

# Preserving Britain's railway heritage



The first of these occasional columns by **Lord Faulkner of Worcester**, co-chairman of the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board, resulted in the recovery of a bridge plate, missing for 20 years.

This time he outlines a number of new designations in light of the introduction of LNER 'Azuma' trains and changes to the West Coast franchise.

READERS of my page in the August issue of *The Railway Magazine* may remember I made an appeal for information about the whereabouts of a number of missing important and valuable artefacts designated and protected under the Railway Heritage Act 1996.

My colleagues in the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board (RHDAB) and I are grateful for the response we received and are following up a number of leads.

At our October meeting we decided to set up an informal working group to pursue these, and I shall report progress in future articles.

One reader wrote directly to RM editor Chris Milner, and this set off a remarkable chain of events that involved eBay, a scrap metal dealer in the East Midlands, the chairman of Network Rail, the chief constable of the British

Transport Police and one of his most diligent sergeants, and the RHDAB.

The Manchester & Birmingham Railway plaque – a high-quality replica of the 1839 original – was erected at the new Manchester Piccadilly station in the mid-1960s. The plaque was removed in 1998 when an upgrade began on the station, but never reappeared when the work ended in 2002.

### Curious

Eagle-eyed railway enthusiast Mel Thorley, 72, then a train driver, immediately noticed the sign was missing. Mel, from Stockport, never gave up hope and in August 2019, 17 years after his pursuit began, he spotted a curious eBay listing.

The missing plaque was up for sale for £3,700 at a location in Nottinghamshire and later retrieved by BTP, citing Network

Rail as the item's rightful owner.

Mel's friend, retired British Transport Police (BTP) officer Dave Smith, also 72, contacted the National Railway Museum in York, who confirmed they had the original 1839 plaque.

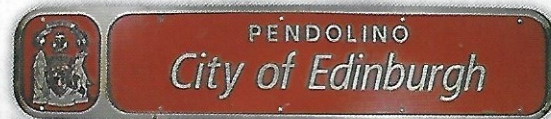
This made clear for Dave and Mel, who both used to work at Manchester Piccadilly, that there were in fact two such plaques, the second of which was the missing one they'd just discovered.

Plans are now afoot for the historic sign to be brought home to Manchester Piccadilly station. Mel added: "I'm chuffed. My mission is now complete."

The plaque – or strictly speaking, bridgeplate – was one of 11 items approved for designation in October. Others ranged from the *Locomotion 15* nameplate (RM Oct, p11), ex-Caledonian Railway signals from Greenloaning, the plaque at Carlisle station commemorating the quick



This replica London & Birmingham bridgeplate had been missing for 20 years before appearing on an internet auction site, located in a scrapyards, and being spotted by a keen-eyed reader of *The Railway Magazine* who knew of its history.



This nameplate from 'Pendolino' No. 390030 will be donated to a Scottish museum.

thinking of signaller Bill Taylor, which averted a major disaster by diverting a runaway Freightliner train, seven rare blue enamel BR signs from Plaistow, a rare survivor of BR's Swallow InterCity station branding from Wigan North Western, and an Anglia Railway sign at Thurston.

However, it's not just ancient artefacts that are considered for designation.

A collection of brand-new 'Castle Class' nameplates placed on GWR's HST power cars for its Bristol to Penzance service are now part of a class designation, which means all of them are protected. A class designation has also been applied to the Railway Industry Archive, updated and improved to take account of the changes in types of archive records.

It's worth reminding readers why artefacts and records are designated.

### Responsibilities

Designation recognises the significance of the items concerned according to agreed criteria, and confers responsibilities on the owners regarding their care. Specifically, it requires the owners to seek the approval of the RHDAB before seeking to transfer designated material.

Where transfer is proposed, every effort is made to secure an appropriate alternative owner and/or custodian.

At the October meeting a series of transfers were agreed.

These included:

Four nameplates from Virgin 'Pendolinos' which will go to national museums in Scotland and England.

The nameplates from LNER's Class 91 locomotives *For the Fallen* to the Imperial War Museum, and *Skyfall* to the National Museums of Scotland.

The nameplates from the HST power cars *Craigenfinny* to the National Museums of Scotland and *National Railway Museum 40 years 1975-2015* to the NRM.

The relocation of the Network South East Route Map at Essex Road station to the main concourse, where Great Northern Rail will display it as a heritage exhibit with interpretative labelling.

After extensive discussion in a special High Speed Train working group, we decided that HST power car 43302, the current speed record holder for the class, and HST carriage 40732, identified as the most original example of the class and representative of the style and layout of the buffet carriages, should both be designated and transferred to the National Railway Museum.

As always, we shall be delighted to hear from readers if they come across items on the railway which they consider worthy of designation.

The work of the RHDAB, marvellously supported by the Science Museum Group, continues so that what is important to Britain's railway story is protected and preserved. ■



The nameplate *For the Fallen* on the side of No. 91111 is destined for the Imperial War Museum. Also on the nameplate are five regimental cap badges, including those for the Tyneside Scottish, Yorkshire, and the Royal Dragoon Guards. CHRIS MILNER



This nameplate from 91007 (aka 91107), specially branded for the 23rd film in the James Bond franchise in 2012 is destined for the National Museums of Scotland.



Recent designations include (above left) an Anglia Railways station sign from Thurston, Norfolk (below left) a commemorative plaque at Carlisle station and (above) one of several BR Eastern Region enamel signs from Plaistow, East London.