

A Right Royal Adventure!



Written by Jenny Batchelor and Beth McKeeman
– illustrated by Emma Mitcheson

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Information for parents, carers and teachers by Helen Harris and Jean MacGrory.

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"Air pollution... green travel... class project..." The teacher's words floated over Sam's head. He was too busy daydreaming about his favourite people from history. "Sam?" said Miss Wing.

"Yes, Your Majesty," said Sam. Laughter from the class punctured his daydreams.

"Your Majesty?" spluttered a regal voice behind him. "She's not the Queen, I am!"

Sam turned around, astonished. Behind him stood Queen Elizabeth I. She hadn't been there a moment ago.

"Sam! You're not listening," said Miss Wing.

Olivia leaned over to Sam. "She's been talking about the end of term project," she whispered. "We've got to think of greener ways of getting to school and persuade a grown-up to use a more sustainable travel method, like walking and stuff."

"Walking!" exclaimed Queen Elizabeth I. "I don't have time for that."

"Wow!" said Olivia.

Sam stared at her in amazement. "You can see her?" Olivia nodded. Nobody else turned around.

"We'll take the carriage," said The Queen.



Sam and Olivia walked into the playground to see two chestnut horses and a golden carriage.

"Chop, chop," ordered Queen Elizabeth I. "No time to lose. My footman will help you in. A snack will be provided. Take these." She handed Sam and Olivia a silver coin each. "For the highwaymen; you can never be too careful."

As cars drove past the school, the horses took one sniff of the smelly air, wrinkled their noses and refused to budge.

The Queen's eyes lit up as she saw bright shiny cars pull up outside the gate. "Right! I'm getting in one of those."

"That's not going to help our project," said Olivia. "Cars cause pollution. Especially when drivers stop and don't switch off their engines." She frowned at the cars.

"Let's take the bus, Your Majesty," said Sam kindly. "Buses still cause pollution, but they are getting cleaner, and they are less harmful because they carry more people than cars do."

"This is too slow," complained The Queen as the bus kept stopping.

"Look, we can go in the priority lane," said Olivia as the bus drove past the queue of cars. "Not so slow now," she whispered to Sam.



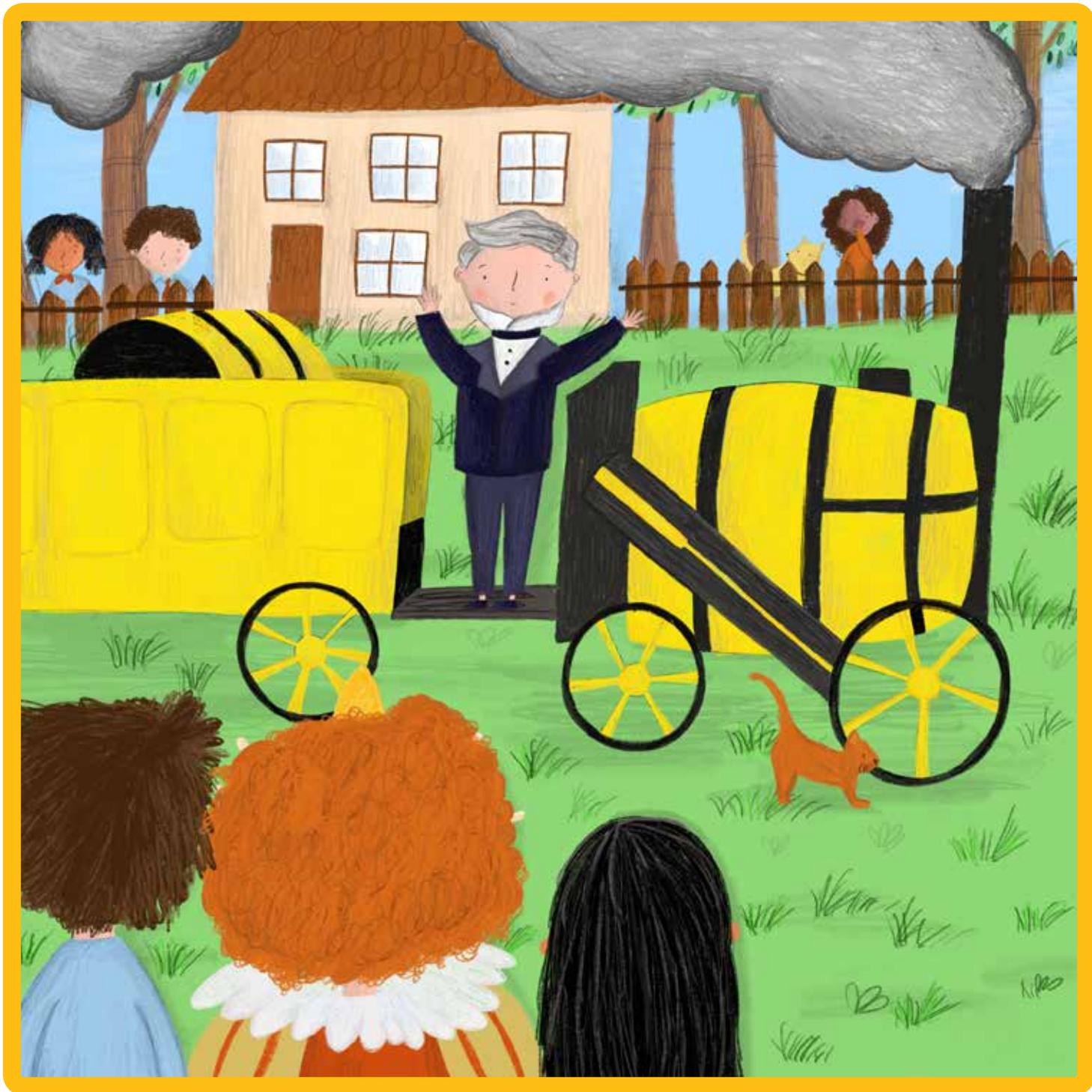
They got off the bus outside Sam's house and went into the garden. A loud whistle pierced the air.

"All aboard!" called Robert Stephenson, the inventor of The Rocket steam engine. The Rocket stood behind him, thick smoke billowing out of its chimney. Sam clambered into the engine room and headed for the controls. Olivia and The Queen followed, though The Queen needed a little help.

"Be a sport and start shifting some coal into the furnace," said Robert, handing Queen Elizabeth I a shovel. She glared at him angrily.

"I don't think that's a good idea," said Olivia, but The Queen had already begun shovelling. The engine room filled with smoke and Olivia coughed. "Burning coal creates air pollution, and it smells."

Sam looked out of the window. The train was slowly making its way around his neighbourhood. Passers-by had to cover their noses.



"Miss Wing says that without the Industrial Revolution we wouldn't be where we are today," said Olivia.

"Ah, the great Industrial Revolution. Full of energy and innovation," said Robert.

"Wasn't it also full of air pollution?" asked Sam.

"Well, yes," admitted Robert. "Air pollution isn't new, you know."

"We had smelly coal fires long before his lot started inventing these contraptions," said The Queen disdainfully.

"But think about what we did! We built engines and factories! We changed life as you know it," said Robert.

"And now we need to think up ways to reduce air pollution by different means of travel," said Sam.

"Modern electric trains are much better for the environment," said Olivia.

"And they go faster," said Sam.

"Faster!" screeched The Queen.

The train came to a stop back in the garden and Robert, Sam and Olivia all jumped out.

"You coming?" Robert called to The Queen. She tried to jump but tripped and fell onto her bottom.



The Queen was about to have a right royal sulk when she saw something that caught her eye.

"I want that," she said, pointing at the scooter.

"You're welcome to have a go, Your Majesty. Wait, you'll need one of these," said Sam getting helmets from the shed.

After a quick demonstration from Sam, Queen Elizabeth was whizzing around the garden in no time.

"I like scooting," said Sam. "It helps me wake up and think on the way to school. And I don't have to wait for Sophie."

"My mum says, if you choose quieter roads and footpaths, you breathe in less pollution. The fresher air and the exercise make you super-brainy," said Olivia.

"You just have to look where you're going!" cried Sam, covering his eyes as The Queen narrowly missed running over his mum's prized begonias.



There was a quiet knock on the gate. Sam peered around and saw a man next to a Penny Farthing.

"James Starley, the father of the bicycle," whispered Sam.

"I've just found the most amazing hill," said James. "The views are breathtaking."

"We've got pedal power too," said Olivia, gesturing to the stack of bikes Sam's family kept in the corner.

"Curious," said James.

"I want that one," said The Queen abandoning her scooter. She picked out Sam's little sister's pink bike.

"Err, have you ever ridden one?" asked Sam.

"Course she hasn't," whispered Olivia. "They weren't invented in Tudor times."

"Maybe it's not a good idea?" said Sam, but Queen Elizabeth was having none of it. She was already wobbling precariously.

"You can get lessons," said Olivia. "Cycle training. They do it at school."

"Come on," said James enthusiastically. "To the hill!"

Everyone grabbed a bike and a helmet.



"You can see for miles," said Olivia. "Look, those cycle paths are on quieter routes away from heavy traffic. And there's our school."

"I'm going first," said The Queen, poised at the top of the hill.

"Why don't we all go together?" said Sam. He pointed at the bike trailer attached to Sam's mum's bike.

"He's not driving, I am," said The Queen, glaring at Robert until he got off.

"I don't think..." said Olivia.

"Silence!" ordered The Queen.

Everyone got into the bike trailer.

"3, 2, 1, GO!" shouted Sam.

The Queen pedalled furiously, making the bike go faster and faster. "Wee!" she took her feet off the pedals and stuck her legs out.

"I don't want to alarm you but there's a tree up ahead," said James.

"BRAKE!" shouted Sam and Olivia.

"Break what? Aah! Get that tree out of my way!" The Queen swerved, tipping them all onto the ground.



"You!" said The Queen pointing at Robert. "Cut that tree down at once, it's dangerous."

"You can't go cutting trees down," said Olivia. "They're good for the environment. Their leaves absorb air pollution."

"And they block some of the noise from busy roads," added Sam.

"My mum has planted some extra bushes outside our house," said Olivia. "Maybe we could do that at school as well."

"I'm tired now." The Queen leaned on James. She was covered in soot and leaves. "I need one of those car things to whizz me home."

"We could car share," said Sam.

"Car engines still create pollution," said Olivia. "Even electric cars, though they produce less."

"Then why don't we walk?"

"Walk?" James, Robert and The Queen looked at Sam like he'd gone mad.



"Yes," said Sam. "It won't take long, we can wheel the bikes back to my house and talk about the end of term project."

"But I don't want to," whined The Queen.

"We have to look after the environment or the air will get really dirty," said Olivia.

"True," agreed Robert.

"Besides, you can do so much when you're walking," said Sam.

"Yes, it was when I was out for a stroll that I came up with the idea for my Penny Farthing," said James.

"Right, it gives you a chance to think, or to talk to your friends. And you see things you'd miss if you went by car," said Sam.

"I've just seen a butterfly," said The Queen.

"Exactly," said Olivia. "And look, we're back already."

"Oh! Well in that case I shall walk back to the Palace," said The Queen. She stuck her nose in the air, pointed her toes and strode off regally.

Sam and Olivia high fived. One queen converted. One 'green travel' project sorted.

Now they were ready to convert everyone else!



What do you remember in the story?

1. What was the class project that the children were being given at the beginning of the book?
2. How did Queen Elizabeth I usually travel?
3. Why did the horses refuse to move?
4. Why is it good to travel by bus?
5. What did Robert Stephenson invent?
6. What fuel do steam engines run on?
7. Is air pollution a new problem?
8. What is a Penny Farthing?
9. Why would The Queen benefit from some cycling lessons?
10. Why is it good to walk, cycle or scoot to school avoiding roads with busy traffic?



Information for parents, carers and teachers around sustainable transport / living.

Choices – it's not about walking or cycling the whole journey. There are many alternatives that could be considered:

If distance is an issue, an alternative is to find a suitable place to park away from the school that is only a 5-10minute walk. This relieves congestion and improves air quality around the school gate, giving child and parent a chance to talk, reduces the stress of trying to find a place to park and provides some fresh air and exercise. Children are ready to learn when they arrive at school having exercised and perform better in class.

For some parents, time is a key factor if the school run is on the way to work. One option could be for the parent to drop off their child(ren) at a friend's house so that they can walk in with them, allowing the parent to go on to work, again without the stress. This needn't be every day – just once a week can still make a difference to the congestion and safety around the school gates.

Consider organising a coffee morning to look at possible car sharing matches for parents. Often there can be a couple of parents who are both driving and would value the opportunity to car share and save money. It also provides a chance to chat and share ideas.

Encourage children to use walk-to-school schemes, e.g. the walking bus – this is not only environmentally friendly but good exercise. It's great fun too and a

positive way to begin and end your day. Walking to school allows children to become street savvy and learn road safety skills.

Travel plan – it's more than a paper document! By bringing together pupils, staff and parents to work together on a school travel plan, you can identify what the key issues are and possible solutions. This is great evidence for securing funding and provides a benchmark for any achievements the school community makes. Travel plans really can make a difference and they are a good way of making new friends in the school and local community. There are also lots of cross curricular opportunities.

Curriculum – making the links! There are endless opportunities to link sustainable travel into the curriculum including being active, effects of pollution on the environment, local area, road safety and much more. Key subjects include PSHE, Citizenship and Geography.

Air pollution information for parents, carers and teachers.

Road vehicles are a major source of air pollution in towns and cities and release harmful pollutants, for example particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, from their exhausts. Poor air quality is particularly damaging to babies, children, older people and people with existing lung conditions, such as asthma.

Local authority staff are required to monitor air pollution including nitrogen dioxide, and their measurements are available for the general public on council and central government websites.

To help to reduce air pollution and to breathe cleaner air, whenever possible leave the car at home and travel actively by, for example, walking, cycling or scooting. Pedestrians and cyclists breathe the cleanest air as levels of pollution inside cars can be significantly higher than the levels outside: car occupants breathe fumes from the car in front, which are then trapped inside the vehicle.

If driving is the only option, engines should be switched off when stationary to keep the air cleaner by reducing fuel use. Idling a car engine unnecessarily when parked on a public road can result in a £20 fixed penalty fine.

Schools could provide parents with information about safer, quieter walking and cycling routes that avoid heavy traffic. Using quieter streets when walking or cycling and walking on the inside of the pavement, away from the kerb, can reduce exposure to air pollution.

Remember, the proximity of young children in buggies and prams to exhaust pipes can increase their exposure to harmful emissions!

Too many cars in rush hour traffic are on the school run. Using public transport or car sharing can reduce the number of polluting cars on the roads, if distances are too great.



Read about Sam and Olivia's magical adventure which helps them learn about the history of air pollution and teach Queen Elizabeth I about sustainable travel today.

This book also contains information for parents, carers and teachers, along with questions for children, which raise awareness of sustainable travel and highlight the issue of air pollution associated with road vehicles.



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