

2025 Anniversaries

1625 400th Anniversary

1625 -- - John Norden's *An Intended Guide for English Travellers*, containing road distance tables, is published.

1725 300th Anniversary

1725 Feb 26 Birth of Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot, pioneer of steam traction (Void-Vacon, France) (d. 1804).

1725–6 -- - Causey Arch built in Co. Durham.

1775 250th Anniversary

1775 Apr - Trent & Mersey Canal opens Harecastle Tunnel (2880 yds/2630 m; James Brindley and Hugh Henshall, engineers).

1775 May 9 Chesterfield Canal opens Norwood Tunnel (2884 yds/2637 m; James Brindley and Hugh Henshall, engineers).

1775 -- - Tindale Fell waggonway (wooden) opens.

1825 200th Anniversary

1825 Jan 2 Josiah Macy's American square-rigged composite liner *Diamond*, bound from New York for Liverpool, strikes Sarn Badrig in Cardigan Bay and sinks with fatalities.

1825 Jan 26 Birth of Henry Orlando Bridgeman, railway civil engineer (Blymhill, Staffs) (d. 1879).

1825 Mar 2 Thames Tunnel first brick laid officially by M.I. Brunel, engineer.

1825 Mar 5 Grosvenor Canal opens in London.

1825 Mar 31 Bolton & Leigh Rly authorised,

1825 Apr 19 Birth of William Frederick Gooch, locomotive engineer (Bedlington) (d. 1915).

1825 May 2 Cromford & High Peak Rly authorised.

1825 Jun 1 Liverpool & Manchester Rly Bill defeated in Parliament. On Jul 1, George Rennie is appointed to replace George Stephenson as engineer.

1825 Jun 10 Canterbury & Whitstable Rly (surveyed by William James) and Duffryn, Llynvi & Porthcawl Rly authorised.

1825 Jun 15 New London Bridge foundation stone laid officially.

1825 Jun 25 Cheshunt monorail opens.

1825 Sep 15 First railway locomotive despatched from Robert Stephenson & Co, in Newcastle, Stockton & Darlington Rly no. 1, placed on rails and steamed at Heighington Lane.

1825 Sep 27 Stockton & Darlington Rly opens.

1825 Oct 10 Swanscombe cement works railway authorised by lease.

1825 Oct 21 PS *Comet* sinks in collision with PS *Ayr* off Gourock (62 killed).

1825 Oct 26 Erie Canal completed in North America.

1825 Oct ? Steamer introduced on Penzance–Scilly packet service, *Cherub*.

1825 Nov 1 George Thompson establishes the Aberdeen Line of shipping to the Empire.

1825 end ?? Steam packet *Saint Pierre* introduced on New Passage ferry, the first steamship on a Lower Severn passage and the first built at Newport.

1825 -- - Redruth & Chasewater Rly part opened during year.

1825 -- - First short-stage coaches link the suburbs with central London. Goldsworthy Gurney drives his first (walking) steam carriage up Windmill Hill, Enfield.

- 1825 -- - Paddle steamers introduced on Portpatrick–Donaghadee packet service (*Dasher* and *Arrow*).
- 1825 -- - Portmadoc's first public wharves built.
- 1825 -- - Rinns of Islay lighthouse built on Orsay (Inner Hebrides) (Robert Stevenson, engineer).
- 1850 175th Anniversary**
- 1850 Jan 30 Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Rly begins Granton–Burntisland train ferry service across Firth of Forth using PS *Leviathan*.
- 1850 Mar 14 GWR absorbs Wilts, Somerset & Weymouth Rly.
- 1850 Mar 18 First regular passenger train over Britannia Bridge (up line tube; down line Oct 19), completing Chester & Holyhead Rly.
- 1850 Mar 30 c. 11.00pm City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. RMS *Royal Adelaide* on passage from Cork to London (via Plymouth) is wrecked on Tongue Sands off Margate with the loss of all onboard (250+ killed).
- 1850 Apr 1 Aberdeen Rly opens to Aberdeen (Ferryhill) giving a through route from London Euston (via Perth); extended Aug 2 to Guild Street.
- 1850 Apr 15 Iron paddle steamer ss *City of Glasgow* (launched on Feb 28 February by Tod & Macgregor of Partick) makes her maiden voyage as the first steamer on the Glasgow–New York route.
- 1850 May 1 Buckinghamshire Rly opens Bletchley–Banbury, worked by L&NWR.
- 1850 Jun 6 *Three Bells*, (probably) the first iron clipper, is launched by Denny, Dumbarton.
- 1850 Jun 18 PS *Orion* sinks off Portpatrick through the negligence of her master (50 killed).
- 1850 Jun 19 South Wales Rly opens Chepstow–Swansea to public on broad gauge (I.K. Brunel, engineer; official opening Jun 18).
- 1850 Jun 21 Bolton, Blackburn, Clitheroe & West Yorkshire Rly opens Blackburn–Chatburn.
- 1850 Jun 22 East Lancashire Rly blockades Daisyfield Junction to prevent Lancashire & Yorkshire Rly trains entering its Blackburn station.
- 1850 Jun 26 Birth of Thomas Rotherham, Western Australian Government Rlys CME (York) (d. 1903).
- 1850 Jul 1 L&SWR locomotive engineer Joseph H. Beattie succeeds John V. Gooch.
- 1850 Jul 7 Death of Timothy Hackworth, locomotive builder (Shildon) (b. 1786).
- 1850 Jul 15 Tyne Improvement Commission created by Act to manage the tidal river.
- 1850 Aug by Forth & Clyde Canal opens Monkland Canal Blackhill incline.
- 1850 Aug 7 GNR opens London (Maiden Lane)–Peterborough, with distant signals throughout.
- 1850 Aug 14 Abandonment of Railways Act provides for dissolution of a railway company which has not opened.
- 1850 Aug 28 First Dover–Calais submarine telegraph cable laid; it is unsuccessful.
- 1850 Aug 29 Royal Border Bridge at Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle Central station opened officially by Queen Victoria.
- 1850 Aug 29 City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. steamer service on River Shannon above Limerick transferred to Great Southern & Western Rly. Improved navigation of Shannon throughout Killaloe–Lough Key is completed this year.
- 1850 Sep 2 GWR opens Oxford (Millstream Junction)–Banbury on broad gauge.
- 1850 Sep 24 Cross Keys Bridge Co. opens new iron bridge over Nene Outfall under powers of Nene Improvement Act 1848 (Robert Stephenson, engineer).
- 1850 Sep 26 East & West India Docks & Birmingham Junction Rly opens first section Islington–Bow with passenger service to Fenchurch Street (Dec 7 extended to Hampstead Road).

- 1850 Oct 7 GWR opens Westbury–Frome.
- 1850 Oct 19 SER Joiner Street bridge collapse: Warren truss girder at London Bridge station fails.
- 1850 Oct 28 Glasgow & South Western Rly formed by Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock & Ayrshire Rly taking over Glasgow, Dumfries & Carlisle Rly; opens Gretna–Glasgow.
- 1850 Nov 19 Emigrant barque *Edmond* sinks off Kilkee (98 killed).
- 1850 Dec 3 *Oriental* arrives in West India Docks, the first American clipper to enter the Thames and the first non-British ship to carry Chinese tea to England.
- 1850 Dec 17 Inman Line (Liverpool and Philadelphia Steamship Company) begins operation when new iron paddle steamer *PS City of Glasgow* puts out from Liverpool for Philadelphia.
- 1850 Dec - Last (naval) packet from Falmouth sails, to South America (returning 30 Apr 1851); on 9 Jan 1851 the first Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. ship on the South American contract, *PS Teviot*, will sail from Southampton for Rio de Janeiro.

1875 Sesquicentenary

- 1875 Jan 1 Midland Rly abolishes 2nd class, leaving 1st and 3rd class, the latter upgraded to former 2nd class level; 1st class fares reduced to former 2nd class (1½d/mile); other companies begin to follow suit this year.
- 1875 Jan 1 Northern Lighthouse Board's Chicken Rock lighthouse (Isle of Man) first illuminated.
- 1875 Jan 18 NLR suburban passenger workings over GNR begin experimentally (full timetable Feb 1).
- 1875 Apr 13 Alexandra (Newport & South Wales) Docks & Rly opens.
- 1875 May 7 German liner *ss Schiller* wrecked off Scilly (311 killed).
- 1875 May 24 Ravensglass & Eskdale Rly opens to Boot for freight on 3 ft (0.91 m) gauge.
- 1875 Jun 1 Bristol & Exeter Rly (B&ER) completes installation of mixed gauge Bristol–Taunton.
- 1875 Jun 2 Gorseddau Junction & Portmadoc Rly opens on 2 ft (60 cm gauge) to minerals.
- 1875 Jun 4 Locomotive Manufacturers Association formed.
- 1875 Jun 7 From this date to the end of the year, the GWR's only pure broad gauge line is the Faringdon branch (8 miles (13 km)).
- 1875 Jun - Upper Avon Navigation abandoned by GWR.
- 1875 Jul 6 South Cliff Tramway Co., Scarborough, opens the first passenger funicular (water balance).
- 1875 Jul 25 Stoomvaart Maatschappij Zeeland makes first public sailing on Vlissingen (Flushing)–Sheerness passage (English port changed to Queenborough 1876).
- 1875 Jul 26 Weaver Navigation Trustees open Anderton boat lift officially (Edward Leader Williams and Edwin Clark, engineers).
- 1875 Jul 31 Public Health Act places highway responsibilities on Urban and Rural District Councils.
- 1875 Aug 2/3 Midland Rly opens Settle & Carlisle line to freight.
- 1875 Aug 5 English Channel Steamship Co.'s twin-hulled *PS Castalia* enters regular service on the Dover–Calais crossing.
- 1875 Sep 1 Adur Navigation (Baybridge Canal) closed.
- 1875 Sep 26 Birth of Eric Geddes, first Minister of Transport (British India) (d. 1937).
- 1875 Sep 27 Railway jubilee at Darlington.
- 1875 Oct 30 James Laing launches the largest and last composite clipper ship, *Torrens*, at Sunderland for H. R. Angel. On Dec 12 she begins her maiden voyage to Port Adelaide.

- 1875 Nov 1 L&SWR and Midland Rly agree to lease Somerset & Dorset Rly jointly (confirmed by Act Jul 1876).
- 1875 Nov 1 LB&SCR introduces Pullman cars on London (Victoria)–Brighton service.
- 1875 Nov 15 North Staffordshire Rly opens last section of Loop Line, Goldenhill–Kidsgrave.
- 1875 Nov 15–18 B&ER converts Cheddar Valley line to standard gauge.
- 1875 Nov 26 *The Times* reveals that Isma'il Pasha has sold Egypt's 44% share in the Suez Canal to Britain in a deal secured by Benjamin Disraeli without the prior sanction of Parliament and financed by Rothschilds.
- 1875 -- - LB&SCR introduces electrical passenger communication system.

1900 125th Anniversary

- 1900 Jan 8 Gloucestershire County Council assumes management of Thames & Severn Canal (under warrant of abandonment from former proprietors, confirmed by Act 2 Jul 1901).
- 1900 Feb 26 City & South London Rly opens Borough–Moorgate to passengers, replacing King William Street terminal. Extended Jun 3 Stockwell–Clapham Common.
- 1900 Mar 17 GER introduces first *Claud Hamilton* 4-4-0 locomotive from its Stratford Works.
- 1900 May 10 Death of Robert Jacomb-Hood, LB&SCR civil engineer (Tunbridge Wells) (b. 1822).
- 1900 May 21 District Rly begins public experimental electric service Earl's Court–High Street Kensington.
- 1900 May 24 Nottingham Victoria joint station opens.
- 1900 May 28 Death of Sir George Grove, civil engineer and music and biblical scholar (Sydenham) (b. 1820).
- 1900 May 30 Sheffield District Rly (leased by Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Rly) opens to passengers
- 1900 Jun 6 Butterley Tunnel collapse due to mining subsidence, splitting Cromford Canal (Midland Rly) in two.
- 1900 Jun 16 GWR Slough accident: Paddington–Falmouth express collides with Windsor local following signals passed at danger (5 killed).
- 1900 Jun 30 Swansea Tramways begin electric operation, the first electric street trams in Wales.
- 1900 Jun - GPO completes new sorting office ("Parcels Office") at Mount Pleasant, London.
- 1900 Jul 1 SECR Tattenham Corner branch opens Kingswood–Tadworth.
- 1900 Jul 10 GJC Foxton inclined plane opened.
- 1900 Jul 28 London County Council opens new Archway road bridge (steel arch; Alexander Binnie, engineer).
- 1900 Jul 30 Central London Rly (electric Tube) opens to the public Shepherd's Bush–Bank (officially Jun 27).
- 1900 Jul 30 Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act (*An Act for the Better Prevention of Accidents on Railways*) empowers Board of Trade to make rules for reduction of accidents to footplatemen, shunters and permanent way staff (first made 1902).
- 1900 Aug 1 East Coast railways introduce dining cars and corridor coaches on 'Flying Scotsman', eliminating lunch stop at York.
- 1900 Aug 6 Great Southern & Western Rly absorbs Waterford, Limerick & Western Rly.
- 1900 Sep 26 London Underground end-on collision between London Bridge and Bank following signal passed at danger.
- 1900 Sep 28 C.T. Yerkes becomes chairman of Charing Cross, Euston & Hampstead Rly.
- 1900 Oct 1 GWR opens Patney–Westbury to passengers (Jul to goods).

- 1900 Oct 1 GWR and L&SWR open Easton & Church Hope Rly to freight; also Castleton Tramway.
- 1900 Oct 1 L&NWR opens Heckmondwike (Spen Valley) Junction–Farnley Junction to passengers (Jul to goods).
- 1900 Oct 24 Richard Bell becomes the first wages grade railwayman elected MP (Derby).
- 1900 Oct 29 Cork, Blackrock & Passage Rly begins operation on 3 ft (0.91 m) gauge following conversion from Irish standard.
- 1900 Nov 8 Automobile Club begins 4-day trial of electric cars at Chislehurst.
- 1900 -- - Metropolitan Rly Surplus Lands Committee begins development of Cecil Park, Pinner.
- 1900 -- - Riddelsdell Brothers set up a garage at Boxford, Suffolk, which after a century will be the oldest working garage in Europe.

1925 Centenary

- 1925 Jan 1 Great Southern Rly amalgamates with Dublin & South Eastern Rly and absorbs all other railways wholly within Irish Free State to form Great Southern Rlys.
- 1925 Jan 30 Londonderry & Lough Swilly Rly Owencarrow Viaduct disaster: derailment and collapse caused by high winds (4 killed).
- 1925 Feb 22 de Havilland DH.60 (Cirrus) Moth light biplane first flies, G-EBKT by Geoffrey de Havilland from makers' Stag Lane aerodrome, Edgware.
- 1925 Mar 28 Last motor race on public roads in the UK.
- 1925 Apr 7 Ashover Light Rly opens to passengers on 60 cm gauge.
- 1925 May 9 British Empire Exhibition opens for second and final season at Wembley. GWR 4-6-0 4079 *Pendennis Castle* is among the additions to the locomotive exhibits.
- 1925 May 13 GWR opens Wombourn branch.
- 1925 May 26 Commercial Cars Ltd enters liquidation for second time; assets to Humber Ltd as Commer Cars.
- 1925 May 29 Death of James Holden, GER locomotive superintendent (Bath) (b. 1837).
- 1925 May 30 Great West Road in Brentford/Hounslow officially opened.
- 1925 Jun 10 Dibbles Bridge accident: tour coach runs away following brake failure and falls off bridge near Hebden, North Yorkshire (7 killed).
- 1925 Jul 1–3 Stockton & Darlington Rly centenary celebrations.
- 1925 Jul 12 SR electrifies extensive parts of its South Eastern section London suburban lines using 3rd rail DC.
- 1925 Jul 20 SR opens Totton, Hythe & Fawley Light Rly to oil traffic
- 1925 Jul 27 SR opens North Devon & Cornwall Junction Rly (Torrington– Halwill Junction, part converted from 3 ft gauge; Col. Holman F. Stephens, engineer).
- 1925 Jul 27 BBC Daventry transmitting station (5XX) begins operation, the world's first longwave broadcast radio transmitter, taking over from its Chelmsford station.
- 1925 Jul c. Northern Lighthouse Board's Brough of Birsay light completed (David A. Stevenson, engineer).
- 1925 Aug 11 Railway common user of wagons extended to cattle wagons (except GWR).
- 1925 Sep 21 (wef) GWR withdraws Hallatrow–Limpley Stoke passenger service.
- 1925 Oct 2 First top-covered double-deck buses in London introduced.
- 1925 Oct 2 John Logie Baird transmits the first television pictures.
- 1925 Oct - Sir Henry Fowler succeeds George Hughes as LMS CME.
- 1925 Nov 2 Watford Joint Rly Committee (Metropolitan/LNER) opens Moor Park–Watford.

- 1925 Nov 16 Vauxhall Motors (Luton) purchased by General Motors (US).
- 1925 Nov 27 Wincanton Transport & Engineering formed as road haulage subsidiary of West Surrey Central Dairy.
- 1925 Dec - Last 0-4-0 tender locomotive withdrawn, LNER (ex NBR) class Y10 no. 1011.
- 1925 Dec - Railway Inspectorate issues revised requirements for passenger lines. Distant signals to be yellow with black chevrons; limit for mechanical operation of points extended to 350 yds (320 m).

For 75th (1950), 50th (1975) and 25th (2000) anniversaries, go to the RCHS Chronology of Modern Transport (1945–2015) which you can find on the Modern Transport tab under Special Interest Groups.