



## Full Steam Ahead! *A Thomas & Friends™ Timeline*

The inspiration for the creation of the beloved Thomas the Tank Engine™ and his “Really Useful Engine” friends was the Great Western Line that ran from London’s Paddington Station to Bristol.

- 1916** In the English countryside, a young boy listens to the puffing of nearby steam engines and as he imagines their conversations, he doesn’t doubt that these engines have their own unique personalities
- 1943** Now a father himself, the Storyteller is inspired to “engineer” tales about these steam engines to entertain his own young son when he was in bed with the measles
- 1945** The train leaves the station as the first of the classic *Thomas & Friends™* stories is published, entitled ‘Edward’s Day Out’
- 1950** This Island of Sodor is “discovered” after Rev. W. Awdry visits the Isle of Man. Sodor lies between the Isle of Man and Barrow-in-Furness on the Mainland
- 1982** Decades later, while filming a documentary on a preserved railway, Britt Allcroft rediscovers the tales of *Thomas & Friends* and is inspired to bring the stories to television
- 1984** *Thomas & Friends*, a new animated production for preschoolers, makes its broadcast debut on ITV in the U.K.
- 1985** A very special passenger hops aboard as former Beatles member, Ringo Starr, joins the *Thomas & Friends™* television series as storyteller – the first of several famous storytellers to come
- 1989** Next stop America! *Thomas & Friends* pulls in to the U.S. when it debuts on PBS
- 1991** Japan is the next international stop for *Thomas & Friends™*
- 1992** Thomas makes his debut into Consumer Products with the *Thomas & Friends™* Wooden Railway Set
- 1996** Thomas the Tank™ Engine travels all the way to Wisconsin for the first U.S. *Day Out With Thomas™* family event. Day Out With Thomas offers aspiring young engineers and their families the opportunity to take a ride with a 15-ton replica of their classic storybook friend, Thomas the Tank Engine, and enjoy a day of Thomas and train-themed activities and entertainment.  
  
Thomas finds his way onto the Internet as [www.thomasandfriends.com](http://www.thomasandfriends.com) launches
- 1998** Thomas goes off the rails as a *Thomas & Friends™* theme park opens in Japan
- 2000** *Thomas and the Magic Railroad*, the property’s first feature film release, rolls into movie theaters worldwide

**2002** Another famous voice takes a ride with Thomas when actor Alec Baldwin narrates new Thomas episodes in the United States

**2005** *Thomas & Friends™* celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a year of activities, including the national *Day Out With Thomas 2005: The Celebration Tour*, a feature-length home entertainment release, new television episodes on PBS KIDS®, and limited edition toys and books

**2007** Thomas takes to the stage when *Thomas & Friends™ Live! On Stage* launches the first US live theatrical tour of *Thomas & Friends™*. Following its US run, the tour travels internationally to Asia, Australia, Europe and Canada

Thomas Town, the first US themepark attraction for the *Thomas & Friends* brand opens at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in San Francisco and Six Flags New England

Pierce Brosnan announced as new special guest Narrator of *Thomas & Friends™*

**2008** Thomas Land, a \$10 million theme park featuring 12-themed rides, opens at Drayton Manor in the UK. This Thomas Land attraction, replicating the Island of Sodor, is the first in Europe and the second in the world

*Thomas & Friends™* launches new "A Stitch In Time" layette line for infants. This line is full of 'very useful' products from coveralls to blankets

Thomas Town continues its US roll-out to Six Flags Magic Mountain and Six Flags Over Georgia

*Thomas & Friends™* production moves into CGI animation for 2009 broadcast season

Thomas enters the Guinness Book of World Records! The World's Longest Toy Train Track record is set by TOMY and HIT Entertainment at Thomas Land at Drayton Manor in the UK. The track took 2 weeks to design, 2 days to build, and 2.5 hours for Thomas to steam around 1.8 kilometers of track!

**2009** *Thomas & Friends™* production moves into CGI animation for 2009 broadcast season

*Thomas & Friends™ Live! On Stage: A Circus Comes To Town* debuts in the US visiting more than 50 cities from January through August