

## Mapping Museums project interview transcript

Name: Keith Whitmore and Matt Arnold

Role: Chairman, Bahamas Locomotive Society (KW); Museum Assistant (MA)

Museum: Ingrow Loco Museum

Location of interview: in a railway carriage converted to a classroom/education centre

Date: 16/12/18

Interviewer(s): Toby Butler

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*For readability the transcript has been made using 'intelligent' transcription (removing ums, ers etc).*

- TB: Okay, brilliant. So, first of all, could you just introduce yourselves by saying your name and your date of birth please?
- KW: Keith Whitmore, XX-XXX 1955.
- MA: Matt Arnold, XX-XXX 1970.
- TB: Great. Keith, just tell me your role in the organisation and whether that has changed over the years?
- KW: Well, I first joined our society when I was twelve years, I was quite a youngster, when we were actually on the other side of the Pennines at what was called the Dinting Railway Centre. And I did have a career in politics so, I had to take a backseat to some extent for a few years. I came back in 2006/07, and I'm Chairman of the society now.
- TB: (00:00:46) Fantastic. Okay, that's quite a time with the organisation. That's lovely, thank you.
- MA: And I'm museum assistant in here since September this year.
- TB: (00:00:56) Okay, lovely. And can you just tell me your background?
- MA: So, I have a writing background. I started off in newspapers and then I have a teaching background, so, I was a teacher for six or seven years. And then I have a museum/heritage background through Houses of Parliament, BBC, Shetland Museum, National Railway Museum at York.
- TB: (00:01:17) Wow, and how did you get involved then, was it through... Do you live locally?
- MA: I live locally now. I came down to work for an exhibition and design company in between two museum jobs and I stay locally.
- TB: (00:01:29) Okay, that's great. And just a few basic questions about the setup as it is now. Just tell me about your governance, are you a charity?
- KW: Yes, we are a company limited by guarantee as well in terms of a charity. That's something we did some years ago and the Society is fifty years old. We started at what was called the Stockport Bahamas Locomotive Society, which has always sounded quite glamorous. The Bahamas name comes from what is the Jubilee class of steam locomotive from the old London Midlands Cottage Company and the first was called Silver Jubilee because it was built in the year of King George V silver jubilee. And after that, all the locomotives were named after Commonwealth countries, which is where the name Bahamas came from.
- TB: I see.
- KW: When they ran out of Commonwealth countries, they then went for warships, which were named after Greek mythological gods. So, you can see on the main line, the names of Leander and Galatea who went into that sort of later numberings.
- We were starting fifty years ago on the other side of the Pennines with our locomotive which was based at Stockport Edgeley. When that closed in 1968... It was always the shedmaster's favourite locomotive, and there was a group who

wanted to preserve it. And he thought, "It would be nice to see it's my loco." So, he put a tarpaulin over it in the shed and it stayed at the back of Stockport Edgeley shed until it was found by the railway... What was a body which was to do with condemned locomotives. And they saw the loco, there was then a panic phone call to our then chairman, who we secured a loan off one of our benefactors to buy the locomotive. So, it was literally at the last minute it got bought.

And then it was moved to Leeds and Hunslets restored the locomotive into a beautiful crimson lake livery, in LMS livery and after that, it went to Bury actually. Ironically, now, where the Bury East Lancs Railway Sheds are, but that was in the BR days, when it was still a BR shed.

A year later we found a site near Glossop called Dinting, right by the big famous Dinting viaduct, which is quite an iconic viaduct. And we were there until 1990 when unfortunately, we had to move because the lease was up, and we weren't able to renew the lease. The site is actually derelict to this day, at Dinting.

TB: (00:04:02) So, Dinting, was that the... In terms of opening to the public, was it open to the public there?

KW: Yes. The depot was an old Great Central depot and was also on the Woodhead line so, it was on the Glossop, Hadfield but the Woodhead line into Sheffield which, of course, was a very early electrification of railways. So, we were very fortunate that this became available as a site for us... Background noise there as well...

TB: That's great.

KW: Steam and diesel together. And we were, in those days of preservation it was very much about steam depots and Dinting was one the main ones, Carnforth was one the main ones, and Southport, they've now gone. It's more about railways now, the preservation field.

TB: (00:04:50) Okay, so just... That's interesting, I'd like to come back to that thing about depots and that being like a period of time in development. But the Dinting, at that moment... So, that was open to the public and that was a working line, it was a steam railway?

KW: It wasn't a railway, it was only a depot. We had literally, we had less than a quarter of a mile running track, which I think would have been a problem for us these days, if we were still there, to be honest, because people want to ride on the railway. But we were a very known depot. The Flying Scotsman was with us for a long time, Bittern, Blue Peter. We had some of the real famous preserved locomotives with us.

TB: (00:05:28) That was open to the public?

KW: It was open to the public, only really in the early days, we were open periodically, and closed throughout the whole winter. About 1973, we then opened up every single weekend throughout the year and we developed into things like we had transport days, school days. We had a site manager then... Although not in steam, we were open every day towards the very end of the life there.

- TB: (00:05:51) So, going to before that... Was that your first big base where, in fact, you were open regularly?
- KW: Yes.
- TB: (00:05:58) And what year did you start there?
- KW: We started in 1969. We reserved the locomotive in 1968 so, it was really 1967 was when we were trying to get it. So, last year was our fiftieth anniversary, '68 was when we really started kicking off and we rented Dinting in late 1968 and really started operating from 1969.
- TB: (00:06:23) Fantastic. I really want to drill down to the early days in '69, of the foundation of the society. So, it seems to me that you've already got this... You mentioned a group of people who, I presume are working in the rail industry around that shed that the engine was in, was that the core?
- KW: Yes, we had a lot of ex-steam drivers. The main element was ex-steam locomotive drivers, based at Stockport Sheds actually, by and large. And then there were a lot of youngsters. I was a youngster that was interested, my parents were involved, my mum used to run the kitchen and my dad used to do the car park. So, there was quite a lot of family stuff in Dinting. Most of our members, who are key members now were with the Locomotive all those years ago so, we've come through fifty years.
- TB: (00:07:12) Wow, that's amazing. Well, amazing not least because geographically, you've moved so much?
- KW: Yes. My worry is, of course, is in twenty-five years' time, who is going to be running things them, when we've gone to the shed in the sky.
- TB: (00:07:24) Just a little bit more about your family, because twelve is quite a young age to be involved in, I would imagine, in a society like this. Did your family have some links to the railway industry.
- KW: No, my dad was an enthusiast, I would say. My first experience I think was when I was about four-years-old, I was taken to Manchester Exchange Station to look at the patriot locos going from Manchester to Blackpool. Most people thought went from Victoria, but it wasn't actually, it was the Exchange Station.
- And apparently, I disgraced myself at four because I was having my photograph taken and screamed the place down when the locomotive let off steam. My father was very distraught about it and not at all happy. The prize was that I got in those days, you had a little dial where you could have your name done on a little plate. And I had my name done saying, "Keith has been bad." And then I got one done saying, "Keith has been good." The following year. So, there was that element to it.
- And funnily enough, the society was actually formed by bankers believe or not.
- TB: Oh, right.
- KW: The Williams Deacons Bank ran a lot of rail tours. Our chairman was the manager of the Longsight Williams Deacons Bank. Our treasurer was the manager of the

Barclays Bank across the road in Longsight. So, there was actually a lot of stuff that started in Longsight, Manchester, just down the road from Stockport. And a lot of meetings, in fact, the whole of the main line steam operation was formed in the bank manager's office in Longsight. For what was called "A Return to Steam" because steam stopped in 1968, three years later there was a return to steam with King George V, a famous Great Western loco. The second tour was a joint Bahamas with King George V. So, we were right there at the beginning of what was the "Return to Steam" on the main line.

TB: (00:09:09) Oh, I see. So, it sounds like your dad was an enthusiast, or he was a hobbyist, he enjoyed trainspotting maybe?

KW: Yes. Not taking down numbers, I took down numbers as a kid, but my dad used to like to look at locomotive operations and steam locos. And of course, I got a train set when I was five, which I think I got to play with when I was about ten. It was always put down, but I wasn't allowed to play with it... No time for me, my dad wanted to do it.

TB: (00:09:39) Okay, because that was such a huge hobby thing, wasn't it? And for me actually, I think... Maybe, well, I supposed it's moved onto Thomas the Tank Engine, hasn't it?

KW: Well, it was cool. My age group were the sort of last of... Standing on the end of platforms looking at locomotives coming in, it was the cool thing to do. And Ian Allan, famous publisher started really tabulating the locos. So, you had an Ian Allan book and you ticked off all locos in the Ian Allan book that you had seen. That was very much the way it was done. I suppose like computers these days for ticking things off there, but it was a cool thing to do for young lads. It was very much the thing to do.

TB: (00:10:20) And what sort of period are we talking about here, probably in the fifties and sixties maybe?

KW: I would say probably post-war, late 1940s it started as a real hobby. And Ian Allan started his books, his first one was a 1948/49 so, it's very much emanated from then. And in the fifties, of course, it was huge and throughout the sixties until the end of steam it would be. But there were some diesel enthusiasts as well, who did carry it on. But of course, it was such a different world, you could get up and clean... If you looked at the very last steam tour in 1968, in terms of health and safety, you would have an absolute nightmare.

If you look at Ribbleshead Viaduct coming off with thousands all over the track, they were everywhere, photographing the engine, walking about. We had open days, open day at Crewe Sheds. People of my age all sat on the boiler on the top of the steam locomotive with no protection or anything of that sort at all. So, it was a bit different health and safety ethos in those days.

TB: (00:11:27) But interesting though. Because I guess the people working on those trains and stuff, they obviously enjoyed showing them off and having people come in and putting them on the engines and stuff. It must have been... I don't know?

KW: Yes, well it wouldn't... British Railways wanted to extinguish steam, that was it, it was a new era. Fortunately, in some ways, what happened was, when the diesels were being built in the late fifties, they were totally unreliable, and they didn't work. There are so many experimental diesels that got scrapped that BR still then continued building steam locomotives. The last steam locomotive was built in 1960 with Evening Star, it only had an eight-year life.

But in the fifties, what was the Britannia class, that was a huge... And they had such a short life. Steam should have finished much later than it did in this country. But there was a determination that with the modern era, Beeching, of course, had done his report with branch lines closing all over the place and steam went with that as part of the modernisation.

TB: (00:12:32) Yes, I see. So, at what point, did there become this huge collection of obsolete trains that clearly were scrapped?

KW: Well, most of them got scrapped. The only way... Preservation started in 1951 the Tallyllyn Railway was the very first preserved railway in North Wales and it was a chap called Rolt who saved that with some friends of his, from Birmingham. Birmingham started it off. And then the Tallyllyn thing kicked things off and then the Ffestiniog Railway, and then the Bluebell Railway became the first standard gauge preserved railway.

And then it was much later on towards the end of steam, a lot of other people started looking at Severn Valley Railway for example, this railway. This is one of the pioneering railways, fifty years old this year. And it has the whole branch, the whole of the branch operated, it's very rare that the whole branch is still operational in a preserved railway. So, I think it took off to some extent with that trigger for the end of steam.

But British Railways scrapped so much so quickly, track was uplifted within days, locomotives were scrapped within days. The whole preservation movement really relies on the Barry Scrapyard, and it was Dai Woodham who had the Barry Scrapyard, had the foresight to think, "There's something here." So, he didn't scrap the steam locomotives. He scrapped all the wagons and he did away with the diesels and carriages. So, that was the base of what was two hundred and fifty locomotives as Barry, it's the base of what the preservation movement is today.

TB: (00:14:05) So, literally, the scrap merchant just thought, "I can't do this for these ones." Or maybe there were some more...?

KW: He could see there was a lot of interest, groups all over the place forming. Some were basket cases, the Duke Gloucester which had its cylinder taken out to be displayed at the National Rail Museum, and it was at the Science Museum in London. It was a basket case, whatever happened. But it's being overhauled on its third overhaul now. So, there were real basket cases but a real enthusiasm.

And some of those locomotives, I still haven't seen. And East Lancs Railway two weeks ago, the first steaming of an ex-Barry Scrapyard locomotive took place up and down in the yard. So, it's still evolving and happening now. But without Dai

Woodham, we wouldn't have the preservation movement that we've got. There were one or two took locomotives direct from BR, like ourselves with Bahamas.

But our sister locomotive then, Leander... Leander was a terrible... Was at Barry, we were buying it as spares for Bahamas, but a guy came along to say, "I'd rather like to preserve it, would you let me have it?" And we did so, that really was the second trigger.

TB: (00:15:13) Just going back to those early days, the sheer amount of money that was necessary; A, to buy a train, but then presumably, there is an awful lot of stuff around it in repairing and the materials and everything. So, these bankers, just explain to me a little bit more why those people, if you know, why they were so interested in getting involved and was it a personal thing for them.

KW: It was a bit of a PR. Ian Allan was involved with rail tours. You got people like Williams & Deacons Bank who ran rail tours for enthusiasts, they could see it was a good PR thing to actually have the [unclear 00:15:51] and a lot of these things happened from about 1964, the last four years of steam, there were an awful lot of rail tours. The Rail Travel Correspondent, they did rail tours, Ian Allan did rail tours, Williams Deacons were famous for rail tours.

TB: (00:16:09) What is a rail tour, just explain it to me?

KW: On the main line. Settle to Carlisle was one of the iconic rail tour routes, so a lot of that was done going down to Holyhead in North Wales from Crewe, very, very popular. And it was just seen as a bit of a PR thing.

TB: (00:16:22) So, were people going for a weekend and they'd stay at the other end of the line?

KW: Yes, yes. But the other thing was, it wasn't actually cheap. The last steam tour with Oliver Cromwell and... I won't call him Blackfire [unclear 00:16:37] that's what the name of the loco was. Was what was called a fifteen guinea special, it was fifteen guineas to go on the trip. That was quite a lot of money actually, in those days, to do that. So, there were thousands of people watching but the train was only half-full. And that was very much how these things were done. Before that, sort of '64, they were much cheaper for enthusiasts to do.

Now, mainline tours are not particularly about enthusiasts, they're about premier dining, they're about experiences. So, the first seats that get sold are always the premier dining with the three, four-course meal and then First Class, and then Standard Class, it's a very different sort of market these days, the way it's done.

We don't run railways for it... It's nice to have enthusiasts but you need to be blunt. On a steam railway ten percent of the income comes from the railway enthusiast, ninety percent comes from a family. That wasn't the case in those early days, it was enthusiasts very much in the driving seat and running it.

TB: (00:17:39) I see, okay. So, those bankers, they were involved literally in financing and putting on these tours.

KW: Yes, there was a lot of that, particularly Williams and Deacons bank, which was a famous bank for doing it.

- TB: (00:17:49) And did they put the money in to buy that train or was it someone else?
- KW: No, no, no, we found a benefactor for Bahamas...
- TB: Who was that?
- KW: He was a local business. We always called him Mr Potter, we never called him George, it was always Mr Potter. And he loaned a thousand pounds to us to buy the engine. It would cost more than that, but that was the main stake of it after our fundraising. And of course, in those days, it was jumble sales and storing newspaper in garages and things. That was how the money was made in those days, very different to now.
- TB: (00:18:21) So, apart from that one benefactor, did you get any other grants or major gifts at that stage?
- KW: No, no, no. We didn't get any other... It was all out of pockets.
- TB: (00:18:31) So, you bought the engine and you were involved at this point?
- KW: Yes, but I was only young.
- TB: (00:18:40) And so, then you had the problem of where are you going to put it; A, to work on it and then; B, to display it, I suppose?
- KW: Yes.
- TB: And you mentioned that it kind of moved around.
- KW: It did, well, the Edgeley Sheds is where it was, Stockport, Edgeley Sheds, which closed in 1968. It closed with a big gala, with the Flying Scotsman, Bahamas, and Oliver Cromwell. And Bahamas story has been quite a well-known... It's an enthusiast's favourite loco. What is unique about our loco compared to the other... The Jubilee class of which there was two hundred locos, it has a double chimney which is a big chimney, blast to improve its performance. And that was the very last piece of engineering ever done by BR to improve a locomotives performance. And you see the difference when it's on the main line with the blast that comes out of the chimney compared to the other Jubilees. So, you can literally say from the Rocket to Bahamas was the history of steam in this country.
- TB: So, it was kind of a pivotal technology which it is of interest particularly?
- KW: Yes.
- TB: But it wasn't possible to keep it there obviously, because the whole point of it...?
- KW: No, we couldn't keep it at Edgeley. It went off the Leeds, to Hunslets, to be beautifully painted. We then were desperate as to what to do with it and we fortunately got an agreement with British Rail to put it in Bury Sheds which as I said, now the Sheds is East Lancashire Railway. And it was then this option about Dinting in Glossop came along an old Great Central railway sheds and we went there. We went there late '68 and properly opened in '69.



TB: (00:20:14) So, just tell me about that move then. Clearly for it to open up to the public that would have involved an enormous amount of, I would have thought... Not just money but also time?

KW: Yes, the site was derelict. It's actually more overgrown now than it was when we started but literally, there was just a shed up there, with no doors, an old Great Central shed. So, we started with the shed and then next to the shed was the mess room, for drivers, that became our kitchen.

We then acquired some old framework from an old industrial site which we got to the site, and we built that ourselves as an exhibition hall. We didn't quite finish it so, we actually got some contractors to just finish it off for us, but that became then, an exhibition hall that could take in fifteen locomotives and we had a shop at the end of that. We also had a coach with sales in as well.

And Dinting grew more and more in popularity. When the Flying Scotsman came in 1973, it was one of the biggest events that has ever been. It took an hour and a half queue to get onto the footplate of the loco. And a queue all the way down Dinting Lane and all down the A57. My dad actually, as I said, did the car park. He went and said, "We're going to lose all these people if we're not careful." So, he actually went down the queue of people to get the money for the car park before they got on the site. [unclear 00:21:36] with that.

(laughter)

TB: That's brilliant. So, the Flying Scotsman, was that a temporary thing?

KW: It was there for a few weeks, we had it three or four times. But as I say, we had iconic locos, we had Bahamas, we had Leander, we had the Scots Guardsman, we had Bittern, we had Cheltenham, we had the Royal Scot for a very, very short... We had a big collection of locomotives for people to see.

TB: (00:22:02) So, where did all the other locomotives come from?

KW: Private owners. There was a chap called Geoff Drury who owned Bittern and Blue Peter, he originally got those at the Neville Hill Depot at Leeds and then they wanted them out, so they came to us. There was also Carnforth with whom we had some relationship, so, Carnforth was another depot where locomotives were stabled. The Cheltenham was owned by the National Railway Museum, that was a Great Central locomotive that was loaned to us.

In fact, Cheltenham is just about to go out of ticket, it's actually on the Mid-Hants Railway these days. It's probably appropriate because it's a Southern loco, it should be there. So, it was very assorted. One of our members owned a locomotive which you can actually see in the yard, in bits there which is an old crane tank from Sunderland which is one of our long-term projects. We had locomotives like Nunlow, that you'll see in the shed, that was gifted to us by the Hope Cement Works, with whom we still work closely, we're about to work on the overhaul of the engine.

TB: (00:23:02) So, all of these were on loan really from these individuals?

- KW: Yes. When Dinting closed of course, we had to get rid of a lot of the collection, like Scots Guardsman.
- TB: But given back to the people that owned them basically?
- KW: Yes.
- TB: (00:23:16) Where did the money come from to set up, it sounds like a pretty ambitious display that you've got going, fifteen engines and so on? Again, was it simply just a bit of fundraising, tombolas and things?
- KW: Yes, that's how it was done. It was out of our own pockets, there was no HLF money. There were no grants available, we got a small business grant from High Peak Borough Council. Local authorities weren't particularly that interested in those days. It just sorts of change, how you see things, the way they're done now to what they were done then. It was done through people's pockets.
- TB: (00:23:53) Yes. And how many people were involved roughly would you say in the setup and the running of it?
- KW: Probably, in terms of working members, we would probably have about a hundred and odd people, something like that.
- TB: Wow, active people?
- KW: Yes, we had about... We got to that. We expanded, and we were very fortunate that we were very popular with the local press, the Glossop Chronicle was very good us, as was the Manchester Evening News. So, we got good publicity for what we were doing.
- TB: (00:24:27) Okay, I'll just ask you... I think we've cut it a little bit given that clearly that trains and train sets, and trainspotting then was a big deal but how on earth did so many people get involved? What do you think, what was the... I don't know?
- KW: There was a determination that steam wouldn't die. There was an absolute determination of that enthusiasm and ex-drivers as well as youngsters like myself, were determined we weren't going to let it go. You know, 1968, 11<sup>th</sup> August, that was it, British Railway said, "Finished, no more now, no more steam."
- There was one locomotive that was allowed to be on the main line which was Flying Scotsman, because Alan Pegler had done a deal. Ironically, of course, he actually took the locomotive to America for the second year, so, it wasn't operational here and of course, it bankrupted him. Harold Wilson's government [unclear 00:25:16] promotions for Britain in America, which bankrupted him. He worked his own passage back on a boat to get back here, but the loco was stranded in America. This is where Sir William McAlpine then came in and bought it and saved it to come back.
- TB: (00:25:33) So, lots of industries have gone through changes, and it's something extraordinary perhaps to an outsider to think why so many people were so angry... Or so passionate about preserving something that clearly had its day, in terms of commercial transport. So, can you unpick it for me why that was?

KW: Well, people hadn't felt that it had had its day. A lot of rail enthusiasts who still wanted to see steam, of course went across the continent. People like Colin Garratt, who was a prolific photographer, who sadly died two months ago. He was the first sort of person who went off to Germany and went off to look at industrial steam everywhere to take photographs of working steam in Europe. Because it was much later, France was three years later to go, Germany was ten years later to go, East Germany, much, much later.

So, there was still working steam elsewhere and there was a feeling in 1968 for locos that were eight years old to go was an absolute waste of money. But there was always that sort of passion about steam, I think, that it wasn't going to die, and the movement would not let it die.

MA: Which is true to this day, the nostalgia is such a big part of the visitor experience, something that is tangible is really interesting to people because they can come in and there are lots of, "Oh, I remember." People go down the corridor in this carriage we're in now and they're like, "Oh, I remember this." And children go in and go, "Oh, this is like the Harry Potter train."

So, there are all these memories and that actually is probably the same fifty years ago, it was nostalgia for something very recent history. But still, we've got people living now, my parents, who are in their seventies who remember seeing trains running past where they used to live and have all these memories.

So, when I worked at the Railway Museum in York, my dad was there, and he was like, "I remember this one." It brings that experience much closer to the visitor and like Keith mentioned really early on, a lot of travellers now are the families because they're looking for that unique experience for the whole family partly based on nostalgia and partly based on teaching younger people a bit about recent history. So, that is a big powerful seller and nostalgia really makes people excited and keen to preserve something.

TB: So, I suppose, from what you're saying, steam trains did touch everybody, didn't they? Because everyone had ridden on one or seen one or whatever.

KW: Yes, and even now. Enthusiasts will sort of rib us at the idea of Thomas the Tank Engine at the weekends, but Thomas the Tank Engine is huge for kids, that's not a diesel, that's a steam locomotive that kids have no memory of in terms of that, but it's huge and iconic is Thomas the Tank Engine, it's a huge industry. And the preserved railways, a lot of them do Thomas the Tank Engine events. East Lancashire Railway do three a year, which is absolutely phenomenal, the people that will come on it.

But also, here we are, it's Christmas, Santa Specials. The trains are absolutely sold out here. East Lancs, thirty-six thousand tickets sold for a month, for Santa Specials, incredible.

TB: (00:28:33) Can I ask you something about train driving because you said a lot were train drivers. When it went from steam to diesel, was it a completely different kind of skillset or did many steam drivers crossover?

- KW: Most steam drivers left the industry.
- TB: Did they?
- KW: Most left the industry. Some retrained on diesel operation, but you always talk to an old driver... There was nothing to do on them, pressing the button, it's not alive, there was thing about steam engines being alive. And the regulator, you know, you pulled the regulator, you make it move how you want. You just push a button and horn with diesel comparatively. Diesel enthusiasts would totally disagree with this argument, because there are diesel enthusiasts around as well these days. I think that some drivers retrained but most left the industry.
- TB: Well, that's fascinating. So, it's almost like... Driving a steam train was much more of an organic kind of thing where you were... I don't know?
- KW: It was a long career. You started as a cleaner, you know. At fifteen years old, you would start on the railway as a cleaner and you would work progressively through to a pass cleaner to a fireman, a pass fireman to a driver. And that was a fifteen to seventeen-year progress of your career before you became a driver.
- MA: And it was a very prestigious role to have, like you may view... Say, like a doctor these days and it was part of their lives rather than just a job. Some other heritage places I've worked at, like in the Lighthouse industry, the light keepers, they don't do it for the money, they don't do it for the power, they do it because they love the environment, they love the atmosphere and they love helping other people which is similar to the railway drivers. I think they felt that they had got their plum job, and actually, if they went to diesel, maybe not quite the same for them so, they looked for different alternatives.
- KW: And every kid wanted to be an engine driver, they want to be an engine driver.
- TB: Yes, so, if you were one, it's quite something, isn't it, I suppose?
- KW: And even now, you see drivers on the mainline... There is a celebrity status with drivers on the mainline now, signing autographs, and taking kids on the footplate and showing them what's what.
- TB: (00:30:45) Yes, sure. And is it... I don't know, but in terms of class, would you say that most people working as train drivers were generally working-class or was it actually quite mixed?
- KW: Yes, but not the Railway Preservation Movement. A lot of the leadership of the Railway Preservation Movement was quite middle-class and in some cases, quite upper-class actually. People like Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who was interested in steam locomotives, did a miniature railway as well as the motor museum that he did. Quite a lot of that... McAlpine, the huge Concrete Bob industry. Bill McAlpine was a huge railway preservationist. So, there was that... There was a bit of millionaire as well as the working-class kids, probably like myself who were interested. So, it was quite a range.
- TB: (00:31:37) Okay. And did you find that range reflected in the volunteers, the hundred or so?

- KW: Yes. In terms of the society, your bank managers were the chairman and the secretaries and the treasurers. And the chief engineers, they were the drivers and the gricers I'd say, in terms of that... It's even slightly to that to this day actually.
- TB: Really? That's fascinating. So, I suppose, perhaps we were more comfortable with bureaucracy might kind of end up in those sorts of worlds perhaps but that is interesting.
- KW: Well, a lot of the engine lads wanted to do the locos, they didn't want to do all the paperwork and all the other side that has to be done, even more so these days than even then, to be honest. Health and safety stuff. The stuff that we've had to do, paperwork, to get our loco back on the mainline, compared to thirty-five years ago, it's just a different world.
- TB: Yes, I noticed there is a noticeboard in the workshop, there is a lot of kind of official bits and pieces that are safety rules and all that kind of stuff.
- KW: We have to follow them. We are as much responsible as the main railway industry, we have to follow the rules. An accident... There has been an accident report recently on East Lancs Railway where a trolley ran away on the line. The RSAB have had to do a full report into that and give recommendations on how you do... And you are expected to implement those.
- TB: Okay, so, it's quite a... Well, it is like running any business, isn't it?
- KW: Well, on the mainline, there was a steam locomotive, Tangmere, which three years ago, part of the West Coast fleet, which is the main provider of mainline steam, did what is called a SPAD, Signal Passed At Danger and nearly collided into a mainline train on the East Coast, quite serious it could have been. And the driver had switched off the recognition in terms of the warning that was given that you were approaching a signal, so, quite a serious report. You're dealing with big pieces of metal and machinery which can kill people and you have to realise that.
- TB: (00:33:44) So, how do you cope with all of that stuff, presumably you have people that don't mind dealing with, or understanding all that? In saying that, I suppose some of the people that are involved clearly worked on them anyway so, they had a grounding in it before they arrived here.
- KW: You develop an expertise, you have to in terms of the loco. There is a lot of expertise and knowledge when things fit together, they have to be done.
- So, we do have that engineering perfection really in terms of what people's knowledge is. We've been very fortunate, we've had the same team now for twenty-five years, who have been looking after the engine. We've got to think about the future and how that is going to develop of course. Age is an issue.
- TB: (00:34:26) Well, in terms of learning skills or updating expertise and so on, are there networks, most museums have support networks and so on, but is there one for steam heritage?
- KW: Yes, well, there are two. There is the Transport Trust which is for all heritage transport. And then there is the Heritage Railway Association, which is for railways,

steam and diesel, and tramways as well for that matter which is like an umbrella body who will lobby parliament and well. Nicky Morgan, the MP for Loughborough, which is where the Great Central is, chairs what is called the Old Parliamentary Heritage Railway Committee.

So, there is a committee in the House of Commons that deals with issues. Obviously, some serious stuff around and certainly volunteering, which is an issue about twelve-year-olds and the like about getting them involved, there are barriers to do that. Coal, a big issue, emissions is a big issue; coal, we can't run these things without coal, we have to be exempted. So, there is a lot of that sort of stuff we have to deal with.

TB: (00:35:30) Right, okay. So, of those two organisations, just tell me what they both do, you mentioned lobbying, but do they have other functions in terms of support?

KW: Yes, there is the annual awards. We were in for an award last year and we hopefully, might be in for one this year as well. There is the information giving, there is a structure and obviously, there are visits as well, that sort of thing. But it deals with issues that are relevant to the Heritage Railway Movement.

TB: (00:36:01) Yes, I see. Okay, great. Before we move on, because I would like to talk post-1990 which is when you came here, so, we'll move onto that in just a second. Before we leave those earlier decades, just in general terms, can you give me a sense of... you mentioned in the early days, there were two main railways, the Bluebell Railway and the one in Scotland was it... No, the Welsh?

KW: It was the Welsh, Talyllyn.

TB: Yes, but presumably after that there seemed lots and lots of other railway...?

KW: There were a lot of people... What actually did happen was, there were a lot of bodies who wanted to preserve a particular steam locomotive from Barry. So, you would find the preservation pioneers like Talyllyn, like the Ffestiniog, like the Bluebell, like the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, who were up and coming.

What tended to happen was that the steam depots were very much so, Dinting, Carnforth, Steamport at Southport, Didcot, were very much where the big locos were. Even a little private farm in Scotland, Lochty, which is where one of the A4s, which is on the mainline now Union of South Africa, went up and down a quarter of a mile of track, which is ridiculous for an A4 to do, something like that. They were very much the mainstay for a long time of preservation.

I remember a visit to the East Lancashire Railway in what was the [unclear 00:37:26], when we sort of looked and said, "We'll never achieve this." And of course, that is now a fully-fledged, very successful working steam railway, from Haywood down to Rawtenstall, via Bury. There was nothing there, when preservation... It was much, much later, it's only thirty years that railway has been going. So, there was that initial sort of way of working.

And the pioneering railways that we knew, like the Severn Valley Railway, one of the most iconic railways in the country. The Great Central Railway, all embryonic... The

Severn Valley started as just three miles, it's now all the way from Kidderminster to Bridge North.

TB: (00:38:06) What sort of period are we talking about here?

KW: We're talking about from... A good, from the late sixties until the late seventies for that, it took ten years for that to grow. And then the eighties, all over the place, there were railways popping up all over the place.

TB: (00:38:23) So, why was that, what happened in the eighties?

KW: Well, I think some of the people who got their steam locos and thought, "We could do a bit more than that." And lines all over the place. Some huge massive flops as well actually happened as well. The Ashford Steam Centre was one that comes to mind, the reopening of the Somerset and Dorset. But then some huge successes like the West Somerset Railway which is nearly a twenty-mile railway to Minehead up to Bishop Lydeard near Taunton. But they were much later along. I think it was the pioneers who started off, encouraged a lot of others then to mushroom out.

TB: Right, so, it was just kind showing that it could be done?

KW: Prove it could be done.

TB: (00:39:11) And not an easy thing, I guess, given that a lot of the stations got sold off to private housing, didn't they?

KW: Where you are now, that building there, there was nothing here. This was a derelict station platform. That building was moved brick by brick from Foulridge in Lancashire, ironically, on a line which is now possibly going to be reopened of Colne to Skipton, which is a great... But they can't have the station back, they've been told. And a lot of that did happen when things were collected for preservation, signal boxes. And Network Rail are quite good, they do donate things as well.

I chaired Greater Manchester Transport for some years, they thought I was quite barmy sometimes, I've got to say because when we closed the Oldham, Rochdale loop line for heavy rail to become Metrolink, I went around the whole line and preserved things like all the levers from Shaw signal box, all the canopies from Oldham Mumps Station, which you know see beautifully displayed at Bury. And also, there could be some Rawtenstall there as well, [unclear 00:40:15], they thought, "What is he doing?" But that is all now in preservation and it's preserved.

TB: (00:40:20) Sorry, what was your role then you said at the Greater Manchester?

KW: As a politician, I chaired Greater Manchester Transport Authority.

TB: Oh, I see, crikey, right okay.

KW: I was a councillor for thirty-three years.

TB: I've got you. And you were a councillor for...?

KW: I was in Manchester, a Manchester councillor.

TB: (00:40:35) That's amazing. Great. So, just to kind of recap then. Up until 1990 you had these pioneering very early ones then. Then around these, I suppose, these big sheds

where you could have fifteen or whatever trains. That's kind of where they were anyway by the sounds of it. They became hubs or places where people go at least to see the trains and then efforts were made to try and build longer and longer little bits of line out from there...?

KW: Yes. The rail industry also did things from time to time because they could see it was useful to do things like big depot open days, Crewe Works being opened, Doncaster Works being opened. That was very much something that was around then, that is very much diminished now with health and safety the way you have to do things. But big railway open-days were huge events in the eighties and nineties.

TB: Right, so the industry wasn't averse to this?

KW: No, it came back around. I think once it has seen the return to steam, it wasn't... And all these preserved railways all over the place, the industry became a bit more interested and mainline steam really started to take off as well all over the place.

TB: (00:41:44) And also financially, was it ever possible to make these things pay for themselves or was it always dependent...?

KW: It was a struggle, it was always a struggle. Certainly, even now, we do make a lot of money, but you have to spend a lot. It's a million quid to put a mainline locomotive, and these boiler certificates only last for ten years. After ten years you've got to do it all over again. Our locomotive will have cost nearly a million pounds to overhaul back to mainline standard.

TB: (00:42:17) So, the money to do that coming partly on fares you can charge and entrance fees. After 1990, clearly, the HLF would have had some other plans?

KW: There was grant availability that came up, local authorities provided quite a lot of grant money, they even bought locomotives. The City of Peterborough bought a steam locomotive that is on Nene Valley Railway, the City of Peterborough. So, the local authorities got involved as well. And I think in terms of looking outside Heritage Lottery Funding and all of that sort of stuff which is well-used now. We had nearly eight hundred thousand pounds to do this coach that we're in now as well as Bahamas being restored to the mainline. We couldn't have done that without the HLF money these days. So, that is the big difference now, the grant availability.

But you've got to do the right things. You're not going to get a lot of money just to do up a steam engine, there has got to be a payback in return. This is very much that part of that for schools to use a good educational resource, which Matt is overseeing.

TB: (00:43:22) Absolutely. Well, let's just talk about this switch then from Dinting to here, it was 1990 that you moved over. So, why did you leave Dinting and why did you come here?

KW: Well, we left Dinting because we lost the lease, weren't able to get the lease renewed. We looked around various places, East Lancashire Railways was one we looked at. We looked at a new project in the Cheshire area, we looked possibly at going to North Yorks Moors at one stage. We looked at other railways, Peak Rail.



We had a secret meeting on the M62 with the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, who gave us a guarantee that we would have an area for ourselves, we would permanently have Bahamas under cover and that was really the trigger why we came here.

TB: (00:44:15) Wow, why did it have to be a secret meeting?

KW: Because there was a big negotiation going on with another railway at that time that we were seriously thinking of going to. They offered us actually, not only just a site but also a bit of a running line that our own would be, which surprised me, I would never offer that if I was that railway.

TB: (00:44:36) But you decided not to go with that one and go with this one, why was that?

KW: Well, it was an established railway, the other railway was nothing like as long established and. We had actually had rivalry in the early days because we poached the Scots Guardsman, it was originally at this railway, in the early sixties and we poached it off them and got it. So, we were a bit of a rival with this railway in those days. And that was never forgotten and some of our lads were a bit... They used to call Howarth Yard, it's a bit like Barry Scrapyard, with the condition of some of the locos in there.

There was a bit of stuff that went on between us but that all was overcome, and we decided to come here on this site. We are, of course, a tenant which we have to understand which causes interest and tension sometimes from time to time with the railway, which we get through more or less unscathed.

TB: (00:45:30) So, you're leasing the engine shed from this other organisation?

KW: Yes. The railway owns all the land.

TB: (00:45:38) Sorry, what is the organisation that you lease from?

KW: From Keighley and Worth Valley Railway.

TB: Okay. Are they ones that own the carriage works?

KW: They own the land, yes. There is a question as to who owns the actual infrastructure, the infrastructure was put in by the Vintage Carriage Trust. You might want to talk to that if ever there was an issue here about what would happen. We own the exhibition hall at Dinting which we actually pulled down bit by bit and it went to the East Lancashire Railway but never ever got used, it got scrapped.

TB: (00:46:07) Well, it seems there are a lot of organisations which, you know, clearly, a lot of trust and lending and kind of pulling buildings down and having them rebuilt. There seems to be a sense of the greater good in terms of needing to preserve everything?

KW: Yes, in terms of the movement, there is a lot of camaraderie, we take locos from one railway for another for a gala, our coal tank that you've seen, is quite an iconic, it's the only one left of its class and a hugely important locomotive for what it did. That goes to galas. It's been to the Bluebell Railway, it's been down to South Wales, it's been Severn Valley, it's been to Llangollen, it's a very popular loco. And the demand

for Bahamas to go to places, well, we could spend nearly every day, I think, with the loco somewhere in the next year with the requests that we've had.

TB: (00:46:59) That's nice. This is going to sound a very stupid question, but do they actually get there by rail?

KW: It depends, if it's mainline certificated, yes. If it's not, it goes on a low loader.

TB: Right, okay. Thank you.

KW: Out of this yard which sometimes causes issues because the police have to have a look at how it gets in and out because there was an accident once with a loco coming out of this yard. Nothing to do with us, I hasten to add. And it does cost money potentially, which has to be added onto the cost.

TB: (00:47:27) Yes, which presumably the host organisation will pay for?

KW: They pay, we don't pay for it, they pay for it.

TB: It sounds to me like that...

KW: Well, we had nothing. When we moved here, we had nothing, that was a derelict shed so, we worked with Bradford Council who gave us a grant to do up that shed, which we did, and it gradually developed into the museum that we've got now. The collection of what we had was downsized completely. So, we had to sell some of our locos and the people that we had agreements with obviously, went elsewhere. The Scots Guardsman went all over the place before it became part of the West Coast fleet and took a long time to overhaul.

TB: (00:48:09) But the council gave you a grant, that's interesting, was that substantial?

KW: It was a useful grant. It wasn't a substantial grant, it was a useful grant to do infrastructure.

TB: (00:48:20) But they were keen to have you as an attraction, improving the offer that was here already?

KW: Yes. And the railway... This site enhances the railway. I think it's the main site on the railway if you want my view for people to come to.

TB: (00:48:35) So, how did you decide... Was the other museum going at that time?

KW: Yes, they've been there... Vintage Carriages Trust have been going for some time.

TB: (00:48:41) So, how did you figure out, they're doing this, so, we're going to do something different, how did that...?

KW: In the early days, individually, we're separate. We looked at what each other was doing. A few years ago, three or four years ago, we decided we needed to be more cooperative and rebrand as what is called Rail Story now, which is a partnership between the Vintage Carriage Trust, ourselves and the Railway. And we do work very closely with the Vintage Carriage Trust. Sometimes we work between us against the railway on some issues at times, to be honest because there are tensions and tricks sometimes. And we've had a bit of that very recently, because individuals are interesting.

This railway is very different to other railways in its structure because it was formed by Bob Cryer, the member of Parliament for Keighley, as he became. And his wife, who is our president, then became his successor as the MP when he was sadly killed in a car crash. And it was very much formed on what I would call a socialist collective principle. Which worked in those days but now it doesn't quite work the same way now. There is usually a company and a society these days with the railway and the company runs the railway and the society supports it. It's the other way around on this railway, the society council of volunteers runs the railway and the operating paid staff support it, slightly odd.

TB: (00:50:03) So, does that make decisions a bit more time-consuming?

KW: It does, because you've got a society council that you go through, you've got autonomous committees that are gone through. To get our sign of Rail Story out, which unfortunately, has blown down, it took six months to get that because one committee agreed it, another one didn't, and society council had to make the final decision. So, it can be a bit bureaucratic.

TB: (00:50:23) So, what is the idea behind Rail Story, was that really to have one public facing brank.

KW: Yes, because we've got...And we still have... Our museum accreditation is for Ingrow Loco. So, until the accreditation is renewed, we've been having it renewed for the last three years, it keeps on getting put off, and put off, and put off. But until it's renewed, we have to keep that title, as the Vintage Carriage Trust do as well. But we think Rail Story, where we have the engine shed, the station, the learning coach, and the carriage shed, is a good package.

MA: Like an umbrella sort of term. As a new person, I kind of describe it to my friends as the engine shed deals with the front of the railway, i.e. the locomotive. The carriages are dealt with by another organisation, and then we have the railway running through with six stations. But together, this whole site is Rail Story because it offers that experience which I mentioned earlier, about what people are looking for is, they're looking for a bit of museum, a bit of travelling on the railway, a bit of nostalgia in the old stations. And it's promoting this site to locals and visitors that it's more than just an old railway. It's for anyone who wants to use it from under-fives who have been in this learning coach to the senior citizens and enthusiasts and all the families in between.

KW: It's all about event, you know, Harry Potter is big with railways. We even do princesses and pirates and all that sort of thing. That's what heritage railways is much more about these days than just having enthusiasts around, that's the big change.

TB: (00:51:57) Yes, I say. So, it's wiped out a lot. So, when did Rail Story... When did that happen?

KW: We're about three or four years old now. As part of our lottery bid, we took on an audience development worker who finished in March of this year and actually, Debbie has had a... She's now employed by the railway but will be coming back in

September, we were very keen that all the educational stuff and the museum stuff... We couldn't lose that which is why Matt is here.

TB: (00:52:27) And how many paid people do you have working on staff?

KW: Matt works the most. And then we have what we call duty officers who between them open the museum Monday to Saturday and then Sunday is a volunteer day, that's how we operate, which of course, is only in the last five years. It was all run by volunteers before that and of course, we didn't open much in the week. Our visitor numbers have completely transformed since we had paid staff.

TB: (00:52:56) Really, why is that do you think?

KW: Because we were open, we weren't open.

TB: I see.

MA: It allows the visitor... They can research when we're open but if it's pretty much the same time every day, it allows them to go, "Oh, they'll be open, so we can go and visit them." If we're open eleven till four on Monday, and ten to two on another day, it becomes very frustrating for visitors. And even though we might look at our hours, in the winter, they're a bit slower, we're still getting people coming through because they know we're open and it's building that kind of reputation, that at least, for a core period of time, the museum is open, and the platform is open, and we'll bend over backwards. If they want to go on the platform, we'll let them on the platform, if they want to come in here, we'll let them come in here.

KW: It's day to day management. I live in Manchester, I don't come here every day, I talk to people. Matt is our eyes and ears and he has a responsibility to...

MA: When that sign blew down, that was the first thing I dealt with, up on hill trying to get the sign, it was all crooked and things like that. So, having someone here every day and the weekend. If people pop in, for a curator or anything else, there is always somebody here to say, "Yes, I can deal with that, but we'll pass it on." So, it's a good setup as it is.

TB: (00:54:12) So, it sounds like that was a really pivotal step then to me, to that kind of...?

KW: Absolutely. It is a different world now than it was then and we've got to realise, we're all that bit older and heritage has changed so much. And things could get lost so quickly as well. We talk about successes but there is an awful lot of bad stuff going on as well.

You've only got to look at Lancashire, Lancashire County Council at a stroke, pulled the plug on virtually their museum service. So, the Fleetwood Museum is now struggling through a little trust. The Helmshore, Helmshore is virtually shut, it's only open for schools. You've got the County Heritage Museum in Preston, that was run by Lancashire County, gone completely. There is a lot of bad stuff about museums around particularly, local authority funded ones, and they've had so much cuts.

TB: (00:55:03) Absolutely, yes. I wanted to ask you about the Transperia or Transperience?

KW: The Transperience was one of the biggest disasters, I think, ever done. It was decided, when the M606 motorway spur was opened, there was suddenly a thought that they could open a Bradford Council inspired museum there based around a tramway that would operate around a site and a lot of stuff including buses and things inside it. It had no realistic financing for it. It operated for a year then limped along for about another seven months and then I think it lost something like a hundred and seventy-two thousand because of the paid staff that they employed and then disappeared. I think it's now a distribution warehouse where it was, just off the M606 motorway spur.

TB: So, that was a...?

KW: It was a typical local authority way of trying to do something without actually thinking it through as to actually having people who knew what they were doing. There was a brief... I'm involved in what is called the Heaton Park Tramway in Manchester. There was a brief discussion about one of our trams going in there. We said, "It won't last six months, there's no point."

And there is motivation. Manchester had a big experience with the old Argos distribution centre at the Trafford Centre. There was an idea that there was going to be a museum of museums which was going to be a showcase for various smaller collections such as the Everton Football Club collection, the Heaton Park Tramway. So, these things were put in, which lasted a year and it was probably a sop to have something that opened the events centre which is there. It was a backwards way of doing it through Trafford Council to get planning permission. So, there was a few crafty things and that sort that have gone on as well.

TB: Okay. So, that was an example, which wasn't an independent...?

KW: Well, it's people not knowing what they're doing and their enthusiasm in doing it for other motivation, I think, is what I say.

TB: (00:57:06) Do you know anyone who set it up personally?

KW: There was one of our members who gave a bit of advice which was actually advice which was probably not to do it, I would say. There was a bit of discussion with the Little Shipley Glen Tramway, which is more of a funicular railway at Saltaire, which they again said, "It's not going to work." But they went ahead regardless. They actually lost I think, two quite historical vehicles, unfortunately, they just got nicked I think is what happened to them. They've never been seen since. They're probably in America somewhere now.

TB: (00:57:42) Okay, why didn't that work compared to this which clearly is working?

KW: Because there is not the passion and enthusiasm for it. There are examples in heritage railways, the Weardale Railway, is a good example of because everybody else has got one, we suddenly in the North here, we're going to have the Weardale Railway, and though it's not far from Shildon where the National Rail Museum are doing... And they put something like seventy-two permanent staff to run this five

and a half mile branch railway. I mean, it just lost an absolute fortune and they've ended up completely in a mess and bankrupted and shut.

It was then revived into opening as a heritage operation and struggled through and still does to this day really, struggle through. The steam engine has not been operational for five years, they do little DMUs from time to time. They did do these specials with polar expresses for a while, but they stopped those now. So, you've got to have the passion and the enthusiasm, I think, to drive it.

TB: Right, and a volunteer base that is going to support it by the sounds of it?

KW: Yes.

MA: As well as a business head.

KW: And a business case.

MA: You've got to run it like a business.

KW: And people will fight for it. The Midlands have lost a major museum at Snibston, The Snibston Discovery Centre, based on the old Snibston Colliery, was quite a museum. But local authority run by Leicestershire County Council who pulled the plug on it. There were no enthusiasts to fight for the thing properly, other than a few from outside. So, the whole thing just went at a stroke and lost a huge resource there. Great Central Railway got a few engines out of it, but you know, a sad... Snibston Colliery was one of the last collieries of Leicestershire, there's nothing there now.

TB: Yes, I see, I'm with you. Right so, it's not just the labour but it's also having people that when things are threatened can actually lobby and make a fuss?

KW: They're going to put pressure, yes, exactly.

TB: (00:59:36) So, just tell me a little bit more about the setup here now. So, your key focus is obviously... You've got a nice exhibition area but also you're repairing or restoring engines as well? Do they actually go out on the line here?

KW: Oh, yes. Our coal tanker is out in every gala. Nunlow, has just actually gone out of ticket, but has operated in every gala. We are working with the Hope Cement Works who help us fund the overhaul of that engine next year, they've got a big ninetieth-anniversary celebration which will be out with the loco and with our coal tank operational. Then it will get stripped down and re-overhauled.

TB: I see. So, you've got a sponsor for that?

KW: Yes. We are probably now the only society who owns a steam locomotive which is on the mainline but also runs a museum as well. A lot of the owning societies have lost their locomotives. We are one of the few that is still on the mainline, but we have a museum as well.

TB: (01:00:37) Why have the others lost their locomotives?

KW: Well, age profile, in some cases, they've not got the follow-on. And that is a worry for us, we've got to younger blood in to take over. You've got things like King Edward I, an iconic, a Great Western loco, on the mainline, went out of ticket, a million pounds to fund it, it's had to be done with a chap called Jeremy Hoskins who runs the Crewe Centre there. It's basically his loco now with the support through doing a bit of work.

Princess Elizabeth, one of the iconic LMS locos at Carnforth, part of the West Coast fleet. The Duke of Gloucester, which I mentioned before, now part of the fleet at Tyseley, now under them. We're independent still, we've still got our head way above the parapet and we have this museum, this coach, as well as doing the mainline stuff. We're a small society comparatively, we don't run a railway, but we do certainly have our head above the parapet. Steve Davies, the Director of National Railways Museum said we're a bit like the Tardis, much bigger on the inside than the outside. I think it's probably true.

TB: (01:01:47) That's a nice description. What sort of visitor numbers do you have a year, roughly?

KW: I'm just about to get the visitor numbers in an email for this year but about seven hundred percent increase from when we started to what we are now, in terms of proper opening.

TB: Wow, crikey, okay. So, are we talking in the thousands?

KW: Oh, yes. I'm not sure, have you seen?

MA: I've heard, but if you quote me a figure, I'll kind of say that's...

TB: Don't worry.

KW: I think I'll have to check on the actual number, but we have had steady growth the last three years from the sort of thousand, to the several thousands.

MA: That's what I've heard, yes.

KW: But I wouldn't like to say exactly what that several thousand is because I've not got the figures to hand.

TB: (01:02:39) So, tell me about audiences and the recent educational element and so on because this seems to me to be quite a big newish development in terms of having something really quite specifically for schools and so on? So, was it really the HLF process that kind of channelled you in that way or was it something you had thought about?

KW: Well, two things. The HLF were not going to give us money just to do Bahamas, we had to do something educationally with it. This coach was owned by one of our members, an old LMS brake coach which was under tarpaulin at Oakworth for eighteen years. And we suddenly thought we'd get things together and this became the learning coach, and it was added on with full discussion with HLF, who got very excited about this element to it and that's how it got going.

And then we thought about the theme of it, telling the history of Ingrow as well as a bit about interesting things on railways, a lot of people don't know about animals on railways, this is also very popular with kids.

TB: This is the picture of...?

KW: What a locomotive footplate looked like. We'd like to look at something potentially a bit more hands-on as well with something like that, and more hands-on stuff. Matt has brought in some very recent developments as well, Christmas activity for kids.

MA: Yes, I think every museum craves more space, whether you're a massive national museum, you always need more space. If you're a very small footprint like we are, and this space is actually a vital space because it allows us to operate school visits, nursery visits. We've got some lectures planned for next year, so we can have an audience of twenty in here. We've had families in here today, in half-term, we get bigger families, lots of families waiting on the platform for trains. So, it's a really mixed audience.

And also because it's got the exhibition, we've got the older people who are interested, the enthusiasts who are interested in this. They will happily let the children play with whatever is out and do a craft activity. So, actually, in here, I've seen probably, from toddlers right up to the enthusiasts in their eighties. It's just a space that offers a bit extra to our experience. It's warm, it's cosy so, if people are waiting on the platform, they come on in and it just makes them think, "Oh, that was really great, we went to two museums and then we went on the railway journey, but then, there was this extra."

So, it's a space we're trying to make people aware of that it's not just a museum where you learn about a story and old things. This is something that a modern audience can engage with, local families can engage with. I might think of doing an under fives workshop on Mondays, where it's like a drop-in or something like that where you just have families coming to engage with the railway.

And so, it's a really useful space from what I can see in my short time here. I see people's reactions, they just feel special that they're allowed to come in and look at our converted compartments, listen to the stories of how that used to be Third Class, this used to be First Class, the toilets. And the three different uses that it's had as a passenger vehicle, as a works vehicle, and now as a learning space.

TB: (01:05:54) Sure. There is also something interesting that you mentioned which is the fact that you've got a section on Ingrow. Now, this museum really could have been anywhere, couldn't it, quite literally? So, just tell me about the community, what if anything does this place offer the community, would you say?

KW: Well, local people come in certainly and they see things there. And they're amazed at some of the stuff historically...

MA: The aerial picture actually, is really engaging for local people because again, they can recognise, "Oh, that building." So, there is that.



- KW: And of course, we've produced a booklet as well, Pete Skellon, who is our...He's produced a book about the story of Ingrow as well, the local history... And that is proving quite popular in the library and places like that, it's proved quite popular.
- TB: And just in terms of... More broadly for the area and the community...?
- KW: We've got good support from the local councillors. Matt is working with the local councillors who practically, who want to actually do things here as well. We've got Chris Herd who is a local butcher, who is famous for his pies in Keighley, he is very keen. And also, Russell Brown, who is associated with Keighley College as well.
- We've had a Saturday Science Club which Debbie used to operate and was a huge resource for the local kids, there was a waiting list to come to it. And we're looking to revise that in the new year, Matt has had some really great work... And ideas and working with people like Russell, we can revive that in the new year.
- TB: (01:07:30) So, this is working on the local audiences and that kind of thing.
- MA: Yes, so, it's building on what has already happened but it's trying to attract people who maybe not... The museum experience isn't their kind of weekend activity but coming to do science in a non-classroom way, slightly different to what you can get in the class, is a bit more inviting. And actually, it does get those kind of slight teenagers, which is the really difficult audience to get because if they know that they come and do explosions and think about building greenhouses on Mars and actually practically doing things. That's a really difficult audience to get into any heritage space. It's the holy grail of any heritage space is to get the sort of thirteen to nineteen-year-olds engaged.
- So, even though it's eight to thirteen, if you just get a little few of those in there, and if they tell their friends. Like Keith mentioned earlier, Debbie, who used to work here is now going to work for the railway in a similar role, but we can kind of work together.
- So, she is very aware of Ingrow's potential so, it's really useful to have somebody working on the railway who I can then work with who we can then make sure that Ingrow becomes a focal part of anything that they may be organising. If we can either piggyback on their activities or do something aside their activities to complement what they're doing, working in partnership. Anything to get the hundreds of homes round here who might just want to come and wander in and see what's going on. That is what we're hoping to build.
- From what I know there has been a little bit of work done but I think there is definitely potential for the new audiences to come in and engage with Rail Story, the space, rather than just a museum. It's more about creating...
- KW: We've got a good relationship as well with some of the local politicians, the town council. I'm the only person who has ever been invited from the railway to address the town council, which I did, and we got some follow-ups from... In fact, I haven't told you that... I don't know if you remember but that lady who does the education stuff wants to have a chat. So, you know, with the town council that's been good.

With Bradford Council, we have some good working as well. We did some things... Our little locomotive, Tiny, that you saw in the museum, spent its entire working life in Manchester, at the Manchester Bradford Gasworks, now the site of Etihad Stadium. We were looking to do something here because obviously, last year we had the Manchester Arena bomb and there were families in Yorkshire who were killed.

Manchester received a White Rose Award in 2017 for the way in which it handled the aftermath of the bomb. The city council were looking to do something in Yorkshire, I was collared because the leader of the council knew my interest, he said, "Haven't you got an engine?" So, we actually did a Bee in the City headboard on our locomotive here with Richard Leese, the leader of Manchester Council and the leader of Bradford Council together, with the Lord Mayor who is sort of coming together... And that's been quite nice coming together with Bradford and Manchester as well. And we're looking to develop that further, perhaps with a bee garden and that sort of stuff.

So, that's where my sort of background in local government has helped a bit with that, to do that bringing it together.

TB: Yes, linking up those parts, yes, that's amazing.

KW: Susan Hinchliffe will be coming on our first trip on the mainline on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February so, those sorts of links, I think are important with local authorities. Which are not necessarily about money, it's about resource and support.

TB: (01:10:48) Okay, back to this big question which you have mentioned a number of times which is this generational sort of time-bomb potentially. I presume that your volunteer members are getting older. I'm assuming that's what you meant, it might be that you mean in terms of governance but you're worried that you're going to need some new generations coming in, in terms of the running of the place, is that the problem?

KW: Yes. If you go in the workshop you'll see quite a lot of younger people in the workshop.

TB: I was going to say, I did notice that because I was expecting everyone to be in their sixties but actually, that's not the case, is it?

KW: No, we have attracted that, and we have Sam, who is one of our real youngsters involved doing social media stuff for us. It's taking on those roles which a lot of heritage... Who's going to be the chairman, who's going to be the secretary, who's going to do that sort of work rather than the hands-on stuff. That is where I think there is a worry, about the administration and that engagement rather than just getting your hands dirty on a steam engine. I think that's a big worry for the heritage movement and getting youngsters interested in... But taking on the managerial roles.

TB: (01:11:59) How are you managing to get these younger people actually involved into the steam engine part of it, because that's quite impressive?

KW: Thomas is certainly... I always use the example of Nick Broderick who came to a Thomas event on the Great Central Railway, he is now the editor of Steam Railway Magazine. So, you could get that level through it, so, those events are important for youngsters. It's also then the interest and sometimes that's family connections, Sam, with his family, who have been involved on the railway. But also, just reaching out to youngsters.

We have had youngsters come in who have stayed, not with us, but have gone to the railway in other roles and we've got to look at how we sustain that a bit more. Our loco Bahamas will certainly be a pivot, we've got quite a lot of new members come in through Bahamas coming on the mainline. In fact, we've done a special offer for fifteen guineas, you can join, the fifteen guinea special and I think that will continue to be a big attraction and we'll draw some people back. Because that loco is on the mainline, is known and people want to work on it. So, I think that is going to be a big asset for us.

But I'm just conscious that we need to get people to do what I call the more boring jobs as well. Which unfortunately, are quite important to sustain how you operate because there is more governance, you know, governance is a big issue, a huge issue with the Heritage Lottery Fund. Diversity is also a huge issue as well, we have to meet those targets and we've got to reach out to new audiences.

TB: (01:13:29) Well, that's an interesting one because... I don't know, I'm just assuming but given that you were saying that the generation that were involved, whether they were steam train drivers and so on. I imagine it's a fairly kind of white...?

KW: And West Indian, quite a few West Indian.

TB: (01:13:46) I was going to ask, do you have any ethnically, and in terms of gender, do you manage to appeal to others in terms of your volunteer...?

KW: Not as much... To be honest, West Indians were quite involved in the heritage and now, that generation has not followed on. There is some work being done with some railways with Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. The Ribble Railway in Preston has been very successful in that. We haven't even scratched the surface and started properly. There are different ways which you reach out to those communities, through mosques and women's groups and the like. Which some people have successfully done, not in heritage railways, we've got a lot to do on that.

That sort of background now from the preservation movement, it was actually more multi-cultural before the preservation movement than the preservation, which is a male, middle-class, now older white. And we've got a lot to do to break those barriers down.

TB: Sure, that's interesting.

KW: I got the last but one year's Rochdale Mayor, had a youth mayor associated with him and he was quite keen on steam engines with his dad. I got them in as volunteers on East Lancs Railway and that's great to be able to do that. We need to because we've

got such a community here in Bradford, we need to do far more outreach with them but use the right techniques to do that, through mosques and through women's groups.

MA: Most museums are facing a similar problem with their visitor demographics as well. Not most museums, that's quite generalist but... I volunteer for the Calderdale Industrial Museum in Halifax and again, we don't feel that the visitors represent the whole community, similar to here I would say.

There are ways of introducing those things, you know, introducing stories of that are relevant to those people so that they can feel that nostalgia value it too. And all sorts of ways like going to outreach in a sort of non-threatening way, "Hello, we'd like to come and visit you, give you a tour." That kind of thing. So, there are ways but it's a lot of strategic investment and time.

KW: It's just getting out and talking to people sometimes. Heaton Park Tramway, where it is situated at Heaton Park is on the doorstep of the largest Jewish community in Greater Manchester and Jews will come into the park on a Sunday and they ride on the tram now. Because we talk to them and working with the Jewish Museum which is not far, as a partnership and that has paid off, we get huge numbers of our trams now in Heaton Park at the weekend.

TB: Okay, so, it can be done?

KW: Yes, it can be done.

TB: (01:16:31) Okay, well final couple of questions; what has the high point been for you, you've been with the place for a long time?

KW: We've haven't reached the high point. The high point will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February when we have our locomotive back on the mainline, doing it's first tour, down from Oxenhope, down this railway to Settle, Carlisle and back. And the high point will be to make sure that we get back after that first trip out, that will be the high point.

TB: (01:16:56) Which loco is going out?

KW: Oh, Bahamas, that will be Bahamas first mainline run for twenty-five years.

TB: Okay, so, that's a huge, huge deal.

MA: I've come at the right time.

TB: Yes, absolutely.

KW: Then we've got... It'll be the March gala. It will be the star of the March gala, we're doing an official launch with Sir Peter Hendy on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April. Our main time is round the corner, the main thing before that was at the end of September when we had the engine in steam for the first time at Tyseley Works. So, we're just on the precipice, I would say, of our main days.

TB: (01:17:33) So, for you, these are turning points for that locomotive's history really. But for you, it's a big thing?

KW: Yes, and the fact that it's going to be alright for twenty years, although it's boiler certificate will expire, this is the biggest overhaul it's ever had, and that boiler will be good with just a few tubes doing for twenty-odd years. So, they'll see me out.

TB: (01:17:51) Okay. why is it so important to preserve that engine, for you personally?

KW: Well, I've been associated with it for all my life virtually. So, a passion for steam and for that particular engine. And for some of our members to be blunt, it'll be the last time that they do see it in steam. And without the Lottery Fund they would never have seen it back in steam. So, it has a strong feel.

And it's interesting being here because there is a lot of anticipation certainly, we've had the mayor of Stockport, wanting to come and have a ride and we've promised we will take it back to Stockport Station next year. It will probably go to the Crewe Day as well next year. There is that sort of feeling... We call it the spirit of Stockport but the Yorkshire Jubilee, depending on what side of the Pennines you're on.

TB: I see, okay. I see what you mean. So, that engine is going to go home and symbolically, it means a lot?

KW: Well, it was in Yorkshire, it was often in Yorkshire. In its heyday, it worked in Yorkshire from Holbeck Leeds Shed. But towards the end of its life it was at Stockport, Edgeley, because Holbeck had closed in '65 and then it went to Stockport. So, both sides of the Pennines, it has an affinity, as the Yorkshire Jubilee so, when we're with Welcome to Yorkshire, it's the Yorkshire Jubilee but when we're with Stockport Council, it's Stockport Spirit.

TB: (01:19:18) This is fascinating because it's local identity caught up with something that is intrinsically mobile. So, it can be everything to everyone in a way, along a line, but it unpacks a little bit about this fixed idea of place, of somewhere where people can have generations and it's always been the same... That sort of feeling. But actually... I don't know, the train just breaks that idea completely doesn't it? Because it's linking places.

MA: There's even people coming here, and they see the Southport plate and they go, "Oh, my family come from there." And then they say, "Oh, that Yorkshire place." So, it's made its own story by being in so many different places.

KW: Well, that is a good... In the 1940s there, with its single chimney, in the 1960s in its authentic livery which it's in now, with its double chimney. Preservation in LMS red, but not authentic because it didn't carry that in that day. A lot of enthusiasts remember it like that. And then in the '90s, its last time on the main line, in that green, with its double chimney. So, that is the sort of four eras of the engine.

TB: Right, so the livery, the colours, the livery, that's...

KW: The livery is an issue with some people, yes. I mean, we might just for devilment, at one stage, I'd like to put it back in that... Some people would crucify me but...

TB: In blue?

MA: Rabble rouser.

- TB: Oh, red... Oh, sorry.
- KW: Because it was originally LMS Crimson Lake, but not with a double chimney.
- TB: (01:20:49) Yes. But just explain to me what these colours represent? It's linking them with certain periods but also certain geographical...?
- KW: With periods of time. Well, in history you go through. Obviously, there were independent railway companies all over the place until 1923. The London North Western Railway, the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, the 1923 was the big four, the LMS, the LNER, the Great Western, and the Southern came into being. And of course, 1948, that all became British Railways. So, there is different generations with different liveries.
- TB: (01:21:22) So, that decision as to what colour it is going to be now is quite...?
- KW: It has to be BR Green to be now. That's its authentic livery. And of course, the biggest debate was the Flying Scotsman. Because the Flying Scotsman, everybody remembers in LNER Apple Green with a single chimney, without its smoke deflectors and people want to see it like that. But it's in its British Railways Brunswick Green, with a double chimney and with smoke deflectors, which improved the performance of the loco because it was poor steamer before that. But hours and hours can be spent with enthusiasts talking about that. Families couldn't give a toss.
- MA: They just want to get on it and have that experience.
- KW: Enthusiasts will spend hours on it.
- TB: Thank you so much. Is there anything else that you want to add, please do but otherwise...
- KW: No, no, I think that's fine.
- TB: I've taken up a lot of your time so, I really appreciate it.

**Audio ends: 01:22:08**