LEGAL PROTECTION FOR RAILWAY HERITAGE – THE UK EXPERIENCE

Not just a theory but making it work

Part 1  Some background + An Introduction
Part 2  RHC – Early Days Mid 1990s
Part 3  How Things Have Developed
Part 4  Who are we and what we do
Part 5  The Permanent Challenges
Part 6  The Bigger Picture – More Challenges
Today’s Speakers – Who are we?

Peter Ovenstone – Acting Chairman

Neil Butters - Secretary
LIFE BEFORE THE RAILWAY HERITAGE COMMITTEE

- No legal protection for moveable railway heritage in Britain, but...

- Statutory “power of claim” for redundant railway material – National Railway Museum (from British Rail) London Transport Museum (from London Transport)

- No problems in transferring ownership: transport bodies were nationalised industry; two museums were state-owned bodies.

- System worked *fairly* well.
PART 2: RHC – EARLY DAYS. MID 1990s

Privatisation of Britain’s public sector railways in 1993. Recognition that railway heritage needs continuous protection and preservation.

Opportunity seized – result: specific Act of Parliament: 
Railway Heritage Act 1996

Only UK law provision for formal legal protection of ‘moveable objects and records’ (as distinct from buildings, structures, landscapes, etc)
CHALLENGES OF BRAVE NEW WORLD OF PRIVATISED RAIL...

From “threats” box of a hypothetical SWOT Analysis.

Threat 1 – Many ‘traditional railway staff’ leave industry; traditional pride in heritage and history goes too

Threat 2 – Take-over by ‘accountants in grey suits’; only make disposal of heritage material for full book value payments

Threat 3 – RHC protective role would be resented; an imposition on commercial operations of new companies; yet another piece of ‘bureaucratic regulation’.
PART 3 HOW THINGS HAVE DEVELOPED

What has happened has been a different story

Esprit de corps has survived in railway industry

Generous approach: nearly all designated material transferred without payment

RHC viewed in a positive light by most of railway industry; strong support from Network Rail, train and freight operating companies, and others.
PARTNERS FROM (RAILWAY) HERITAGE SECTOR

Not just NRM – operating heritage railways, museums large and small; working closely with RHC

Support too from umbrella bodies – Heritage Railway Association, Association of Independent Museums
PART 4: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Membership of Committee reflects railway industry, NRM, record offices, heritage sector; other people too

Artefacts, Records, and Scottish Sub-committees
TOOLS TO DO THE JOB –
A rigorous assessment system

• ‘Scoring system’
• ‘Decision tree’ – first applied to artefacts; now for records too
A truly low-cost ‘Quango’

- All done on proverbial ‘shoe string’
- Full time paid staff – one, Neil Butters
- Everyone else no remuneration, moderate expenses only
- Operation echoes volunteer ethos of UK railway preservation generally
WHAT WE COVER AND WHAT WE DON’T

• Records and moveable artefacts
• Owned by successor bodies to nationalised British Railways
• Military railways – still state-owned (fairly recent addition)
WHAT WE COVER AND WHAT WE DON’T

• But not...
  buildings and other structures – protected by listing artefacts and records already owned by heritage bodies
PART 5 THE PERMANENT CHALLENGES

1. The ‘Really Big Stuff’

2. The ‘Cinderella Stuff’

3. The ‘Nice Stuff but not Nice Enough’
PART 6. THE BIGGER PICTURE – MORE CHALLENGES!

But more opportunities too

The ‘RINA’ Project – Railway Industry National Archive

Extension of Scope
'CAROLINE'

Network Rail inspection saloon

Former Hastings (narrow) Diesel Electric Multiple Unit buffet car

Former BR Southern Region General Manager’s saloon