

Yorkshire Jubilee steam locomotive returns to rails after 25 years

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The Bahamas 45596, first built in 1934, has been commissioned back into service after a £1million restoration made possible thanks to National Lottery players.

Often referred to as the Yorkshire Jubilee, the Bahamas 45596 has recently benefited from a five-year volunteer-led restoration programme. Until February 2019, it had not hauled a train on the mainline for 25 years.

Built by the London Midland & Scottish Railway Company, this historic engine was one of several engines named after Commonwealth outposts. It was the very last steam train used by British Rail in attempts to improve steam locomotive performance before they were abolished in 1968.

The Bahamas 45596 last ran on the national network in 1994. Its first public outing following major restoration came last month when it hauled two trains from Oxenhope to Carlisle and back over the Settle & Carlisle Railway.

The launch at Ingrow on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway was attended by Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail, as well as *The Railway Magazine*, National Lottery Heritage Fund, local young students and members of the community.

Saved by volunteers

The Bahamas 45596 has been in the care of volunteer group the Bahamas Locomotive Society (BLS) since 1967. The BLS was one of the first community groups formed to save, restore and operate steam locomotives on main lines.

The National Lottery-funded project also included the launch of a new Learning Coach based at Ingrow in West Yorkshire. The coach, built in 1924, was derelict for many years. It has been restored to offer classroom facilities as well as showing some compartments in their original condition.

A new sign on the steam locomotive

David Renwick, Head of The National Lottery Heritage Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “We are delighted to see this magnificent engine back on the rails again thanks to money raised by National Lottery players and such a dedicated and passionate group of volunteers.

"I'm also excited that the launch of the fantastic Learning Coach will mean that visitors of all ages can now experience the wonders of the steam age for themselves.”



Putting final touches to the locomotive

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway is a five-mile restored branch line running from Keighley to Oxenhope in Yorkshire.

British Rail closed the line in 1962 but it was re-opened by volunteers in 1968. It is the only complete preserved standard gauge branch line anywhere in the world.

The railway was the location for the 1970s film *The Railway Children*.