The Railway Heritage Trust

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Executive Director
Presentation

- Britain’s railway heritage
- The golden age
- Today’s railway, after the changes of the twentieth century
- The formation and role of the Trust
- Specific Trust projects
- Conclusion
Britain’s Railway Heritage

• 1830 - railways replaced horse carriages and canals as the best means of transport

• The richest in the world?
  – Developed since 1820s
  – Still growing
    • Waterloo
    • St Pancras
    • Kings Cross
The Golden Age

• End of the 19th century
  – 19,000 miles of track
  – 9,000 stations
  – 60,000 bridges
  – 1,000 tunnels
  – Innumerable trackside buildings
    • Warehouses
    • Engine sheds
    • Signal boxes
    • Cottages

• Some amazing buildings and structures
Today’s railway

• Developed the train product from the Rocket to today’s high speed trains
• Still very much the 19th century railway underneath it
• Can recognise today’s railway in pictures of the 19th century
Changes of the mid-twentieth century

• Railways lost monopoly after Great War
• Long period of not recognising and resistance to change
• Early 1960s - final recognition of need to change and develop
• Historic buildings and structures seen as old-fashioned, in the way of progress
• ‘White heat of technology’ (Harold Wilson 1963)
• Station re-development – sweep away the old
• Doric Arch – 1961
• Subsequent battle to save St Pancras - 1967
• Key role of John Betjeman
Formation of the Trust

• Change in Government and railway attitude over 20 years

• 1981 – SofS for Environment
  – Register of Government Historic Buildings
  – Suggests others should follow

• Increasingly structures became subject to legal constraint
  – Network Rail © 1650 operational listed buildings and structures
  – Network Rail © 100 ancient monuments
  – Network Rail runs through some 17,000 conservation areas

• 1984 – RSA conference on ‘The Future of Railway Heritage’
  – Simon Jenkins (then a Director of BR) announces formation of the Railway Heritage Trust
RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST
Incorporation of the Trust

• April 1985 – Trust became operational
• £1m grant from BR to start it up
• Independent, registered, company
  – Limited by guarantee
• Supported by BR initially
• Now supported by
  – Network Rail; and
  – BRB (Residuary) Ltd.
Current Members and officers

- Chairman – Sir William McAlpine, Bt
- Executive Director – Andy Savage
- Director – Marcus Binney
- Company Secretary – Malcolm Wood
- Administration – Claire Pickton
The remit of the Trust

The conservation and enhancement of railway buildings and structures which are listed or scheduled, and are of special architectural or historical interest

To act as a catalyst between outside parties and owners on the conservation and alternative use of non-operational property, including the possible transfer of responsibility to local trusts or other interested organisations
The scope of the Trust’s work

- Listed buildings; or
- Listed structures; or
- Buildings and Structures in Conservation Areas; and
- Connected with the national railway system (Network Rail and BRB(R) Ltd)

The Trust does not support projects on Heritage Railways which are totally divorced from the national system.
The extent of the Trust’s work

- 1,283 Grants awarded in 26 years
- £40m value of grants awarded
- £49m value of external funding drawn in
Specific RHT projects
Bridges
Lambley Viaduct

• 1852 – single track Haltwhistle - Alston branch, closed 1976
• 1990s – major defects in spandrels, parapets and waterproofing
• £800k - English Heritage, BRPB, ERDF, Tyneside DC and RHT (£159k)
• De-vegetate, masonry repairs, drainage
• Parapet handrail added, deck surfaced
• Transferred from BRPB to local Trust
• BRB(R) still owns 44 listed viaducts
Conwy Bridge

- Stephenson project – 1849 – precursor to Britannia Bridge
- Adjacent to Telford bridge and Conwy castle
- Only survivors of this design in UK after 1970 fire destroyed Britannia Bridge
- Grade II listed and Ancient Monument
- RHT and Cadw contributed to minor repairs and painting of bridge (RHT £14k)
Manchester

• Restoration of New Bailey St road bridge
  – Includes decorative metalwork to bridge and columns
Specific RHT projects
Stations
Whitby

• Stations should be gateways
• Cluttered approach
• RHT (£127k), Regional Railways and local authority funded improvements
• Great improvement in station appearance
• Similar work at Huddersfield
• How to handle after effects?
• Conservation management plans
Boston

- 1848 design by local architect – Henry Goddard
- 5 arch portico leading to booking hall
- 1911 – entrance moved, two arches demolished
- 1990s – RHT (£75k), local authority, Regional Railways and Regeneration Group funded restoration of the arches and area
Littleborouough

- Lancashire and Yorkshire station of 1839
- Later building, badly damaged by fire
- Local Historical and Archeological Societies leased and restored station
- Railway Heritage Trust support of £22k out of £52k cost
- Note LYR colours and clock
- Superb interior restoration
Aylesford

• Typical example of how stations deteriorated in the mid-twentieth century
  – Financial disciplines and restrictions by governments of all colours, not deliberate action by professional railwaymen

• Opened 1856, Kentish stone with Caen stone dressings

• RHT (£75k) and NSE led major programme of restoration in 1980s

• Note masonry and chimney repairs
Liverpool Lime St

• 1867 trainshed – later and larger of two in the station.
• Frontage cluttered by inappropriate retail development
• RHT funded £100k towards £500k of heritage costs in £4m scheme to open out station front and improve public realm
• Transformation of a major station approach for the better
Moorthorpe

• Swinton and Knottingley station of 1879?
• Station building closed in 1960s
• Leased to a pub, poor extensions, allowed to fall into dereliction
• One of last two S&K stations left
• Town council got 20 year lease, superb restoration
• RHT grant of £70k towards £425k cost of works
Newcastle on Tyne

• Grade 1 listed building
  – 3 Dobson train curved shed barrels
  – 1 Bell barrel (straight)
• 1950s / 60s signalling centre – abuse of building
• Railtrack / Network Rail subsequent restoration
  – remove centre and restore roofs
  – Restore chimney stacks
  – Stairways to west concourse
  – End screens
  – Dobson’s restaurant – paintings
  – Accountants’ office to child care centre
• RHT support £1.24 million
Sheffield Midland

- 12 year challenge to restore station as a gateway to the city
  - Demolition of Sheaf House
  - Improved platform environment
  - Restored and glazed frontage
  - Modern sculpture
  - Improvement to catering facilities

- RHT contributions £430k
Sheffield Tap

- Redundant refreshment rooms on Platform 1
- Converted to very successful pub, good use of original features
- Second phase to follow
Birmingham Moor Street

• Near derelict station brought back to first class condition
• 1909 construction painstakingly restored
• New Footbridge over through lines
• Includes out of use areas so whole station
• Modern facilities
• Traditional signing
• Centenary Café Bar
• RHT support over £200k
Specific RHT projects
Other Infrastructure
Settle and Carlisle line

- Ongoing Trust involvement
- Whole route a conservation area
- Ribblehead viaduct
- Dent platform shelter
- Lighting at Dent and Horton-in-Ribblesdale
  - Historic MR style lights
  - Unusual for RHT to fund old style lighting, but very clear precedents on this route
- Dry stone walling
- RHT contribution to route over £1 million
Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Summit signing

- Smaller end of RHT activities
- Summit signs were once common
- RHT funding of less than £10k for two signs
Druimachdar Pass
1484 ft (452 m)
Highest Point on Rail Network
Signal Boxes

• 500 odd mechanical boxes remain on the system
• Fund restoration of those that need to remain – eg Wylam, Newcastle – Carlisle
• Fund transfer to private sector if listed and Network Rail has no further use for structure – eg St Albans (South)
• National strategy required?
Britannia Bridge memorial

• Most of original bridge lost in 1970 fire
• New structure with road deck on existing piers – modified at high level
• 1850 memorial to 16 men who died in construction of original bridge
• Restored with £16,000 RHT contribution
  – Names of two men who lost lives in post 1970 reconstruction added to the memorial
In conclusion
• RHT has spent 25 years supporting the restoration of the heritage of the national railway system
  – In situ where still needed
  – Finding a new future when the railway doesn’t need it operationally
  – Bringing money into the railway
• Looking forward to carrying on with this work