

Our run out to Kelham Island Museum was on an overcast but warm day with a hint of rain in the air. Four cars met up at Wetherby Road with two more to join us at our destination. So that was two TFs, a BGT and an MX5 with two TFs to join us. Our route was via Thorpe Arch, Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet and then onto the A1 below Ferrybridge and the M62. The run was without incident until we got to Sheffield where we followed the brown signs for Kelham Island. As we got closer we encountered some roadworks which threw a bit of a spanner in the works and one or two of us went round in circles but eventually we all got there. Once we were parked it was time for some refreshments at the on site Steam Hammer Cafe. Simple food and slow service seemed to be the order of the day and then it was into the museum.

The museum located on a 900 year old man made island in one of Sheffield's oldest industrial districts. The star attraction is the River Don engine, at 1200 hp, the most powerful steam engine in the world. Used to drive the rolling mills that rolled the armour plate for the battleships that fought at Jutland, the engine can be seen working on most days of the week. It is one of four identical engines built in Sheffield by Davy Brothers all to be used for the same purpose one of which went to Japan. It is the only one of the four still working. The Crossley Gas Engine on display also drove a rolling mill but of a much smaller size. This was a small rod and bar mill in Penistone Road in use until 1970.

Elsewhere in the museum can be seen a transport gallery with examples of the Richardson light car, the Sheffield Simplex car and the Wilkin and Ner a Car motorcycles, all built in Sheffield. There is also the world renowned Hawley collection of tools numbering over 100,000 objects all relating to Sheffield's tool, cutlery and silversmithing industries including a Braille micrometer. Who would have thought such a thing existed. There are video screens throughout the museum showing how various manufacturing processes were carried out including one showing the operation of a Bessemer Converter. Outside the museum there stands one of the last three Bessemer Converters in the world. Originally used in Workington where in 1974 it produced the last Bessemer Steel made in Britain, it came to Kelham Island in 1978.

After a very enjoyable visit we set off for home at intervals. The run home was uneventful and the rain stayed away.