



Press release

Train World opens to the general public on 25 September 2015

Brussels, 21 September 2015 – The long-awaited railway museum in Schaarbeek will officially open on 24 September 2015 in the presence of King Philippe of Belgium. For the general public, who can discover Train World from 25 September onwards, the museum offers a spectacular panorama of Belgium's history as a pioneer of railways on the European continent and a fascinating tale of the role of railways today and in the future.

The past, present and future come together as one at Train World, in a central location next to the historic railway line between Mechelen and Brussels where, on 5 May 1835, 180 years ago, passengers in Belgium travelled by steam train for the first time.

Visitors will be able to admire the most precious artefacts of railway heritage, which were previously spread across five different sites in Belgium. For example, 22 pieces of rolling stock will be on display, along with 1.250 other items, 64 projections and over 20 interactive installations. School groups will receive customised learning packs and families with young children can explore Train World with the help of a cartoon strip.

The famous comic-book artist François Schuiten, a Schaarbeek resident, designed the scenography in partnership with Expoduo. This turns Train World into a real story, a succession of tableaux that sweeps visitors through the past, present and future of our railways. The experience opens up a whole world of railways and trains to discover.

The foyer of Train World will be located inside Schaarbeek Station, constructed in 1887 and extended in the 1920s. It is a building in the "Flemish Renaissance" style, a typical railway building style.

The new building, with a surface area of 8,000 m², has an industrial look with a saw-tooth roof reminiscent of railway workshops. This building is composed of four large halls that will accommodate legendary trains and railway memorabilia. Two of the halls also have train tracks (connected to the main railway lines) to allow rolling stock to move in and out of the building.

Among the attractions that visitors will be able to admire is the "Pays de Waes", the oldest preserved locomotive on the European continent. It was first used on the railways in 1844 and featured at the World Exhibition in Ghent in 1913. The "Pacific" (Type 10 model steam locomotive), dating from 1910, is another of the pièces de résistance in this exciting collection, as is the "Atlantic" (Type 12), the spectacularly aerodynamic steam locomotive dating from 1939. Admirers of splendour and magnificence will be able to feast their eyes on two restored royal carriages, dating back to 1901 and 1939.

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The restoration of the old station building and the construction of the new industrial building were carried out by Eurostation, which entrusted the work to architect Paul Lievevrouw. The NMBS (National Belgian Rail) and Infrabel, the railway infrastructure company, provided most of the historic exhibits on display. Siemens, Bombardier and Alstom also contributed to making the museum a genuine centre of knowledge.

The entire project (the restoration of the historic station building, the construction of a new museum building, the landscaping and the creation of the museum itself) cost a total of €25 million euros. Train World is sure to become a showcase for a rich history whose final chapter is still far in the future.

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