

# Overview of Kyoto Railway Museum

Hideyuki Miura

## Introduction

Kyoto Railway Museum opened on 28 April 2016 in the international tourism city of Kyoto. The museum has been built by West Japan Railway Co. (JR West) in Umekoji Park as a facility adjoining the old Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum that closed in August 2015. Rolling stock as well as objects and documents from the Modern Transportation

Museum that closed in April 2014 have also been moved to the new museum run by the Transportation Culture Promotion Foundation.

A total of 111,500 people visited the museum in the 10 days from the 29-April grand opening through the long holiday period ending on 8 May with the highest daily attendance of 17,200 visitors on 4 May. Even after the initial rush, the museum continues to bustle with many visitors.



Entrance to Kyoto Railway Museum

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Signing Sister Museum Partnership

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Sister Museum Partnership Flag

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

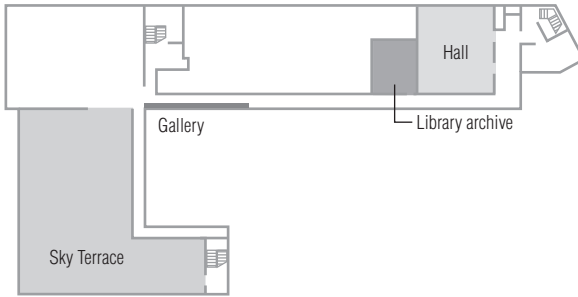
## Continued Sister Museum Partnership with NRM

The now-closed Modern Transportation Museum and Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum entered into a sister museum partnership with the UK's National Railway Museum, York (NRM) in April 2000. Kyoto Railway Museum has been founded as a fusion of the two closed

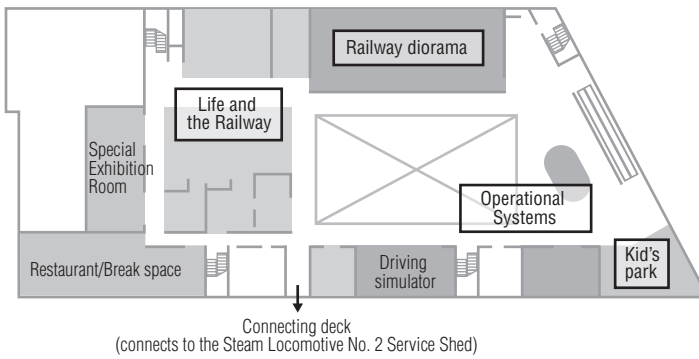
Japanese museums, and most of the rolling stock, objects and documents have been transferred to the new museum, so the sister museum partnership too has been inherited by Kyoto Railway Museum. NRM Director Paul Kirkman and I signed a memorandum on the continuance of the sister museum partnership on 28 April ahead of the opening ceremony.

# Floor Map of Kyoto Railway Museum

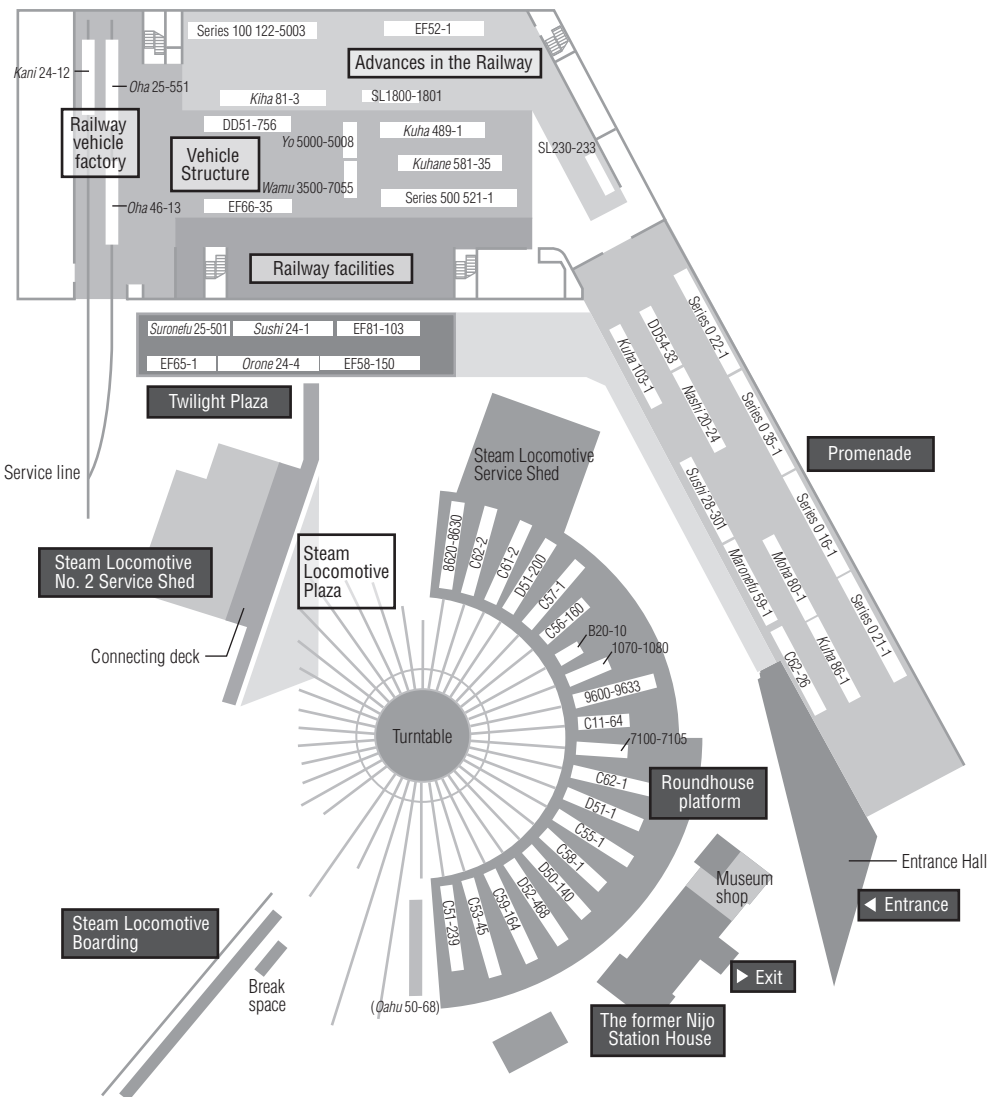
## Main Building 3F



## Main Building 2F



## Main Building 1F





Promenade with C62 steam locomotive, *Kuha 86*, and Series 0 Shinkansen (from left)

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Main Building first floor with Series 500 EMU, *Kuhane 581*, and *Kuha 489*

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

## Basic Museum Concept

The museum's fundamental concept is to be a 'hub of railway culture that progresses with its community'. We seek to unite ourselves with local communities by reflecting the fundamental mission of the JR West group to 'contribute to the revitalization of local communities through business activities centred on the railway'. Based on this concept, we provide a lifelong learning venue that visitors of all ages

can enjoy. And we further work to partner with local schools and other nearby facilities to contribute to revitalization of the community.

## 53 Pieces of Rolling Stock

The museum exhibits 53 pieces of rolling stock including 20 steam locomotives exhibited previously at Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum including Japan's oldest mass-





Class 230-233 built in 1903 by Kisha Seizo

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Twilight Plaza exhibits 6 railcars including EF 58 and EF81 electric locomotives (from left)

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

produced steam locomotive, the Class 230-233 built in 1903; the No. 1 car of a Series 0 shinkansen from when the high-speed train entered service; a Series 500 EMU that achieved a commercial operating speed of 300 km/h; and other rolling stock with high historic value. The rolling stock is exhibited at four locations: the Promenade, Main Building

first floor, Twilight Plaza, and Roundhouse built in 1914 and designated an important cultural asset.

A major feature is the museum's 8 steam locomotives in operating condition. These include the Class 1070-1080 *Yoshitsune* imported from the USA in 1880 and the C62, Japan's largest steam locomotive.



Roundhouse exhibits 20 steam locomotives

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Museum visitors enjoying ride on C56-160 steam locomotive

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

## SL Steam Hands-on Exhibit

Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum had *SL Steam*, a steam locomotive in operating condition hauling carriages and this tradition continues at Kyoto Railway Museum. New carriages have been built for the museum, increasing the passenger

capacity to 208. Up to 19 runs a day give visitors a close-up experience of the excitement of real steam locomotives spouting steam and blowing their great whistles. With this exhibit, older visitors can experience the nostalgia of days past while younger visitors can wonder at such trains.

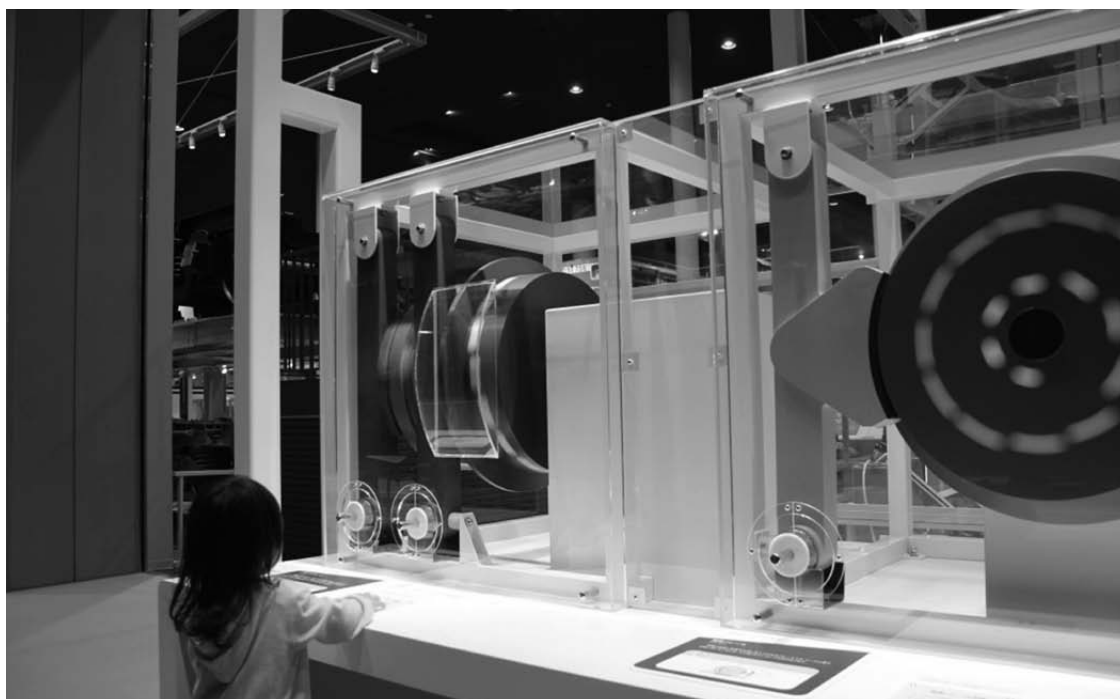


## Exhibits to See, Touch, and Experience

The museum has many exhibits that can be touched and experienced as well as seen. Having visitors touch and manipulate things helps promote understanding of the various railway mechanisms.

The hands-on exhibits include six driving simulators for

narrow-gauge trains and two for shinkansen where visitors can experience train driving by wearing train drivers' uniforms, receiving instructions, and simulating actual train operation. This is one of the most popular attractions at the museum, with many children as well as adults wanting to try it out, so a lottery is held each day to select lucky new train drivers.



Visitors can touch and manipulate things to gain better understanding of various railway mechanisms

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



Six driving simulators for narrow-gauge trains and two for shinkansen allow visitors to experience train driving

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

## Experiencing Railway Work

Railway operations are supported by people performing a wide range of tasks, including station personnel, conductors, drivers, dispatchers, as well as engineers who maintain vehicles and facilities, such as tracks, civil engineering structures like cuttings, embankments and bridges, and overhead power lines and signals. At weekends, holidays and during the summer break, staff from JR West who actually work on railways explain their duties using museum exhibits, and events are held for visitors to experience that work.

By providing an opportunity for communication between railway staff and visitors, we hope to be able to provide a new level of discovery and amazement for visitors and to heighten job satisfaction for JR West staff by making their work more widely understood. This has proved to be well accepted by adults as well as children.

## Railway Diorama

The Railway Diorama on the second floor of the Main Building is one of the largest in Japan at about 30 m x 10 m. All the HO-scale model trains are operated manually with an eye



Young visitor getting hands-on experience of railway work

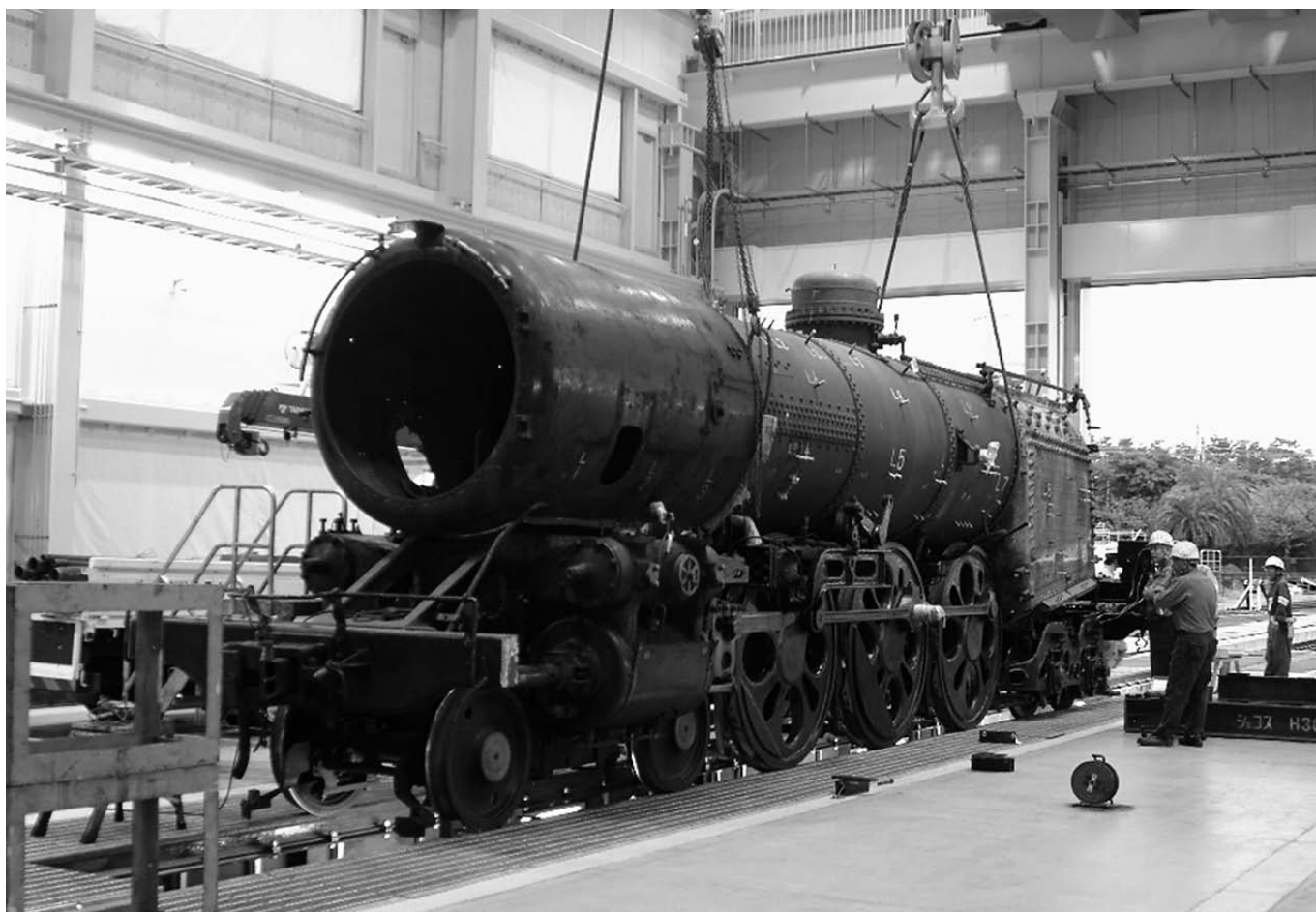
(Kyoto Railway Museum)



30 m x 10 m Diorama with 1/80 HO-scale model trains

(Kyoto Railway Museum)





Steam Locomotive No. 2 Service Shed with ceiling crane lifting boiler of steam locomotive

(Kyoto Railway Museum)



View over Kyoto from Sky Terrace

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

## Sky Terrace

The Sky Terrace viewing deck on the third floor of the Main Building offers spectacular views of Kyoto Tower, Tofukuji Temple, and the Higashiyama mountains with the Tokaido Main Line, shinkansen, and San'in Main Line trains running below. It makes a great viewpoint that takes advantage of the landscape of the old capital of Kyoto. An operation information display system for the Tokaido Line shows visitors the operations status of trains running below. Railway fans will forget the passage of time while they are at this special spot.

## Steam Locomotive No. 2 Service Shed

to portraying a day on the railway. Even though up to 250 people can see the diorama at once and there are four to seven shows each day, it is almost always full, proving it is one of the most popular attractions.

Next to the museum, JR West has set up a shed for inspecting and servicing steam locomotives to preserve them in operating condition into the future so they can run on commercial lines. The shed is a JR West facility, but it



Former Nijo Station House

(Kyoto Railway Museum)

is connected to the second floor of the museum, so visitors can watch steam locomotives being inspected and repaired through the windows. Views of large and small parts being repaired and assembled and locomotives being hoisted by a large ceiling crane captivate many visitors.

## Former Nijo Station House

The former Nijo Station House, also used for the Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum, forms the museum exit. This wooden station house was built in 1904 by Kyoto Railway and was relocated to Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum in 1997. It is a tangible cultural asset of Kyoto City. Half of the interior houses a steam locomotive exhibit, and the other half is a museum shop.

## Closing

We are continuing to take on the challenge of developing new projects for the enjoyment and education of visitors to the museum. At the same time, we are putting our full effort into the collection and preservation of materials as well as conducting investigations and research, which are all

the true essence of a museum. We also aim to be a lasting museum that evolves under stable management to pass on railway culture to future generations. ■

For directions to the museum, floor maps, and other information, visit the museum website at <http://www.kyotorailwaymuseum.jp/en/>



### Hideyuki Miura

Mr Miura is a Director of Kyoto Railway Museum and a Vice President of the Transportation Culture Promotion Foundation. Prior to his current position, he served as CEO of JR West Financial Management Co.