainline, we caught the London Underground, changing from the Metropolitan to District line at Baker Street.

The next leg of the journey, travelling from Marylebone to Birmingham would be using one of the most highly-regarded TOCs in Britain: Chiltern Railways. We had a while to wait in Marylebone, where I looked around the station, still in Network SouthEast colours which it held after it was revived by Chris Green's (Chairman of BR working on the railways from 1967 until after 2000)

transformation of this part of the country. Our train would be 1R21: the 1002 to Birmingham, which was, presumably, one of Chiltern's quieter services, shown by two trainee drivers being present; one driving the train with the instructor in the second man's seat and one standing in the passenger saloon, holding the cab door of 168108 open so she could see into the cab. As I stood near the doors of this almost empty carriage, I started a conversation with the instructor who had just come back from the toilet. I was told about the fleet that Chiltern uses and his opinions on them.

The train which it would be most exciting to see would be one of their class 68-hauled mk3 push-pull 'silver sets', however they are unpopular with drivers for a few reasons: he told me that they were unpleasantly loud to drive from the Birmingham (down) end of the train as, unlike multiple units which the rest of the services consist of where the engines are under the floor along the train or even as seen on Fast Light Intercity Trains (FLIRTs) in a walk-through power pack in the middle of the train, the [3750 horsepower](#) engine is situated directly behind the cab not even connecting to the mk3 coaches. From this problem, Chiltern installed sound-proofing which did amend the problem to an extent, but it was still less pleasant than a Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU). There were two more problems he said that he experienced with Chiltern's flagship fleet, which were;

cleanliness, the cabs were very dirty, likely due to them not being part of a passenger-carrying-vehicle and even as they may haul freight on occasion as they are leased by Direct Rail Services (DRS) which is owned by the nuclear authority as it was originally a TOC just for carrying nuclear waste.

And probably the most major with the 68s reliability. Often trains not even leaving the sidings in London at the start of the day. In his rankings, the class 168 'clubman' DMUs came second, being Chiltern's secondary long-distance fleet but also doing more rural workings. He said that they have average reliability and when they break, they can be bodged back in to working until the end of the day.

His favourite train that he drove with Chiltern was the class 165 networker turbo, saying that they are very reliable, however, if they break, they are completely dead. He then went on to explain about route retention, noting that on complex sections, such as the route into Paddington which is a number of miles of 6-track bi-directional working at 100 mph, one must traverse it every few weeks, whether that be in the second man seat of the front cab or driving a train so as not to forget it and potentially get into a major crash, like the Ladbroke grove disaster in 1999, which was the most deadly rail disaster of the privatised network.

When the train arrived into High Wycombe, the driver in training made it his priority to leave the cab to clean the windscreen, in doing so neglecting opening the doors, him leaping back into the cab to push the left side door open button. Once we were going again, I began to appreciate the standard to which Chiltern Railways had overhauled these coaches for the benefit of the passenger, bringing more passengers in the long term on their trains due to higher quality but slower services between Birmingham and the capital, especially compared to the notorious class 390 'Pendolinos' and class 221 'Super Voyagers' with a cramped interior due to the smaller profile to allow tilting on the sharp

corners of the west coast mainline (WCML) so that they can run at 125 mph, however, newer trains are being introduced to replace the 221s and add to Avanti fleet capacity from the Intercity Express Program which are furnished to a high standard. The reason Chiltern has put so much investment into their fleet is because they had an unusually long franchise contract of 20 years, giving return for their investments, unlike other large franchises which typically [last around 7-10 years](#).

Chiltern railways provides free Wi-Fi on all their trains, however, I was finding difficulty connecting to the Wi-Fi on this occasion and had no luck with the streaming service that they provide, however, I have heard that other people have found more luck with this.

Occasionally, I would hear a buzzer make a sound or a bell chime, which would make me feel a connection with the driver. This kind of connection may be able to discourage antisocial behaviour and vandalism to an extent, combined with the luxurious interiors of the trains to prevent offensive behaviour.

On the approach to Birmingham, There was a gangwayed West Midlands Railway (WMR) class 172 Turbostar and also a surprising number of disused platforms and spaces for platforms near such a rail hub.

The change between the beautiful 1909 Great Western station of Moor Street and New Street was well-integrated into the journey as it is signposted me through a tunnel through the Bullring shopping centre and a walk of only 400 yards from exit to entrance. New Street was rebuilt in the mid sixties, however it was partially redeveloped in the sixties. The first thing that I noticed when entering the station was a large mechanical bull in the main concourse, built for the commonwealth games which were held in Birmingham in 2022. After a walk around the station, looking down on the station from the shopping centre section of the station and watching West Midlands metro trams roll by on Stephenson Street, there was the task of finding my platform.

Our next leg of the journey would be to derby, on a Crosscountry class 170. It would depart from platform 9a, which was in the 'green zone' of New Street's complex arrangement of platforms. The reason the platforms were grouped like this is because there was only the width of the tracks to fit a station, which is surrounded by roads and other buildings. This means that, in order to access the platforms, which are beneath the level of the road, the concourse must largely cover them, also acting as the waiting area instead of the platforms due to how narrow they are at points. With a slightly delayed train and many people on the platform, it was stressful to find our reserved seats as the platform was less than 3 metres wide consistently, the rest of the space supporting the concourse above, and the train was stopped for a shorter amount of time than normal to make up lost time.

Even though the platform was very busy, the train still had seats empty; an amenity not found on many Crosscountry services which tend to be packed full and standing. Crosscountry lack rolling stock, not helped by this trip being between the withdrawal of their High Speed Trains (HSTs) and introduction of Avanti class 221s made redundant by the introduction of class 805s.

The interior of our train (170639) was made of aging low sitting but heavily padded chairs which would be comfortable if there were not such abysmal legroom, especially in airline style seats, which do not allow me to extend my legs.

The Crosscountry 'Turbostar' class 170 fleet make up half of Crosscountry fleet at the time of writing, however many of the ex-Avanti class 221 'Voyagers' are being moved to Crosscountry as they are replaced by bi-mode class 807 and 805 'Evero' IETs. The voyager fleet makes up their long-distance fleet, operating core routes from the south-west, to the midlands, north-east and south Wales while Turbostars operate the slower routes, however, there is likely no increase in frequency on these routes than those operated by Voyagers. The reason for such high frequencies on the long distance routes was the way that Voyagers replaced ex-British Rail stock in the early-2000s, replacing trains that were 7-8 coaches long which operated infrequently with trains 4 coaches long operating at a higher frequency. This led to many cities losing their Crosscountry services and, often, an overall decrease in capacity on some routes-only made worse by Virgin CrossCountry giving some of their trains to Virgin West Coast so London Euston-Holyhead services could be increased without needing to couple a class 57 thunderbird diesel loco to a Pendolino and drag it along the un-electrified north Wales coast.

I was glad for our train to arrive into Derby where I went straight to the southern end of platforms 4 and 5 where I could see an excellent view of the Rail Technical Centre (RTC) and London Road Junction, where trains can either go towards Leicester and Bedford on the midland mainline or the West Coast Mainline.

The station layout at Derby is adapted for internal changes between trains, and less-so to serve the city. This is because the majority of trains operate through platforms 4, 5 and 6, few using 3 and 7, and platforms 1 and 2 (which are closest to the entrance) used least. This is to allow cross-platform changes and because Derby is just north of a large junction, making it less likely for delays to occur if the number of tracks a train crosses is minimised. Due to this, all the freight that I saw was on an outer-most line, where there would be fewer people on the platform. This included a GWR class 165 or 166 'networker turbo', which rarely comes north of the Thames which was there for maintenance, Derby having always had works and being a major train-building location for bombardier, a Canadian-German company.

Our train to Sheffield arrived after a pleasant session of trainspotting which was 222023 on a St Pancras-Sheffield duty, taking us on the picturesque piece of line to its terminus station. Our train was quite empty, my estimate being 30% of seats filled, leading to a very nice atmosphere. This was especially noticeable as East Midlands had refurbished their Meridians, replacing carpets and seat moquettes, replacing the lively Stagecoach red with a neutral grey, making the atmosphere of the carriage rather dull-the opposite of what Stagecoach was aiming for; a very bright, lively ambiance. Perhaps this stemmed from their collaboration with Virgin in the east coast and west coast franchises. The train had a narrower profile than necessary, due to it using the same carriages as class 221 tilting super voyagers, resulting in smaller luggage racks, however, the use of uplighters and grand-looking, comfortable seats (unlike much of the Voyager fleet) did not make the cabin feel cramped. These Meridians have always been kept to a high standard, however, a refurbishment may be bad news disguised as good as this refurbishment could mean that the introduction of the new class 810 'Aurora' IETs with East Midlands could be delayed, meaning the class 222s will not be able to go off-lease; becoming available to such operators as Crosscountry or Open access (operators not running under a franchise) operators such as Grand Central or [Virgin Trains](#)

We arrived into Sheffield and left the station which, unusually, lacks ticket barriers even though almost every train there either begins or terminates at Sheffield. After a quick lunch near the fountains outside the station entrance, it was time for the next leg of our journey to York. From Platform one, we would be catching northern class 150/2, a fleet built by British Rail Engineering Limited York (BREL). As we were on the viaduct, our tickets were checked by the guard, meaning there were at least 2 members of staff for this train, when on Govia Thameslink Railway routes, there would sometimes only be the driver for 12 carriage trains, especially coming out of the pandemic. The reason for 2 members of staff was in part due to the age of the train, perhaps not having CCTV cameras for the driver to see the doors from the cab, giving the guard the job of operating doors and how small some stations were, perhaps people boarding without a ticket and buying from a guard. Northern class 150s have standard class only seating in a 3+2 arrangement, meaning small seats without armrests. The unit we were on had been refurbished to have 2 USB sockets on each wall per row of seats and LED instead of incandescent lights, leading to an unpleasant ambience. Furthermore, this unpleasant ambience may have led to antisocial behaviour as many of the seats had been jumped on so had collapsed, meaning that more difficult and expensive repairs would be required at the reputable Neville Hill depot in Leeds. It would have been more suitable to employ a class 170, 158 or 156 on this diagram, as despite the probably unnecessarily higher speed of 100 and 90 mph than 75 on the 170s and 158s respectively, it would lead to a much more pleasant journey on units that would require minimal extra training and be able to cope with capacity. Similarly, the high-capacity 1/3-2/3 bi-parting doors of the 150s are unnecessary for such a quiet route.

I was excited to arrive in to York after a spell on the busy East Coast Mainline (ECML), one of the railway hubs of Britain and home to the National Railway Museum (which I was unfortunately too late in the day to visit). We were glad to leave the train for a break of about two hours, where we would buy our dinner and have an ice cream near the river Ouse. As we returned to the train station, which was made of a number of grand arches spanning across 11 platforms, I noticed on [Realtime Trains](#) that an HST would be working from Carlisle to St Albans, clearly on a charter. After a brief check on the internet, I found this would be Locomotive Services Limited's Blue Pullman set. The Blue Pullman is based on a luxury dining train operated by BR between 1960 and 1973 aimed at the commuter market, running to Manchester until electrification of the WCML then on the western region, when it was taken out of service due to poor ride quality and superseded by the HST, initially only a stop gap while the [APT](#) was still on the cards for BR at the time.

The Blue Pullman HST paused for a few minutes for a driver change at York before departing, a sight that York rarely sees since LNER's HST farewell tour in 2019 then CrossCountry's withdrawal of HSTs in October 2023.

Our next train would be bound for Sunderland, coming from London under open-access operator Grand Central. Grand Central operates a fleet of class 180 Adelante/Coradia units which have been plagued with reliability issues since their introduction to replace First Great Western HSTs in 2000. To combat these reliability issues, Grand Central has employed 2 class 221 'super voyagers' which run to Bradford from London, while the 180s receive upgrades.

When the train arrived, it was notable how different it was to any other TOC on the ECML, containing at least 4-5 members of staff, possibly because no Grand Central staff are present at the station, meaning the train must be more self-sufficient. As we left, I saw 60103 Flying Scotsman standing outside the NRM, pride of the national collection. The train was packed. We found difficulty finding a seat, eventually having to ask some people to move from our pre-booked seats. The seats were extremely comfortable, very padded, though slightly small, with a nice leather section. Unusually, some of Transport For Wales's mk4 carriage & DVT +class 67 trains have very similar interiors, as Grand Central wanted to operate a service of mk4 carriages and DVTs and class 90

locomotives from London to Blackpool. This was axed at the last minute, after everything had been refurbished and reliveried.

After an early arrival into Eaglescliff, we had a pleasant few minutes to spend waiting on the wide island platform, with a warm breeze blowing across the railway line. Our next, and final train of the day was a Northern refurbished class 158 to Darlington. The class 158 is a diesel multiple unit introduced between 1990 and 1992 by British Rail to cut costs on rural lines. It is known for its reliability and abundance, making it popular with many TOCs.

Fresh from a night of rest, we boarded another class 158 on the line to Bishop Auckland, a number of interesting railway sights on the way there, the first being at the Darlington North Road railway station, the former sight of a railway museum- a class 37 being visible and the new-build P2 steam loco 'Prince of Wales' inside the shed where it was being constructed. Shortly before Newton Aycliffe was an electrified test track and a number of sidings, where Hitachi IETs would be shunted and stored after being built in the attached factory.

The arrival into Shildon came quickly and we had time to explore the sidings and buildings linked to the museum, which included a goods shed and an office. I could see the new hall, which would be opened in a few weeks after I visited, making Shildon the largest undercover collection of historic rail vehicles in Europe. When the doors opened we were welcomed in, I was in awe of the line up in front of me, which included;

- a class 43 HST powercar, withdrawn in 2021-which even had a hand sanitizer dispenser fitted in the cab due to Covid 19
- a class 40 'whistler' diesel-electric loco
- the prototype Deltic
- a Bulleid light pacific
- and a replica of locomotion,
- George Stephenson's loco for the Stockton and Darlington railway.

Behind this row of locomotives was an array of experimental BR designs and luxury carriages. The most foreign and futuristic looking vehicle was the APT-E (experimental), which was a tilting test train powered by gas turbines so it could be used on the Old Dalby test track and was fitted with a plethora of performance-measuring machines. The APT-E held the rail land speed record of 152 mph from 1975-79, when it was surpassed by the APT-P (prototype) at 162 mph.

Another train exhibited was a prototype class 41 HST powercar. This loco was one of two powercars, each at either end of a service train, which were built to trial the design for BR's new diesel high speed train. They were specified to include buffers, meaning that they could be dragged by another loco, but this meant that there was only space for the windscreen to be the width of one seat for the driver, no space for a second man, due to aerodynamics. This caused so much backlash with the trade unions that BR was forced to ditch a buffer beam in favour of a hatch that an emergency coupling could be attached to, forever changing the way that British trains would be designed.

Another notable train was a 'pacer' pre-production test train. The 'pacer' design of train uses a Leyland national bus body on a long-wheel base 4-wheel wagon. This design is unusual due to the unusual, bus-like look and the unpopular undercarriage, leading to a much bumpier and noisier ride than a conventional rail bus, which would normally use 2 4-wheeled articulating bogies to support it. There is a non-operational prototype on display, still in Derby's yellow departmental livery and an operational production example, taken from the hands of Northern Rail, that being the livery it still carries, in 2019 as the first of many class 142s to be preserved.

As Darlington is a centre of early rail innovation, there was an assortment of early steam locomotives from the Rainhill trials. On show were Rocket and Sans Pareil. One of the main reasons that Rocket had an edge over Sans Pareil was due to a different design for steam tubes, using multiple pipes to carry gasses from the firebox to heat the boiler instead of one large tube.

As I left the museum, I looked forward to the day ahead of me, made up of fewer, more scenic journeys, the first of which being on an abundant Northern class 158, returning me to Darlington, where we had a leisurely change to a Crosscountry class 221 heading north, a train designed to tilt to cope with the heavily curving West coast Mainline but never actually tilting due to the marginal differences in journey times; difficulty to measure the entirety of the extensive Crosscountry network's clearances; easier scheduling and interoperability & standard maintenance with the non-tilting class 220.

The voyager family (class 220 voyagers and class 221 super voyagers) were introduced by virgin Crosscountry and Virgin West Coast under operation princess and have not received refurbishment since their entry to service in the early 2000s. This means the, even though the external livery is somewhat fresher, the interior was extremely tired and carry Virgin's unusual moquette of half of the carriage's seats blue and the other red. Crosscountry has become known for its crowded services for a long time and this service was no exception, managing to find one pair of seats beside each other, these being of the airline style. Ironically, fitted in the quiet carriage where we were sat were radios between seats which have been long deactivated due to the advances made in mobile phone technology since 2003. The seats were rather padded but a small, uncomfortable shape and in desperate need of a refresh. As I write, Alstom has recently signed a contract to fully refurbish these units at their Derby Litchurch Lane works.

We had a change of nearly an hour at Newcastle, a station which I was unfamiliar with, where new glass ticket barriers were in use instead of Medium Density fibre as is the standard. I was unsure which direction our train would come from, 2 more Northern class 158s coupled together, utilising their end gangway for passage between units. Our train came from the north end of the station, bound for Carlisle, taking the Tyne Valley line. From a look at realtime trains, the front unit (158784) had not been fitted with USB sockets, one of the small provisions that can be made for today's world without overloading the system, built in the early nineties and not having too invest heavily as they are bound for withdrawal soon.

Unfortunately, the air conditioning in the rear unit had failed and the emergency hopper windows had not been opened, leading to an increasingly hot and stuffy carriage due to the high capacity seating and number of passengers. It took a while to leave the sprawl of Newcastle as we had to negotiate the complex layout of bridges and tracks on either side of the Tyne, as well as local transport interchanges, such as the bus network or unusual metro system using overhead wires at 25 Kilovolts, spanning all the way to the coast at Sunderland, where Grand Central happens to terminate most their services from London.

Our service called at infrequent stations and made a calming, beautiful journey along from Northumberland and through to Cumbria, nearly even entering Scotland. Our train terminated in a bay platform at the WCML station of Carlisle, a particular interest for trainspotters and rail enthusiasts due to the diverse traffic going through it and sidings to the west of the station where a Thunderbird is often stabled.

A Thunderbird is a locomotive (or entire train as sometimes class 755s are used by Greater Anglia) that is kept at strategic point on a line, introduced when trains were fitted more with automatic doors and electric train heat was required to operate these doors, especially as British Rail was moving towards a more specialised system of locos and phasing out their mixed traffic locos. They were used by Greater Anglia and Virgin Trains West coast regularly to take electric trains over non-

electrified routes, such as the Wherry line to Great Yarmouth and the north Wales line to Holyhead. They were also used on unelectrified diversionary routes when a mainline was temporarily closed until the introduction of bi-mode trains, when these complex workings ceased. The locomotive stabled at Carlisle is a class 57/3, which is fitted with an unusual height Dellner coupling which cannot attach to the buffer beam as they do elsewhere in the country but must fold upwards into the nose of the locomotive. It can couple only to class 390 Pendolinos and class 220 and 221 Voyagers and Super Voyagers, so it is used by Avanti West Coast only (I assume that if another TOC has a train that fails, they can use a more standard freight locomotive due to a more standard coupling type or can couple two trains together, which cannot be done with class 390 Pendolinos).

As the overcast afternoon began to cool down, we boarded our final 2 class 158s: a northern service to Leeds along the famously picturesque Settle and Carlisle line. Once more, one unit had a broken air conditioning but the emergency hopper windows had been unlocked, leading to a pleasantly cool train. I could only enjoy myself admiring the Yorkshire countryside; this line is very popular with tourists and has many steam hauled charter trains that traverse it. A few of the outliers of this journey were Dent station, the highest station in Britain; the Ribbleshead viaduct and the Keighley and Worth valley railway, for which there was an interchange at Keighley.

Leeds was a large but easy station to navigate, North-East of a triangle and junction of tracks going towards such hubs as Carnforth; Manchester; Liverpool; Doncaster and York. It is served, in conjunction with York, by LNER's class 91 and mk4 intercity 225 sets, however that is not the haulage we would be travelling on.

The class 91 is an electric locomotive used on the east coast mainline between London, Leeds and York, introduced between 1988 and 1991. It was designed for the ECML, with smaller clearances and space to install tilting apparatus so it could be introduced on the WCML. It was initially used with mk3 coaches and HST powercars for mileage accumulation due to mk4s not being built in time and electrification only being used north of Peterborough as it was expensive to rebuild the Kings Cross roof so there was space for overhead wires. They were built with a specification for cabs at both ends, one flat and one pointed, so they could operate in both directions for freight at night when carriages are being serviced. From this specification, the class 89 was designed by Brush Engineering (instead of GEC like the class 91s) and used for testing, even after class 91 had almost all been secured. This due to BR keeping a good reputation on intercity trains like this and wanting to show that they would try many British manufacturers.

Looking similar to the class 91 was the class 90. With a pointed cab at both ends it was operated in both directions and frequently uncoupled from its coaches and used for freight.

Ironically, when GNER experienced a shortage of electric trains, they brought the class 89 out of preservation and used it on service trains.

Our train was a class 800 bi-mode IET, running on electric only. It was quite crowded, but luckily LNER has a reliable seat reservation system clearly shown on a screen and with a red, orange or green light. The IET family of trains is notorious for their poor build quality, panels often being loose in the vestibules, and uncomfortable nature of standard class seating, seats only comfortable for 20 minute journeys being used on trains that are exclusively used for long distance work.

There is often great variety to be seen passing through Doncaster and our date of travelling was no exception. On display were a number of snowploughs made from redundant locomotive bogies and locomotives such as the class 56 and Anglia thunderbird liveried class 47.

At Newark, a class 57 thunderbird was on standby (however it lacked the cutout in the nose for a drop down Dellner coupler due to the more normal height of ECML train couplings), a Network Rail contract to West Coast railways.

After passing Peterborough's GBRF depot, we arrived in for our last change, a Crosscountry class 170, the same class as our train from Birmingham to Derby. We left Peterborough by looping underneath the ECML and heading out to the fens. The class 170 had similar seats to the super voyager from earlier in the day, showing the legacy left by Virgin, a TOC with more brand image than is seen today. There were 2 class 69s at March which are a locomotive rebuilt from a class 56 used for aggregates and stock moves currently. They are often put in heritage liveries due to the small fleet size and the non-standard nature compared to the bountiful American-built class 66.

When we arrived in to Cambridge, there was something that stood out to me as the Crosscountry crew were changing for the rest of the journey to Stansted airport: the one thing that the railways need is interoperability and spontaneity to adapt to the changing world; route closures and public events. This is something that was in no short supply, but has been reducing ever since, now that operators run on contracts instead of franchises, this kind of spontaneity and extra capacity has been taken by luxury tour operators operating relief services. Once the railways are nationalised again, this problem should die down, but privatisation has left a lasting legacy of change, but not necessarily quality in the way this change was made.

Photos:



Class 700s at
Royston



Declassified rear First Class of a class 700

Graffitied toilet of a class 700

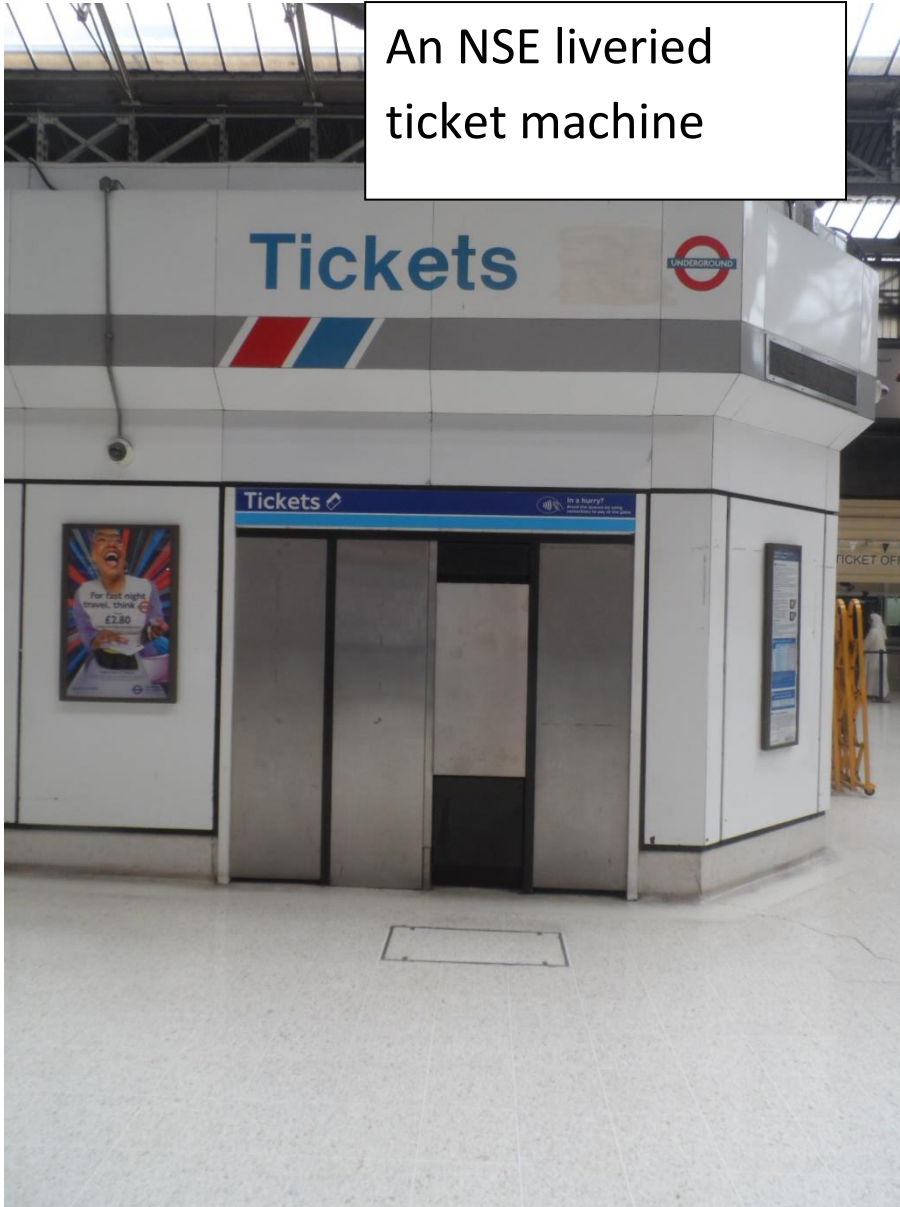


Uncomfortable standard seating of a class 700



Marylebone

An NSE liveried
ticket machine













Chiltern's comfortable, long-term seating



Our trains coupled together, including a class 168 with 125th anniversary of Marylebone decals.



Birmingham Moor Street



New Street







A refurbished East Midlands class 222



A class 195 at Sheffield



A class 222 at Sheffield





A class 158 at Sheffield



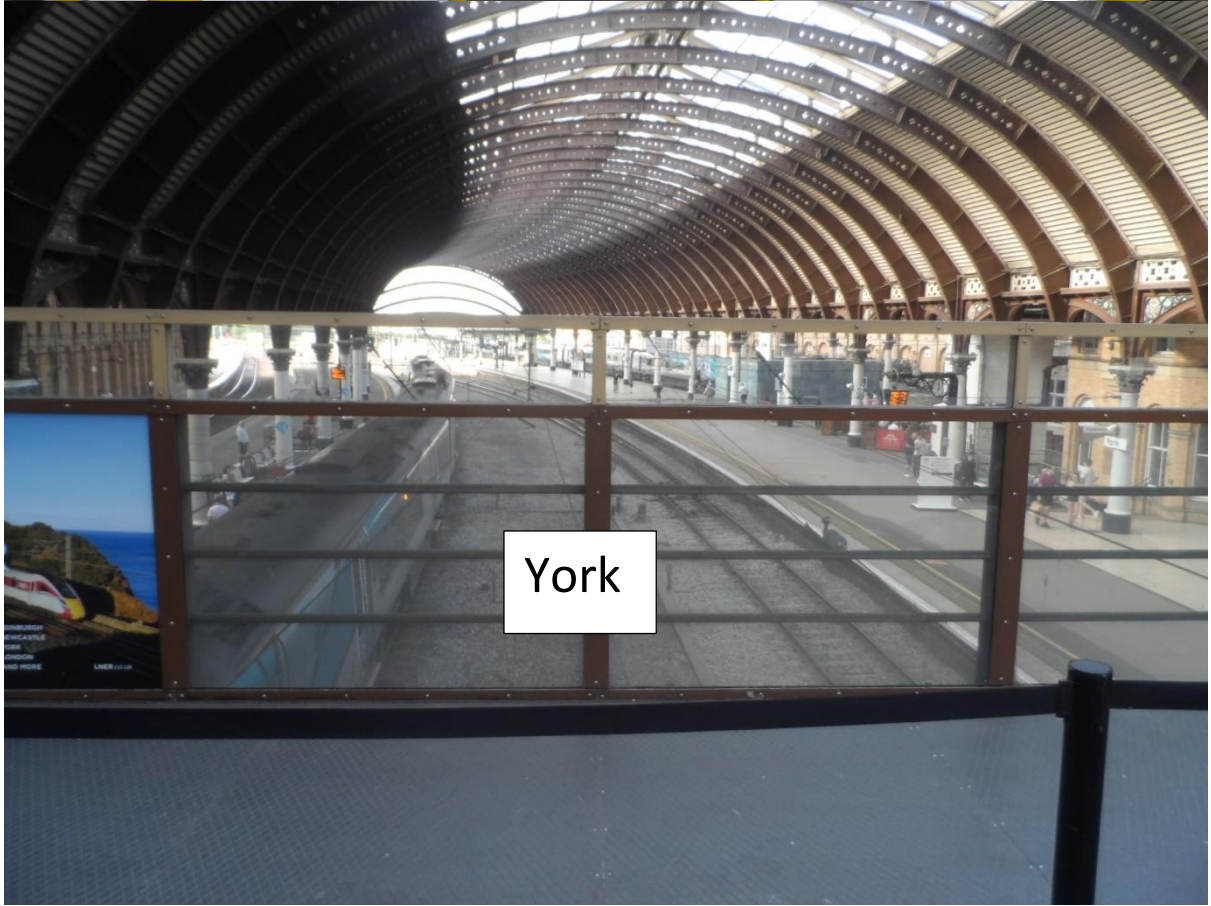






Our class 150 to take us from Sheffield to York





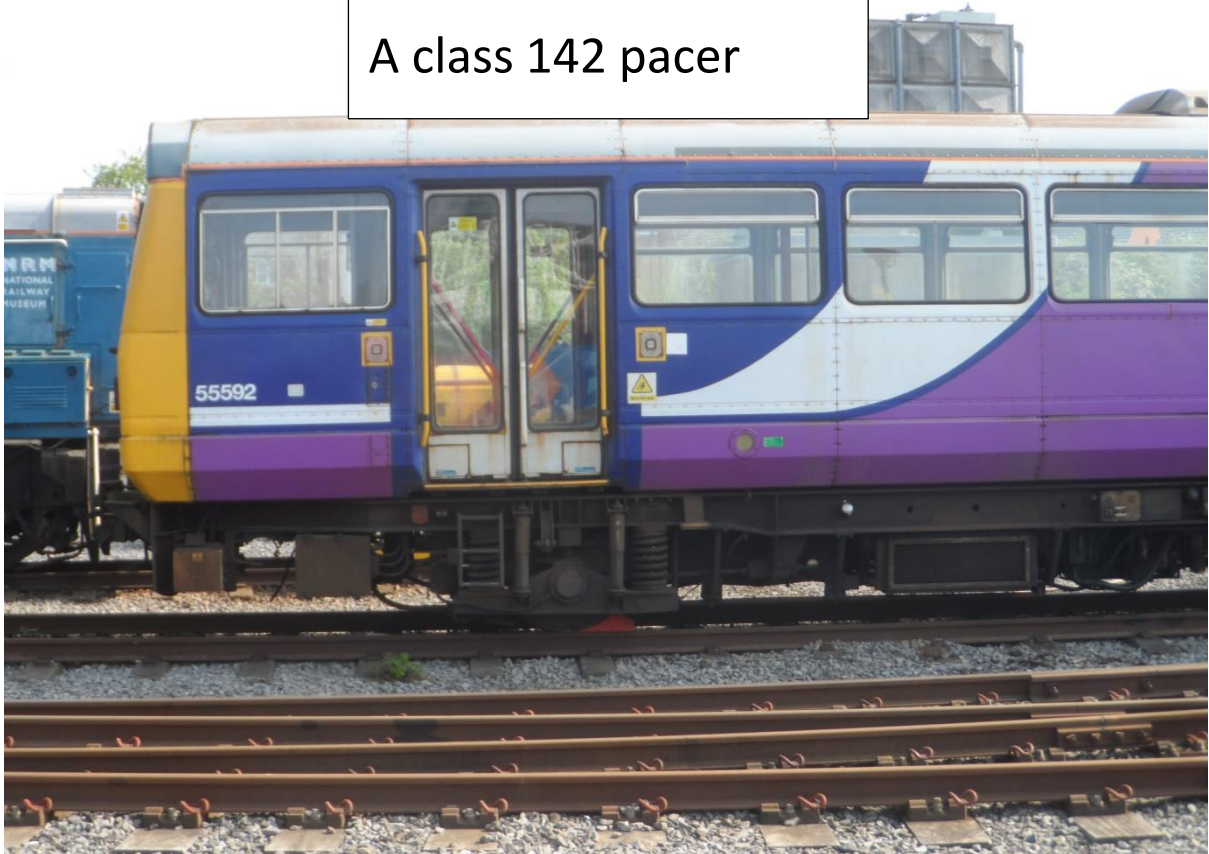
York

A class 66 at Darlington





Locomotion, Shildon
A class 142 pacer



The prototype Deltic

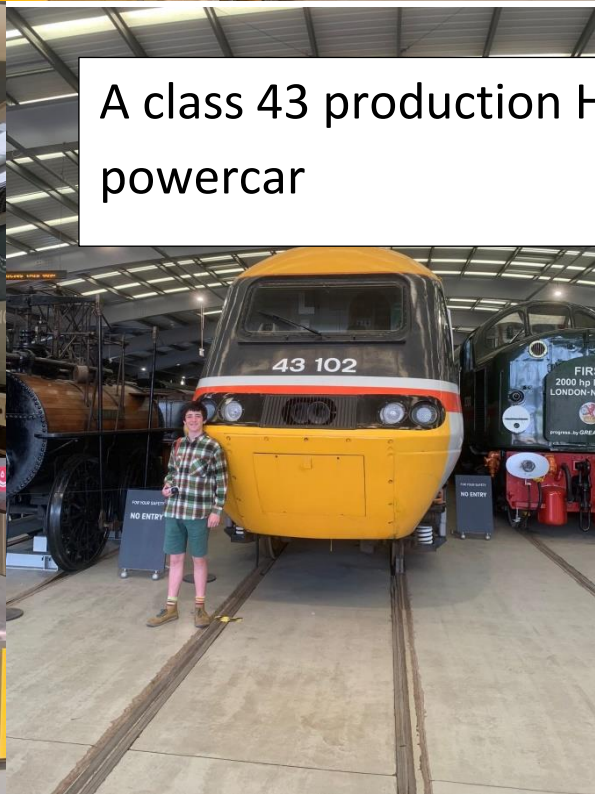
A class 41 prototype HST powercar,
taking its photo with me



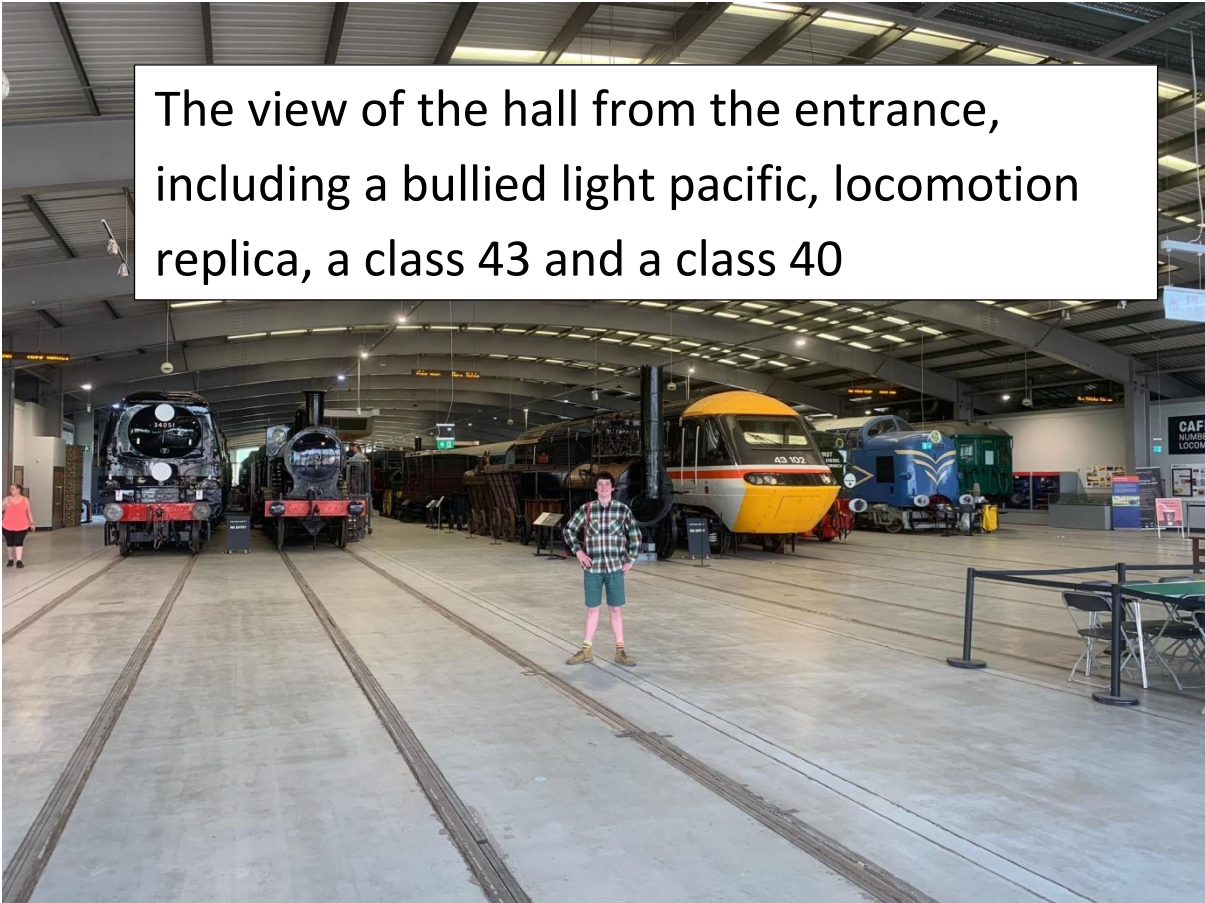
The APT-E



A class 43 production HST
powercar



The view of the hall from the entrance, including a bullied light pacific, locomotion replica, a class 43 and a class 40



A class 43 and class 40



The soul surviving class 71 electric locomotive



A BR prototype railcar using an obvious bus body







A ubiquitous black steam loco













43 102

FOR YOUR SAFETY
NO ENTRY

SAFETY
RY



































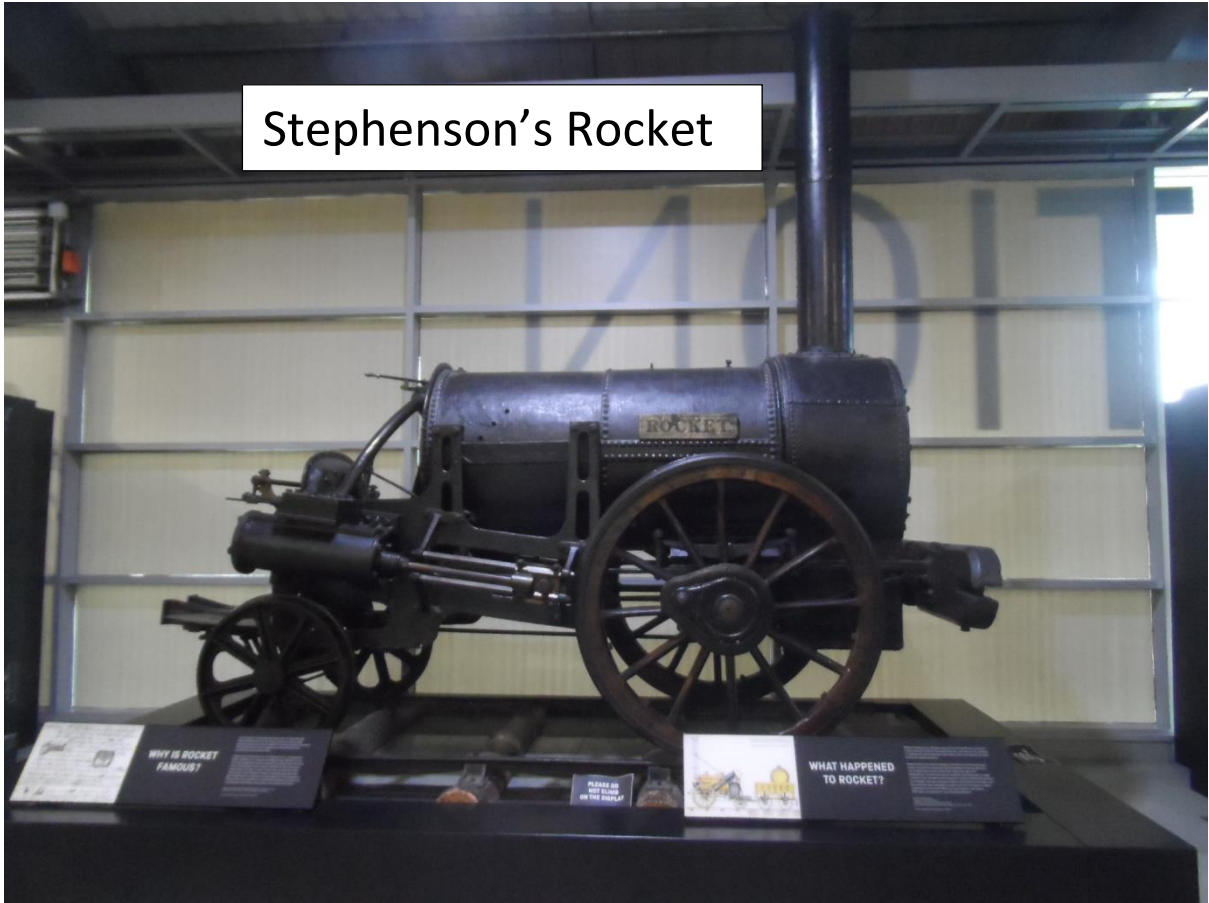








Stephenson's Rocket



Sans Pareil

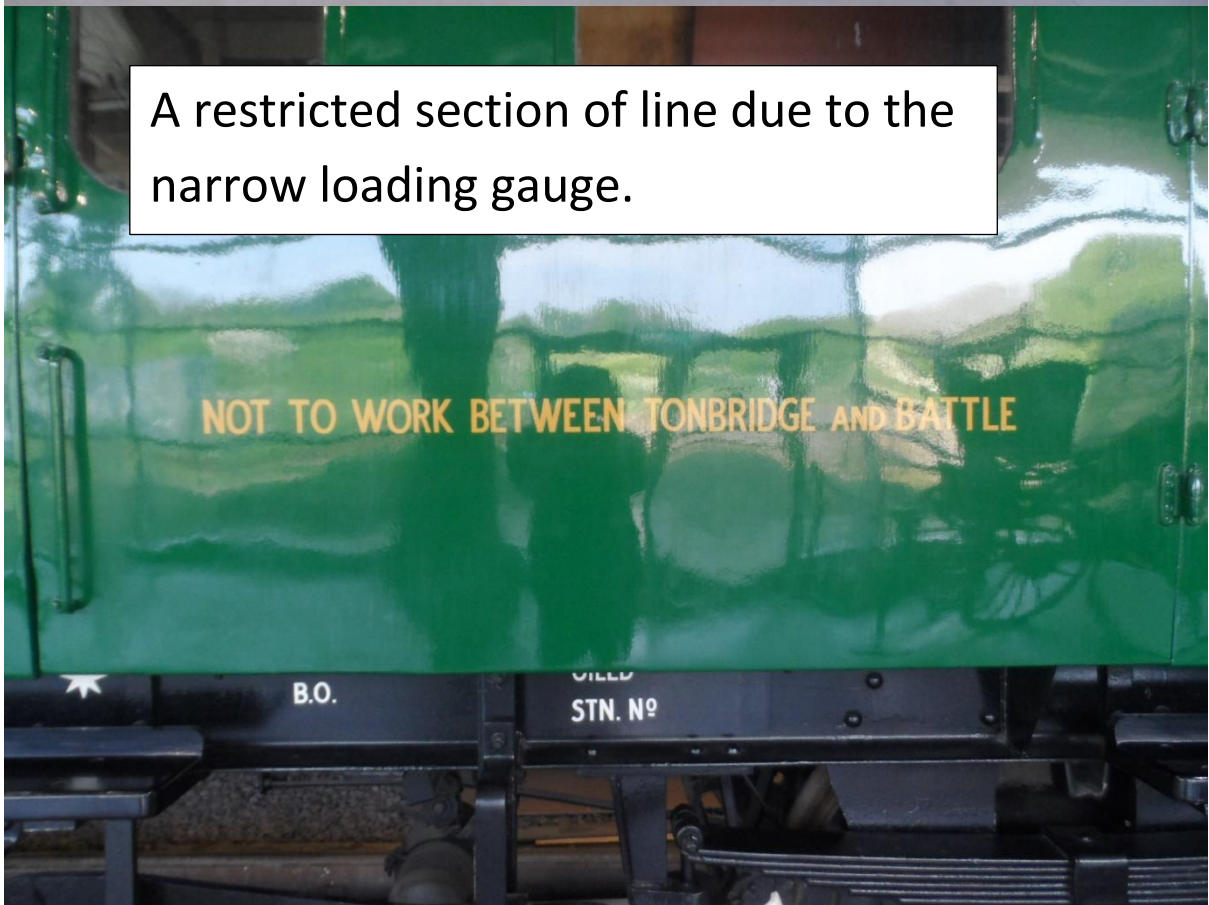




A horse box, formerly a standard feature of the railways



A restricted section of line due to the narrow loading gauge.



A Bullied Pacific or Spam Can due to the distinctive shape which allowed it to be cleaned by automated carriage washers instead of by hand









FOR YOUR SAFETY
NO ENTRY

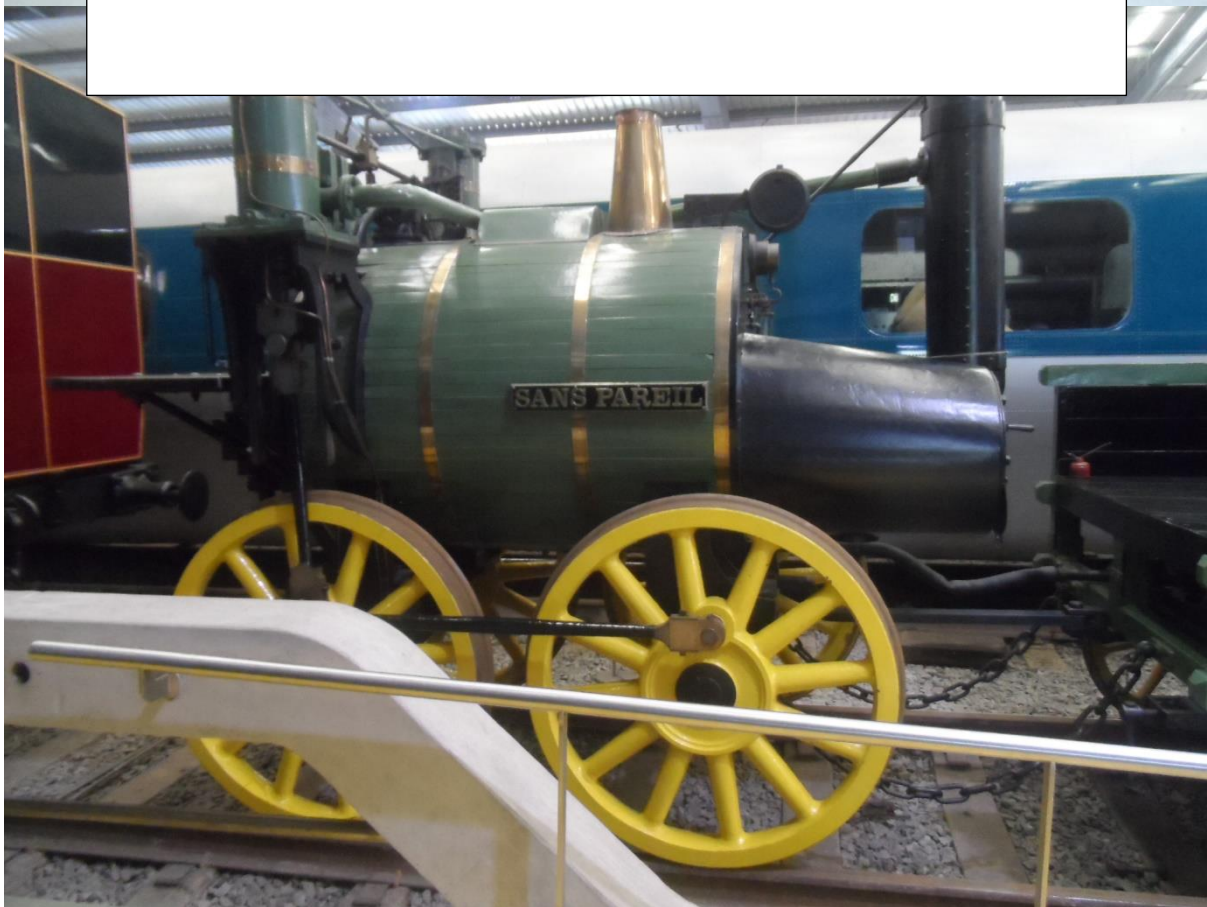








Replicas of Locomotion and Sans Pareil



A mk1 coach in a 1980s
BR intercity livery







The new hall







A former locomotive coaling station



A view from the footbridge at Newcastle



Carlisle's class 57
thunderbird on standby





Class 158s stood on the settle
Carlisle platforms at Carlisle.





Leeds



New street, from street level



A Crosscountry class 170



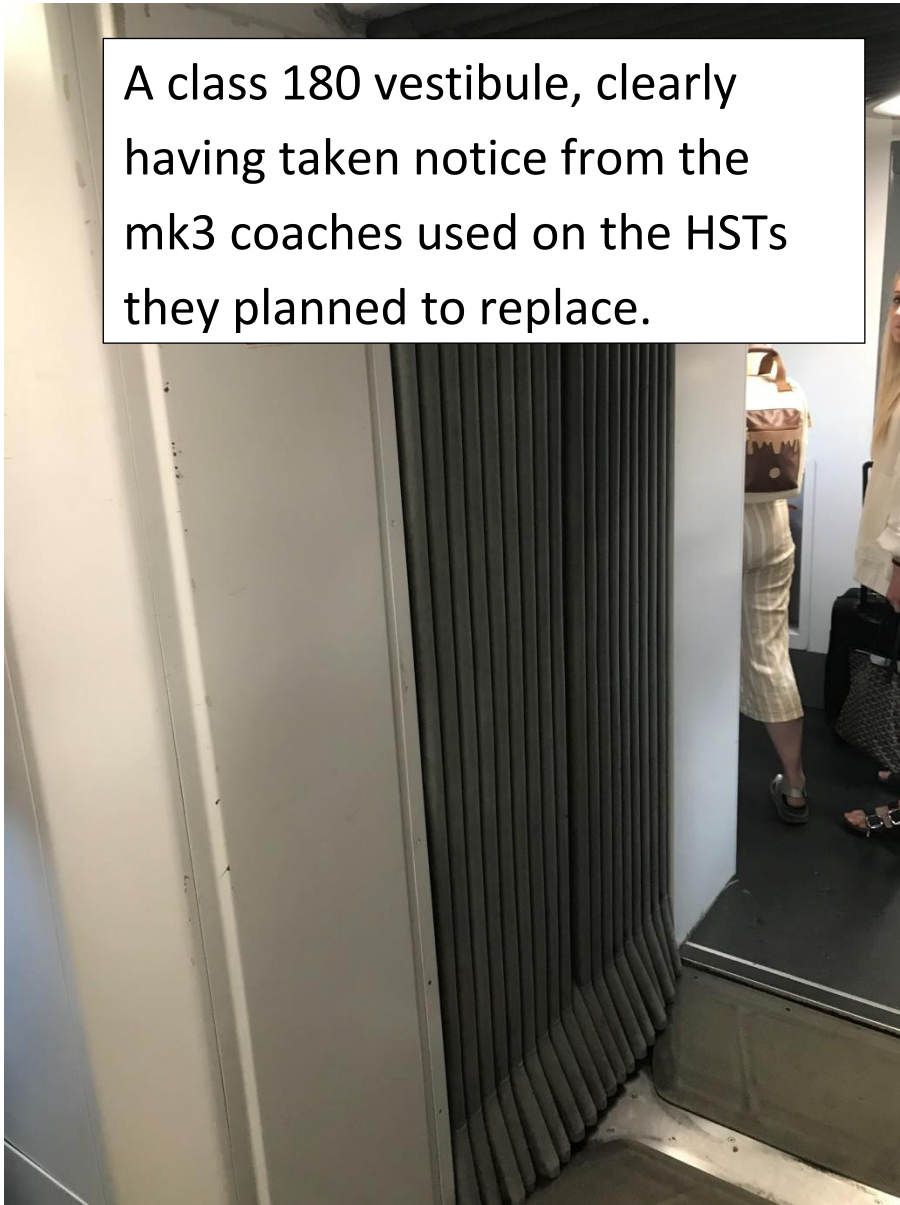
A Northern class 150 at Sheffield



Class 180 seating



A class 180 vestibule, clearly having taken notice from the mk3 coaches used on the HSTs they planned to replace.



Northern Class 158 seating

