

# Foreword

## Lord Faulkner of Worcester

Deputy Chair of the Science Museum Group  
Chair of the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board  
President of the Heritage Railway Group  
Life Member of the Great Western Society

**A**t the beginning of the 20th century – at the time that my great-grandfather John Jones was a top link driver at Old Oak Common – locomotive engineering was about to enter a new and advanced stage of development. In Britain that progress was best represented by the GWR's eminent locomotive engineer, G J Churchward, whose first express engines, the Saint 4-6-0s incorporated innovations that, becoming generally accepted, laid the foundations for locomotive design until the end of steam on British Railways 60 years later.

Sadly the last *Saint* to run in service was withdrawn and, possibly in error, scrapped 65 years ago. The reputation of these engines was such that a deep chasm was left in the national collection of preserved steam; volunteer societies could not even think of filling this gap until 1973 when the Great Western Society decided to purchase a withdrawn *Hall* with the intention of rebuilding it as a *Saint*. Even then it was another ten years before any scheme to do so could be put in place.

This book chronicles the 40 years of determination in the face of adversity that has been necessary to bring this project to its successful conclusion in 2018. The first undertaking had to be abandoned due to lack of money. A renewed appeal some years afterwards, initially much more successful was continually delayed by a plethora of real problems, insufficient engineering data, manufacturing processes that were no longer available, funding shortfalls, asinine official rulings (for example declarations that spoked wheels were not suitable for use on Britain's railway lines) and a lack of volunteers with the right skills. Only by herculean determination to see it through has this project reached fulfilment.

The GWS is proud of its achievement, justly so, and I am delighted to have been asked to write a foreword recommending this book to enthusiasts, engineers and anyone else who, like me, regrets that Britain no longer has a world class engineering industry.

The railway heritage and preservation movement in Britain contributes massively to the British economy and it is projects like the replica *Saint*, built almost entirely by volunteers in tiny workshops with archaic machinery, that reminds us that British engineering enterprise is not a thing of the past.

Richard Faulkner