

## FRIENDS OF THE SCOTSMAN /

# Movement to save Britain's transport heritage builds up a head of steam

It is important to celebrate our transport heritage because learning from the past helps us to do better in the future.

Transport preservation in Britain has seen some notable successes: from the unique Charabus convertible single-decker bus built as a show exhibit for the Olympia Commercial Motor Show in 1921 to a Bristol Scout aeroplane of First World War vintage, from the lowland canals of Scotland to the return of the Flying Scotsman, the preservation movement in Britain has much to be proud of.

Britain's place in the history and development of transport is demonstrably second to none. This country's growth and prosperity has been inextricably linked with the movement of people and cargo. But the risks remain to preserving all this heritage for future generations.

If transport heritage seeks to be of value, we need to make sure people know about it. If those that have given so much to preservation have no one to pass their skills and enthusiasm on to, these will be lost. The Transport Trust is the only national charity established to promote and encourage the preservation and restoration of Britain's unique transport heritage.

For more than half a century the Trust has campaigned for Britain's immensely important transport heritage in all its forms – land, air and water – to ensure that the story of our heritage does not slip into oblivion. Its role is to spotlight past



**John Yellowlees** welcomes the first Red Wheels plaques to mark sites of special interest

successes (including transport's role in the development of the Industrial Revolution and British Empire), current activities and the future needs of transport preservation.

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) was proud to attend the unveiling on 16 August at Paisley Canal by Transport Scotland's rail director Bill Reeve of the Trust's first Red Wheels plaque, commemorating a transport heritage site north of the border.

Paisley Canal has quite a heritage – built by Thomas Telford, it boasted the longest arch of the Canal Age across the White Cart (now Britain's oldest operational railway bridge) and was the scene of its worst disaster, in November 1810, when 85 people drowned in the Canal Basin as excited passengers trying to board the pleasure-boat Countess of Eglington surged forward, starting a panic which led to its capsizing.

The drama continued in 1885 when the canal was turned into a railway providing the Glasgow & South Western with an alternative to the congested main line through Paisley Gilmour Street. That alternative route

closed in 1983, and was converted by Sustrans beyond Paisley Canal into an active travel route that takes walkers and cyclists deep into the serene Renfrewshire countryside – while the station building became a popular restaurant and bar.

However, in 1990 the railway reopened to a new terminus at Paisley Canal, and in 2012 it was electrified in a low-cost innovative scheme that holds lessons at a time when further mainline electrification has been called into question as too expensive by the UK Department of Transport.

The Transport Trust has ambitious plans to unveil further Red Wheels plaques across Scotland, catching up on its long-established programme south of the border. Indeed, the second one was inaugurated on 18 August by Lady Judy McAlpine in celebration of the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct.

As well as the Red Wheels locations, the Transport Trust website has a searchable database of more than 800 interesting heritage sites which can be readily visited and inspected. Many represent an extraordinary technical or engineering leap from



↑ Carolyn Swift, Transport Trust trustee Jerry Swift, and John Yellowlees, as an honorary Rail Ambassador, attend the unveiling of a Red Wheels plaque at historic Canal Station in Paisley, Renfrewshire

the then received wisdom, and are a source of pure wonder.

To be listed on the website database, the buildings, artefacts or general sites have to be shown to have special value within their general category; for architectural reasons; as an illustration of progress in social or economic history; as involving technological innovations; for their associations with particular individuals or events; or for their group

value. Scotland has a rich heritage of achievement across road, rail, water and air travel, and it is right that this should be celebrated as an important dimension to our tourist industry. However, why should CILT as a professional body that is dedicated to helping develop the next generation of excellence in order that this country may remain competitive in the global marketplace want to associate itself with the Transport

Trust's endeavours? Because the competition is fierce for the attention of the young talent that might otherwise prefer the safer world of, say, software development.

What the Trust is doing is to create a virtual itinerary of world-class achievement in transport and logistics here in the United Kingdom that young people can explore online and warm to the story that unfolds before their eyes.

Achievements of our times such as the Queensferry Crossing and the proposed space-port in Sutherland are worthy of the traditions developed by the likes of Telford. By taking viewers back in time, the Transport Trust can help us enlist the next generation of transport specialists and logisticians.

You can find the Transport Trust website at [www.transporttrust.com](http://www.transporttrust.com) John Yellowlees, chair, CILT Scotland.



**That's the spirit – railway plans could whisk loads of Scotch off busy roads**

David Spaven looks at the potential of reopening a mothballed line

The recent Scottish Government go-ahead for detailed design work on a reinstated passenger train service to Levenmouth was welcome news for a neglected corner of Scotland.

Unlike the other Scottish rail reopenings of recent times – Airdrie to Bathgate, and the Borders Railway – this scheme also has a potentially strategic freight dimension, unlocking a wide range of economic, environmental and social benefits.

The largest grain distillery in Europe, at Cameron Bridge, has its own rail sidings connecting with the mothballed Levenmouth line – opening up prospects for movements of bulk spirit and wheat to be shifted from truck to train.

It is less than two miles by road

from Cameron Bridge to the major bottling plant at Leven – creating the opportunity for up to two trainloads a day conveying finished product to Grangemouth, for onward rail and sea connections to domestic, deep sea and European markets. Accommodating freight in the Levenmouth scheme will not happen automatically however – additional signalling and track works will be necessary to create a container railhead at Cameron Bridge.

Given the 'climate emergency' announced by the First Minister earlier this year, it is therefore vital that the Scottish Government works closely with whisky giant Diageo, logistics companies and the rail industry to ensure that the freight potential of the Levenmouth line

is fully realised. Sending freight by train cuts CO2 emissions by up to 76 per cent compared to road haulage, even where road collection and delivery legs are required at either end of the rail trunk haul. Switching freight from road to rail can offer a 'quick win', as it involves doing the same for less carbon, rather than having to do things completely differently (as is often the climate change prescription in other sectors).

A Cameron Bridge railhead would be a key building block for the whisky industry to diversify its transport options within Scotland. While rail has long moved finished product south to export markets from hub container railheads at Coatbridge, Grangemouth and Mossend, heavy lorries convey the entire annual

output of nearly 1.5m tonnes of bulk spirit from north of Scotland distilleries to maturation sites and blending plants in central Scotland.

Complete dependence on road haulage has a number of down sides, not just in terms of climate change, in particular the severe damage to road surfaces, and lorries' disproportionate involvement in fatal accidents.

There are special concerns along the single-carriageway A95 through Speyside, where half of all HGV movements are whisky-related, and on the A9 to the south, which sees around 50,000 long-distance whisky vehicle trips annually.

Yet an integrated road-rail option is perfectly feasible, with convenient mothballed railheads located at Elgin and Keith. The Scottish Government's 2017 rail freight strategy took an upbeat line which should encourage prospects for whisky by train: "We will galvanise efforts to overcome the technical, cultural and regulatory challenges towards a 'can do' approach, with the needs of rail freight customers at its heart."

"We will invest, along with the industry, in the whole system solutions and innovations which can meet the demands of the modern market, for the benefit of Scotland's economy, its environment and its communities."

In central Scotland – with financial 'pump-priming' of new services by the Scottish Government – rail is well-placed to make a breakthrough at key spirits destinations, which could be served by a service linking Speyside,

maturation and bottling plants, and the railheads at Coatbridge, Grangemouth and Mossend.

At Cambus/Blackgrange, the largest bonded warehouse site in Europe lies adjacent to the Stirling-Alloa railway, while the massive Shieldhall bottling plant in south west Glasgow is less than a mile by road from a mothballed freight railhead at Deanside.

Major maturation complexes in Dumbarton, Drumchapel and Dalmeir are on average only a dozen miles by lorry from Deanside or an alternative railhead at Elderslie. Outwith the Central Belt, large grain distilleries sit adjacent to railways at Girvan and Invergordon, with potential opportunities to transport wheat, as well as spirit, by train.

The new Levenmouth line can

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