

When Was Britains's First Railway?

1560's

Mining carts were used in Cumbrian mines, running on wooden rails steered by a guide pin between the rails. Pushed by hand, later horsedrawn around 1600's miners would often take a ride on them.

1725 - Tanfield Railway

The Tanfield Railway was a horse drawn colliery waggonway, used to transport coal. The line is now preserved and runs as a heritage railway.

1798 - The Lakelock Railway

Arguably the first actual public railway by three years, a 3 mile long horse drawn narrow guae railway in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, and carried coal and served coal pits around the Aire & Calder Navigation.

1801 - Puffing Devil Locomotive

Richard Trevithick built steam locomotive *Puffing Devil* and demonstrates it carrying passengers in the village of Beacon.

1804 - Pen-y-Darren Locomotive

Trevithick also built a high pressure steam engine to drive a hammer at the Pen-y-Darren Ironworks at Merthyr Tydfil, and then mounted it onto wheels and turned it into a locomotive

1802 - Surrey Iron Railway

The Surrey Iron Railway, often credited as the first public railway was a horse-drawn plateway between Wandsworth Croydon and Mitcham used to transport coal, corn and seeds.

1807 - Swansea & Mumbles

The Swansea & Mumbles railway opened with the world's first passenger railway service, a horse-drawn service on rails again, but with fare paying passengers.

1808 - Catch Me Who Can

A visitor attraction that lasted just a few weeks - it ran in a circle so didn't passengers anywhere put people did pay so it was the first locomotive in the world to haul fare paying passengers. It was the fourth and last steam locomotive created by Richard Trevithick.

1812 - Kilmarnick & Troon

The Kilmarnock & Troon railway opened in Ayrshire, designed to carry coal but worked with tolls so anyone could pay - including passengers - to ride it, a horse-drawn carriage.

1812 - Middleton Railway

The Middleton Railway in Leeds had colliery locomotives that transported coal, part of the industrial revolution - and had the first professional train driver, James Hewitt. It had been the first railway authorised by an act of parliament in **1758**.

1825 - Stockton & Darlington

The Stockton and Darlington Railway opened on the 27th September 1825 and is often seen as Britain's first railway because it was the first to carry both passengers and freight using steam locomotives on a public line. Engineered by George Stephenson, it marked the beginning of the modern railway.

1828 - Bolton & Leigh Railway

The Bolton & Leigh was first public railway in Lancashire. It opened for goods in August 1828, and passengers from 1831 onwards. The railway operated independently until 1845 when it became part of the Grand Junction Railway.

1829 - Rainhill Trials

This historic competition was held in October 1829, Liverpool and determined the best locomotive design for the new Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The trials tested the speed, power and reliability, of various steam locomotives over a set course, and was won by George Stephenson's *Rocket*

1830 - Liverpool & Manchester

The Liverpool and Manchester was the world's first fully operational railway between towns/cities powered entirely by steam locomotives. It featured the first timetable, signal systems, and dedicated passenger services.

1830 - Canterbury & Whitstable

Nicknamed 'Crab and Winkle', the first to offer regular passengers services with season tickets, using a steam locomotive. It was combination of stationary engines and cable hauled systems.

1837 - London & Birmingham Railway

Opened in stages between 1837 and 1838, was the first railway line to connect London with a major industrial city. Engineered by Robert Stephenson it featured tunnels, embankments, and forms what it the West Coast Mainline today. It helped pave the way for further expansion of the railway network.