

ENJOYING YORKSHIRE ON THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS RAILWAY



The North Yorkshire Moors Railway invites travelers, film tourists and railway enthusiasts on a journey through Yorkshire. 145 years old iron bridge to be reopened in March.

The sky was robin's egg blue and there was a gentle, sweet-smelling breeze on the day I took the 840 Coastliner bus from York to Pickering, home of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. **The famous train, its coaches lined with lustrous paneling, has been featured in A & E's (USA) Poirot and Sherlock Holmes series, and one of its stations, Goathland, served as "Hogsmeade" in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone and "Aidensfield" in the English TV Heartbeat series.** I love taking this rail journey, which crosses beautiful moor country dotted with forest parks, old iron forges and ancient stone monuments before entering a long tunnel near the final stop at Grosmont.

In 1831 George Stephenson, regarded as the "father of the railway", was commissioned to design the route which connected Pickering with Whitby. When time came to lay track on the mile-long incline between Beck Hole and Goathland no funds were available to build a bridge over Fen Bog, and a causeway still in use today was fabricated out of brushwood, timber and sheepskins. In 1965 the line was discontinued and the Pickering-Grosmont segment was taken over privately in 1968. Locals still use the train to get from village to village, there is seasonal service to Whitby and along the Esk Valley line, and reservations for the weekend dining service are often made weeks in advance. Over the winter the 145 year old wrought iron bridge between Grosmont and Goathland was replaced (during one of the worst January snow storms in memory), and **the railway will celebrate its Grand Reopening on March 27-28.**

The long Monday ticket queue was made up largely of warmly dressed hikers with their dogs. The moor scenery was at its best that day. Whole hillsides were covered with purple heather and I watched goats trudge their way up to the top of craggy hills. Soon the conductor for the day sat down beside me while the service trolley, loaded with coffee, soft drinks and snacks, was wheeled through the coach. He is a fount of information on NYMR. At Goathland locals were drinking coffee and reading newspapers outside the Warehouse Tea Room, quite oblivious to our stopping.

Grosmont, a quaint-looking, picket-fenced village with tea room and souvenir shops, is where the magnificently-restored Pullman coaches used for elegant weekend dining, Murder Mystery and other special events are parked. It is also home to the huge train works that keep the NYMR operating three times a day, seven days a week - if you want to know how difficult it is to keep trains in good running condition in unpredictable Yorkshire weather, take a long look at the old battered, rusty railway stock you see parked on the return journey.

The RVs and trailers parked outside of town belong to volunteer workers who stay here for weeks at a time. If you are taking the return train right back you have twenty minutes to walk the lengthy platform and enjoy the picture-postcard view before climbing back on board for the excruciatingly slow crawl up the steep 3.2 grade, where after you fly down to Pickering. (Train ride only: Adult 15-20£ Child 7.50-12£; Dining Events: Adult 45-62£ Child 33.50-50£. From York to Pickering it is 25 miles; Nymr.co.uk)

Right behind the York Railway and Bus Station, just outside the medieval city walls, sits

the British Rail Museum (BRM), the largest railway museum in the world. The wealth of its exhibits is staggering and you should plan on spending a half-day there; free, with two on-site eateries. Note: the York Observation Wheel is no longer in operation. Nrm.org.uk.

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