

Mapping Museums project interview transcript

Ref (nos/region): 1/YH

Name: Trevor England and Chris Smyth

Role: Chair of the Trustees, Vintage Carriages Trust; Trustee, VCT.

Museum: Museum of Rail Travel, Ingrow

Location of interview: railway carriage, converted to an educational workshop space

Date: 17/12/18

Interviewer(s): Toby Butler

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

- TB: That's great. Well, first of all, can I just ask you to, in turn, just give me your name and your date of birth and your current role in the organisation?
- TE: I'm Trevor England, XX-XXX 1949, at the present time, I'm the Chairman of the Vintage Carriages Trust.
- CS: I'm Chris Smyth, born XX-XXX 1944 and I'm a trustee of VCT.
- TB: (00:00:35) Okay, that's fantastic. Just a couple of fact-checking things while we're here. Governance-wise, you're a charity, is that right?
- TE: Yes, a charitable incorporated organisation. We went through the hoops two or three years back.
- TB: (00:00:50) Lovely. And how many people work at the museum in terms of employed people?
- TE: We've got about five. There is Chris, who is the engineer, there is Alexandra and Keith who do part-time in the shops and we have two cleaners, Robert and Rose, that do part-time cleaning.
- TB: (00:01:12) Okay, lovely. And how many active volunteers do you have at the moment?
- TE: Around about forty in total, that all do various little bits. Some the occasional once a month, to others that are here virtually seven days a week.
- TB: (00:01:28) Wow, okay. And visitor number-wise, roughly how many visitors do you get a year?
- TE: In the region of fifteen thousand.
- TB: Really?
- TE: Yes.
- TB: Crikey, that's a lot. That's up there with some of the most popular independent museums, that's very impressive.
- TE: Up to five years ago, we were around about eleven thousand and we got involved with an audience development coordinator that was employed through the Bahamas Locomotive Society. We developed Rail Story along with that and then also, on top of that, we had the visits from coach parties that were coming to the railway. We did a twelve-month free trial, to encourage them that we had something to offer down here. That now brings us another one pound per visitor from that and we've got another two thousand people coming from that so, it's been a development.

TB: (00:02:20) Yes. That's fantastic. And in terms of turnover, can you give me a sense... You've got various income streams, haven't you? But is it in tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands?

TE: It's difficult to remember exactly what we've got. I think the easiest thing is actually give you a copy of the annual accounts and work it out from that. What we do is virtually anything that we earn, we spend on the restoration. If we don't earn as much then we slow down on the restoration work.

TB: Right, yes. And your income, basically comes from that fantastic tour, thank you, which I've just had, which was brilliant because it gave me a good sense of it. Sales of magazines, sales of...

TE: Second-hand books.

TB: Second-hand books. Of memorabilia found at auction and old signs...

TE: And we also have local interest things, relevant to our particular organisation that we sell, a small range of souvenirs. Hiring out of coaches to the railway, hiring out to film companies when we get the occasional film. There are all sorts of different ways of raising the revenue.

CS: But traditionally, we have been very dependent on contributions from our armchair membership and even from people who are not members. So, a lot of our money has come in not through the formal income streams we're talking about. And recently we've had some very generous bequests, and this is another area and it's why one of these bequests... You've been in the museum extension. Now that is a very useful extension, but we spent all our money building it. And we fell then, on, not quite hard times but watch what we spend, we have now, because of the bequests, we've now got significant money in the bank, just about a six-figure sum and this allows us to take the brakes off a bit. But we've always got to be aware of the financial constraints.

Traditionally, we've had a little bit of lottery money. Now, Trevor may have told you about accreditation, an awful lot of our volunteer resource and gone into re-accrediting the museum. We now need to look for grant aid in various areas, like new toilets to bring in a bit of additional revenue to supplement what we've already talked about.

TB: (00:05:20) I see. Just tell me about accreditation, why did you decide to go down that path because not everyone does?

CS: Well, we started as...

TE: As a registered museum...

CS: As a registered museum. And I have to admit that I'm one of those who raised an eyebrow about this. And in that case, I was quite wrong, museum registration was extremely good for us. It brought us into contact with a lot of people and a lot of ideas that hadn't... From the museum world, that hadn't been present within the world of railway preservation.

We then moved onto accreditation and I'll be frank, I'm one of those who would not have proceeded because the procedure is so time-consuming that it has used an awful lot of our secretary's time for a scheme that is not well-advertised to visitors to say, "Why does it matter that you're accredited?" What does it mean? And having set up this very complex scheme, it's not very well-advertised to the public. But, bear in mind, I am a minority here.

TE: I could give you the variation on the theme.

TB: Please, yes.

TE: In that, with accreditation, it gives us sources of income from fundraising and we've now got a fundraising team that we're putting together. We've relied for many a long year on two individuals that have always done the fundraising. And we haven't followed that up as they've got to the point where they're starting to retire from a number of projects on age, that we've now, got to work out how we're going to get another team together and actually go out there looking for funds. It isn't just lottery, we think that there are other funds that we can get, and we need to be specific in what we can do in the way of finding funds.

The rear wood extension that Chris mentioned, we actually did a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, in-house, without asking for funds, which we could have asked for. It's just that we hadn't got the wherewithal within the volunteer movement. One is that the people who were actually previously doing it, didn't want to take on another project and the people that were there said, "Well, nothing to do with us." And that system, we've had to alter, that's what we're hoping to do with re-accreditation.

This time, eighty-four pages plus supporting documents. Five years ago, it was twenty-odd pages. It's got to the point, as Chris says, you've got to justify it. Justifying it in five years when we come again, it will have to be that somebody needs to seriously think where independent museums are going. Unfortunately, we haven't got the resources of national museums and local museums and local museums where we just give a project leader the job. This is mainly done volunteer and takes up hours and hours where we could actually do restoration of our vehicles.

TB: (00:08:40) Yes. That's something that's coming out from quite a few of the interviews actually and I think maybe it's something that we could get into our recommendations, it just seems so onerous for all different sizes of organisation which doesn't... It just seems like it's too much frankly, for people to...

TE: It's up to the point where we put in the accreditation eighteen months ago, then because of the changes in personnel at the council, it was twelve months before we were actually considered for the process. They then changed some of the documentation and documents that we actually put in eighteen months ago needed to be revised in line of what was required. But at the time that we did it, that was what was required, and we did... And we've had to redo stuff that we had already done which I would say, was not helpful.

TB: (00:09:28) Yes, I know, it's so frustrating isn't it? Okay. Let's go to the main thing, the core of what I'm interested in which is really the very early days of this organisation. And I appreciate that the foundation of the museum is pre-dated by the foundation of the society, right? So, let's go back to the very, very beginning. I don't know who was here first or perhaps you both...

TE: As a brief history, the first vehicle that is now part of the collection is the Manchester Sheffield Lincolnshire four-wheel coach which was preserved by Tony Cox, who was the first chairman of the society as an ordinary trust, back in 1965.

TB: (00:10:14) Right, okay. So, this is really, really early, isn't it? And I also understand that the railway that we're next to was pretty much the second heritage railway in the country after the Bluebell?

TE: The Bluebell Railway, unless certain people will tell you the Middleton Railway was probably before the Bluebell Railway. It's always been a matter of who was first? But the answer is we were second or third.

- TB: (00:10:40) Okay, great. So, very early. And given that steam kind of came to a stop in '68, it was, in fact, before British Rail actually got rid of it. So, this was a working line and your organisation, in fact, was in place really to keep it going rather than it having grass growing through the rails?
- TE: The Worth Valley Railway as opposed to the Vintage Carriages Trust, was formed towards the end of 1961, early 1962, which was three months before the closure of the branch. So, the railway was left in place with a view that they would start to restore it and eventually run it as a local commuter railway. In actual fact, it turned out to become a preservation society which is slightly different.
- TB: (00:11:34) Right. So, we've got the history of the railway and it's preservation society, so that is one thing. Then we've got this, which is the carriage...?
- TE: The Vintage Carriages Trust, was really Tony Cox as an individual who met up with Robin Higgins, who was an individual, eventually became the first chairman and secretary in 1965.
- TB: (00:11:57) So, those two kind of set it up. And just tell me about... Did they work in the industry or what was their interest, were they collectors?
- TE: They were railway enthusiasts. Most of the preserved railways started with railway enthusiasts that eventually understood what museums were about. So, it was definitely a learning curve, as Chris said, once we started going into register museums, it was a matter of then learning from other museum people from outside the railway industry how much common ground there was in the museum world.
- TB: (00:12:33) Yes, sure. So, the VCT was set up in '65 by these two individuals, one of whom, bought a carriage, is that right, Tony Cox?
- CS: Yes. Can I just take you a little further back and say that when the railway was set up there was a strong movement to say there are enough preserved railways. So the Worth Valley encountered opposition from established schemes, of which there were three. And the story that was fed to the embryo railway was to say, there is Middleton Railway in Leeds, there is the Chasewater Railway in the Midlands and there is the Bluebell Railway in the South, we don't need you.
- So, this was part of the story, everybody who set up a museum in the sixties was told why do you not support that which already exists, why are you insisting on going off and doing something new? Now, another thing that comes here is the

railway, as Trevor has said, was set up to run trains. The coaches that Robin and Tony collected were hen huts, they were projects. They were excellent museum projects, but they needed a lot of work.

And one of the things that I think the railway got right was to say, "Look, VCT, we're not against you, we like what you're doing, you have our moral support. However, be aware that you are never going to get our financial support because we have so much to do in maintaining our railway, our stations, our more modern carriages, and our steam locomotives. So, you must plough your own furrow. As I say, we're not against you." But also, there was an element of, "And please don't compete too directly with our shop." Which I think it's fair to say is why we went into the second-hand books, magazines, railwayana, and so on. Whereas if you look in at Howarth Station, you will find modern tourist souvenirs with a railway enthusiast bias.

TB: (00:15:04) I see, I've got you. So, were Robin Higgins and Tony Cox involved in that railway society first of all; did it grow out of that or was it quite separate, if you know?

TE: No, they were part of the original society.

TB: (00:15:22) I see, right. But there was a feeling that you needed something special for these projects which that society couldn't cope with financially?

TE: Tony... As well as the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire coach also brought a locomotive to the railway, the one that is now known as the Green Dragon, was originally a Tony Cox engine which eventually was sold to the railway or to another organisation, which is closely affiliated to the railway.

TB: (00:15:48) And where did he get the money to buy all these things, was it his own private funds or was there fundraising?

TE: Certainly with the Midland Coach, which Robin featured on the Midland Coach, which was one the earlier six-wheel coaches, it was very much passed in and around the railway for people to put in small contributions.

CS: But bear in mind, as with a lot of museum exhibits, they were cheap to acquire, you were buying at scrap and firewood prices. It's only when you actually scratched your head and say, "Now, how are we going to restore this?" That you started to look at real money.

TB: (00:16:32) Right, okay. So, it didn't take too much to get hold of them at that time. I guess, when some things were coming out of service in waves I suppose, with carriages

that happened, I presume a company will decide right, this lot, were all built in 1940 so, we're going to get rid of the whole lot now, is that how it works?

TE: Well, if you look at The Beeching era in here, the idea was to get rid of the old and bring in the new. And the first thing that they got rid was all the old departmental coaches that looked like tatty old coaches in sidings and let's free up these sidings, scrap these lines and actually make some money.

So, they were very much into modernising the railway, which meant that early carriages disappeared very quickly. It was a matter of a few people managing to get hold of a certain amount of carriages. A lot of them when straight to the scrapyard without the preservation movement being able to do a great deal about it.

TB: (00:17:27) And also, I guess, the preservation movement was fairly early stage, I presume in the mid-sixties? It's not like there were lots... Well, it sounds like there were three or four major organisations.

TE: If you got a person in their thirties, they were in the minority, most of them were actually in their twenties or teens. So, teenagers actually putting their pocket money together and wanting to preserve something was definitely the thing of the day.

TB: Really?

TE: Those very same teenagers and twenties are the ones that are now in their seventies and eighties, and that's where you have the sustainability of museums, there has been an interest, a sideline in its own way.

TB: (00:18:05) Now, that is very interesting because you were saying that the people involved were actually pretty young, they were kind of... Which is unusual, most museums, you tend to get the retired setting these things up.

CS: Well, for example, taking my case. I got involved when I was at university at Newcastle when I became a founder member of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group. So, I would be about twenty and drove its sales committee because the idea there was to raise one thousand four hundred pounds, which doesn't sound much now but it was the price of a small house in the North East at the time. And we had only a few months to raise the money. And the same picture applied across the country to small groups.

It's quite intriguing because the British Transport Commission had put quite a fleet of locomotives into what is now York Museum. So, they had said, "We are going to preserve this, this, and this. And it's the young enthusiasts who said, "But, what about?" And they then set off, the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group to preserve two old North Eastern Railway freight engines which were not on the list.

TB: I see.

CS: Traditionalists were a little bit biased towards passenger engines and elegant engines. Whereas the enthusiasts remembered these workhorses. And Tony Cox's Green Dragon, as we now refer to it, this was a workhorse from this area which Tony bought, again, as a relatively... How old would he be, in his twenties?

TE: No later than his late twenties or early thirties. Interesting that Tony is actually still around and still working. We've only ever had, within the fifty years that we've been running, fifty-three years that we've been running, we've only had four chairmen. All four of them are still active in preservation.

TB: (00:20:15) Crikey, that's amazing. So, why do you think there was this interest in saving those workhorses, was it... I don't know, tell me?

CS: Well, I can give you a parallel and move on. The Tramway Museum Society was set up when the last of the tramways was closing. Now, the last city tramway was Glasgow, the only exception to tramway closure was Blackpool. Leeds went in '59, Sheffield went in '60 and suddenly, there weren't any trams anymore.

So, this group of again, relatively young people had been interested in the trams and they argued, and they were quite good at the documentation so, you can actually find where they were debating, what they were going to do, where they were going to go. They would have to set up a centre, the centre would have to accept a variety of trams, it couldn't be the Leeds Tramway Museum or the Manchester Tramway Museum, it had to be the National Tramway Museum. And it had to be done quite quickly because these things were vanishing like snow on a dyke.

Now, much the same happened with railway engines. Because if you go back to when the Worth Valley Railway closed, in '62, the railways were driven by steam. There were thousands of engines still about and the initial move as the sort of move towards Beeching applied, the initial move was to preserve the little old engines because they were obviously going to vanish. And it came as a bit of a shock to most

of us when the steam locos that had been built up until 1960 all vanished by 1968. So, suddenly, your interest which had been in quaint little old engines had to broaden to cover all these relatively modern engines and how many of those are you going to keep?

TB: Right, I see, gosh, yes.

TE: And of course, on the carriage side, it went very similar, the wooden-bodied carriage was out with old and in the with the new. Let's get all these new Mark 1's that started in the mid-fifties, and start replacing all wooden-bodied carriages by modern steel construction carriages. Which meant that they then had lots of wooden carriages and it was easy to take a carriage into a scrapyard, burn the body and then scrap the underframe.

TB: Oh, I see. That's how they scrapped them?

TE: So, it was an easy way to get rid of a lot of old carriages and if you weren't quick, you didn't get the opportunity. And saying, it will take us six months to fundraise, the scrap man says, "Sorry, I'm cutting it up tomorrow."

TB: (00:23:08) Just a simple kind of question, but how did you find out about these things that were in the scrapyard; I don't know, is there a system where a railway company would have been able to put the word out there?

TE: The scrap men were very amenable to people wanting to preserve stuff and with all the magazines from Ian Allan and the like, the recording of stuff that was going for scrap was all there to be seen. So, you knew where things were being withdrawn. More often than not they were actually scrapped in the area of which they actually finished work. So, you would have vehicles that were in sidings in York that suddenly it became known that such and such has just turned up in this siding in York. If you're interested in getting it then get in touch with head office at York and they'll talk to you.

TB: I see, okay.

TE: And the thought of a carriage being a carriage when it was preserved, shall we say, some of the documentation implied that this was scrap firewood that was getting rid of, rather than actual vehicles. Because it was an interesting way of just getting rid of something that would save them the problem of having to move it on by other means if somebody took it off their hands.

- CS: But there was another flow which is worth mentioning because it came as a sort of second stream of stuff into Vintage Carriages Trust. And that was, as railways like the Worth Valley opened, they needed coaching stock. If you're going to run passenger services, you have to have coaching stock. And so, they were in the market for something a little bit more modern and usable. And the three MET coaches and the Chatham, in fact, were acquired for the West Room Preservation Project, which failed. And the good fortune of the Worth Valley was that it acquired these four recently out of service coaches, not from the back of the engineers siding, but recently retired. And they were ready to use. A bit run down, but ready to use.
- Now, they came to VCT when the railway had got its three or four extra years out of them and they needed an overhaul. But there were so many coaches coming out of service on the national network, that the railway could acquire a replacement vehicle for say, a thousand pounds, which would be five years newer.
- And so, the railway, I think, if we hadn't been there, I think the railway would have disposed of the MET's and the Chatham because they said, "Look at it sensibly, lads, it'll cost you five thousand pounds to repair one of those coaches. We can buy one out of service with a couple of more years' service in it for a thousand pounds." So, it's not a commercial proposition. So, that is why these finished up with VCT after a spell of service on the Worth Valley Railway.
- TB: I see, yes.
- CS: So, that was where they came from. So, you've got sort of two different streams there. You've got the hen huts, the engineering vehicles which were exciting and interesting in the early sixties because they went back to Victorian times. By the mid-sixties, you were requiring significantly newer coaches straight out of service.
- TB: (00:26:52) I see, I've got you. Okay, lovely. And, Trevor, I didn't ask you but how did you get involved or what was your interest or background in terms of...?
- TE: I came to rule a steam locomotive into my ABC book in 1965. And I've been coming here now for seventy-four years... For fifty-four years, it sounds seventy-four years. So, yes, it was my local vicar that encouraged me to come and have a look at this steam locomotive that had just arrived. And by default, he had gone on to pastures new, back to Wales and the Worth Valley Railway and Vintage Carriages Trust has had to put with me for a number of years since.

TB: (00:27:31) So, how old were you when you first got involved?

TE: I was fifteen.

TB: You were fifteen years old, okay. So, you came along just literally to see a steam train, which, hang on, must have at that point... Was that the very early... Was that the first few years then of the society?

TE: I started trainspotting in 1958. So, as a trainspotter, I was interested in stuff and then I got to know about preservation in 1965. So, three years after a lot of people that were already involved with the railway. I had never even heard of the Worth Valley Railway, having lived in Rotherham all of sixty miles away. It was the other side of Leeds, you didn't know anywhere the other side of Leeds in the 1960s.

TB: But at fifteen, you did come over and you did get involved?

TE: Yes.

TB: This being the nearest place that you could actually?

TE: It was the nearest place that actually had preservation as a regular thing. Now, you can get stuff that's a lot closer but of course, you stick to your allegiance, to the places that you start.

TB: (00:28:28) And in your teens and twenties, what kind of things would you come over and do? Were you literally hands-on?

TE: I worked on the track maintenance gang. I worked in the carriage and wagon department, I became an operator on the railway, as a guard on the steam train, a driver on the diesel multiple units. And eventually, it became your life.

TB: (00:28:52) Can you tell me what is it about trains and carriages that kind of did it for you, that you were so interested in them?

TE: I think it's not so much just the trains, it's the fact of the social interaction with people. People from the teams right the way through to their eighties that were involved in the organisations. People from all walks of life and the crossover of learning different skills from different people.

Most solicitors think that it's a lot easier to dress-down and become a train driver for the day, well, people that were working in industry were quite happy to take on management roles because it was something different for them to do as opposed to their day job. So, there was a crossover in both directions from people that were

actually in professional jobs and people that were into service jobs actually learning skills from one another and not wanting to do exactly what they did in the week.

TB: (00:29:52) I see. I'm going to ask you the same question because it sounds to me like you had a slightly different direction, or certainly, came to it later as you said at university was when you first got involved. The first question is, yes, what was it about saving trains or whatever that was so exciting for you.

CS: Well, the first thing is you've got to remember that in the fifties, railway enthusiasm was a major hobby of lads. So, at my school, you wouldn't be the only geek talking about what had come through on the Liverpool express this morning, there was a general interest in steam locos promoted by Ian Allan's ABC books, which Trevor has already mentioned.

Yes, I got a little bit involved at Crich as it took off, but I was quite intrigued thinking back. I went to the Bluebell Railway so, this must have been about '62 when they were running. And I looked at it and I enjoyed it, but I didn't feel any inclination to get involved in it at all.

But I got involved in the North East and my first job on leaving university was down in Cheshire, in Knutsford, where I'm now living again, having circled the country a bit and Worth Valley was the nearest point. It was a long trip back to Tees and Tyneside to the group I had been involved with, though I had maintained contacts there. From that group we have Andrew Scott, who was head of the National Railway Museum so, he was one of those who came in from Newcastle University.

TB: Oh, right, okay.

CS: So, there was quite a strong group of interested people there. But I came here to see what was happening. This was, in my case, this was in '67. So, I had started working, this was the nearest place so, I came and had a look at what was going on, joined and found that you could travel on the works trains and be involved in things. So, I quite rapidly became heavily involved here.

Once the railway started operating there was a sudden demand for a number of not only, drivers and firemen, but guards, crossing keepers, station staff. And as each of these was being covered by volunteers, for each job, you needed quite a few people, perhaps ten by the time you had some fall by the wayside during training. Training

was less lengthy than it is now. And then I became involved in sales which I had been doing in the North East.

We had seen the need to raise money as Trevor has explained. Getting enough money to buy things was crucial. So, we set up to produce booklets and the booklets we produced were on where you could still find steam initially on the main line, and also, in due course, in industry and we sold these at five shillings each. And as I've said, there were a lot of interested people, there was a real market for something that told you when a colliery was going to be running its steam engine and this sort of thing. So, we borrowed the duplicator, an early version with...

TB: With the handle?

CS: Yes, that's it, at my father's school and we produced five hundred five shilling booklets and then we sold them on here at Worth Valley. As I said, VCT was already picking up in the person of Guy Henderson as much as anybody, the idea of selling second-hand stuff to make money. And I was, for a period, in charge of sales up at Howarth. Not an easy job to run as a volunteer, because everybody has been in the shop and so, they can always run it better than you.

TB: (00:35:04) That's fascinating. So, you started off doing some of the jobs on the railway and you took on a few of those, guarding and that kind of stuff. But then you moved on actually to publishing, which is fascinating. And professionally, what were you doing, did you have some background in sales?

CS: No, my sales background as far as the Worth Valley was concerned was my work on railways in the North East. No, I was working at the cutting edge, nuclear power, Harold Wilson's future. So, I was working on nuclear power stations and eventually became involved in the computer control of them. And I watched my cutting edge profession turn into museum work. Because the trouble with the computers that run our power stations is that they have to last for thirty years and computers are not built to last for thirty years. But you carried out so much safety-related work on them that you have to keep them going.

TB: (00:36:16) Gosh, how amazing. I thought your point, Trevor, earlier about different backgrounds and people coming together was absolutely fascinating. Because an outsider might assume that a lot of people involved would tend to be train drivers or people working in the railways and so on. But actually, what I'm hearing, in your society at least, that's not the case at all, it was people from all over.

TE: It was very much that there were a few operating train drivers involved with the railway and they were training other people up to do their job. As I said, the likes of solicitors and doctors that wanted to be train drivers, were the first ones that got the job.

So, it was very much a changing of people wanting to actually learn one another's skills. I started in secondary school and started as a fitter in the steelworks. So, at the weekend, I didn't particularly want to be working with sledgehammers and things like that, that I had been doing in the week. I turned my skills to doing things with pen and paper on occasions for a change.

TB: (00:37:28) I see, yes, absolutely because it's a hobby, it's something to enjoy or be different from your work life. That's lovely. This might seem quite obvious, but I'll just ask the question anyway. Why was the society set up, simple as that? Clearly, it was to preserve a carriage or a couple of carriages but can you... This might have changed over the years, I don't know.

TE: It was really the idea, as Chris has said earlier, that the railway, by 1970 or just after had decided to dispose of wooden-bodied carriages. We saw that we'd like to restore these, and we needed to do something different to just run them on the trains which the railway wasn't that keen on.

The answer is the railway offered us a plot of land down here in the 1980s to set up at Ingrow and to develop it as a museum. The initial thought was this gave us some siding space with a building that we could put onto the sidings where we could carry on the carriage restoration. We then realised that we could go into the museum world as a way of getting funding.

TB: (00:38:39) Okay, lovely. So, '65 the VCT was set up, but you didn't have your base here at '65 or did you?

TE: In 1965 everybody was based at Howarth. By 1970, the carriage side had been based at Oxenhope, because they split the locomotives from the carriages and then in the later stages because there was the Worth Valley Railway running it operating services, you've got the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Preservation Society with its group of Lancashire and Yorkshire coaches. And you've got the Vintage Carriages, so, there were three organisations on one site.

TB: (00:39:17) This was at Oxenhope?

TE: At Oxenhope. And it was then that there was a shortage of undercover space to do work on the collection that we had put together, it was better to find another building on another site and do something different. To do that, we needed to fundraise. We already had a shop down at Keighley Station for a number of years then we took in a small shop just down the road from Howarth Station to sell our second-hand railwayana.

When we were offered the site here, we could then bring all the shop and the collection together on one site, sell our stuff that actually then, you could restore the vehicles that the money from the shops was making.

TB: (00:40:02) Okay, I've got you. And so, that land was owned by the railway?

TE: The land is still owned by the railway, we lease it to the railway and it costs us twenty pounds a year.

CS: But it's a hundred-year lease. So, it meets approved museum practice. It's very quickly said, but it was quite a slow learning process because we started to restore one of the vehicles and then the winter came and washed our work away. And that's what moved us to think we really must get undercover, so, that started the thinking. And as Trevor says, we then thought, "Yes, we'll make a shed." And it was another big mental step to say, "No, it won't just be somewhere to work on the vehicles, it will be somewhere to display and show off the vehicles... Or, perhaps it will be a museum."

TB: Wow, okay. You're right, and I think it's important to unpack that because it sounds like that was a big decision for the society to make.

CS: Yes.

TB: (00:41:12) Just in terms of date, did you say it was 1990 that you set up here?

TE: 1989 when we put the building up.

TB: 1989 when you put the building up, okay.

TE: And it took until about 1992 before we had good walkways in the place, so people could actually...

TB: (00:41:28) So, you opened to the public in '92 then or earlier?

TE: We were opened to the public in 1990 but, shall we say, it was an experience. First of all, they had to negotiate the... When we first started there was, of course,

virtually no track into the building. We moved the track into the building and then isolated the vehicles within the building as the first stage, while they redeveloped the whole of the site.

Because this came as a redevelopment of the site under what was then the Manpower Services Commission where we put a new station building up at Ingrow. The original one had been vandalised and demolished. We brought in a building to Ingrow from Foulridge in Lancashire, so, we actually had a bit of Lancashire in Yorkshire. As part of that development we wanted setted roadways down to the museums, this took a three-year period to do with Manpower Service Commission doing a lot of the work, but it was led by the volunteers of what we actually wanted.

TB: I see.

TE: So, it was that three-year period where people could find their way down this building site to actually look around the carriages in the museum.

TB: (00:42:42) So, who drove... That's massive to me, the station, for the county in a way. So, was that driven by the railway or the council or by you as an organisation? It sounds like a really big, big project, that Manpower Service bit.

TE: It was railway-run but with support from other sources and at the same time, both Vintage Carriages Trust, looking for expansion of its own. The Bahamas Locomotive Society that is at the other end of the yard had just had the point where the people at Dinting, that owned their land, had told them that they needed to relocate.

So, you finished up with two organisations coming to the site within eighteen months of one another, that was setting up afresh. And we, independently set up one end of the yard from the other. And it's only in the last six years that we've actually realised that you're better working as a team and moving it all together. And that's only taken us another twenty years.

TB: (00:43:47) Why did that take so long, because that does seem a bit strange, to an outsider anyway?

TE: I like to use the phrase 'Not invented here Syndrome' We've always done it this way, we're going to do it our way, then at the other end can do it their way. Then you realise that you can get even more if you actually joined forces. You're doing a lot that is similar but differently if you understand. They're to do with locomotives,

we're to do with carriages, why do we need have them? The answer is well, they need to occasionally shunt our museum.

And we've gradually realised that we're a lot better working together, and it was really the fact that they wanted lottery money for restoring their locomotive Bahamas that they had to then have an education side of things. And the answer is working with partners was a requirement of the lottery bid, and by default, we actually started to work together, and we found out that we weren't that dissimilar in many ways anyway. And it's cascaded and that's where the visitor numbers have improved because we're working together.

And the railway offers a discount for people coming on a day rover ticket, who come down here. They pay the VCT and the BLS a portion of their admission charge which is a discount to the railway but at the same time, we get more visitors coming off the railway which has increased our visitor number.

TB: (00:45:18) Brilliant. So, you've got the story.

TE: So, it's all working in together. And as I say, the partnership, is the three, of course. The first question that we had was that when we rebranded the site as the railway station, the locomotive shed, or engine shed, and the carriage works, well, why do people need to know that it's the station? It's obvious it's a railway station and that is why they came down to the carriages at the bottom of the yard, not realising they've actually passed the station building and they're saying, "Where do we catch a train?"

TB: I see, yes.

TE: And you've got to appreciate that people coming through the door, by the time they've driven down the yard in a car, at five miles an hour, or sometimes a little bit more, they've already passed the first two sites before they realise that they've actually passed where the trains are actually leaving from.

TB: Well, this is fascinating because it's interesting that the HLF thing just kind of triggered that cooperation.

TE: It did, yes.

TB: (00:46:18) Which is interesting and also, the fact that you've had to, as part of that process, think about the visitor and how they perceive it all. Because clearly, it makes total sense organisationally to have different names and sites and stuff. But of course, to

the visitor who knows nothing about this, it doesn't make any sense at all. Unless you frame it with the railway story kind of thing which is great.

TE: So, we now run under the title of Rail Story, which stands for Railway History, if you have a look at the branding. And the ideas that showing three different parts of railway history on the one site is a museum environment on its own in that you've got two independent accredited museums on the railway that isn't accredited because it's a preservation society in its own right.

CS: Well, it's a proper railway, we're not a museum.

TE: So, the fact that they are actually a charity in their own right, they do get some of it, but the answer is it's an add-on extra and it's that add-on extra that is starting to develop. And I think in another five years it will be a different body altogether. And I think that the museum world will eventually catch with them and them realising that they're more of the museum than they think they are.

CS: There is one thing that we haven't mentioned thus far. Bahamas came here in a slightly traumatic state because of the closure of the Dinting site. And for many years they weren't very often open and a lot of it was the lottery money with the development officer giving a permanent presence rather than a weekend presence that probably speeded up the coming together.

TB: (00:48:13) Yes, I see. Because if they're only open at weekends, it's hard to cooperate if you're open much longer hours, which I guess you were?

CS: Yes. Well, yes, I don't know how long we've been running every day except Christmas Day, but it was a very deliberate decision to... Because we don't need a lot of people to open the museum. If you finish up with these museums which are open Thursdays and Fridays, excepting in February or whatever, you finish up with something that is very complicated, and we were looking for something uncomplicated.

TB: (00:48:55) And your visitor numbers are really good as a result, I'm sure. Let's just go back to this moment when the society decided that they were going to be a publicly accessible museum as opposed to a very large shed with lots of people restoring something. Because that is a big decision. And also, that must have happened, I suppose, and the debate about it must have been around the mid-eighties, would it

have been... '87, '88, I don't know? So, can you just talk me through that or was some debate about it, where did that impulse to go public come from?

CS: Yes, as I say, it was a gradually developing thing. But you've got to remember that the vintage coaches were not going to be used very much. So, you're putting all this work into restoring what I've referred to as hen huts and when you've finished with them they'll not be easy to use, and they'll not be used very often. So, it's a dawning realisation that if you're going to put all this work into making these beautiful exhibits then you better make arrangements for people to be able to come and see them. It doesn't apply on the railway, because the railway doesn't give any access to the carriage sheds at Oxenhope in general terms, but that's fine because the coaches come out on the line and you can travel in them. But this just did not apply to us so, it was a fairly logical development to open to the public.

Whether we could... An awful lot of the things that we mentioned that would probably be more difficult in the modern world if we just start with Trevor coming to the site for the first time as a teenager, with his local vicar. Now, you would have to at least have the vicar checked out and this sort of thing.

TE: And they still wouldn't have been allowed to take one individual under sixteen, in his own vehicle.

CS: And similarly, we, as Trevor has said, we opened this place as an embryo museum. Nowadays, you would have to do an awful lot more risk assessment and I think we'd have not opened as quickly as we did if we'd had to do that.

TB: Right. So, in that respect, it was easier to move things on into a public realm.

TE: I think anybody starting today would have a lot harder job than what we managed in the 1960s and right the way through to the '90's really.

TB: (00:52:13) Yes. We're quite interested in transport museums that have clearly expanded, it seems, throughout the period. But here, clearly, the late sixties were the big moment, I guess, or mid to late sixties, when the steam trains were coming to an end. But also, it seems that there was a later kind of boom, maybe in the eighties, where railway preservation seemed to be everywhere almost. Is that fair to say, have you noticed that more generally?

TE: Because people are doing something in one area and people didn't want to travel... It then got into people were interested in the history and why should we actually

lose our particular piece of railway line? So, they were trying to reintroduce railway lines that had been long closed and that became a boom in its own right.

But that in itself, has actually brought in a lot of more general visitor interest and that is where the museum world has come on in that we're moving on from enthusiasts of our age that are now, shall we say, sadly departing. You are now moving into a culture where most of the people don't remember steam trains as a natural thing. And you're now getting people that are doing it for nostalgia or because they remember the early days of preservation. Preservation is a history in itself and it has been going for over fifty years.

Ninety percent of our visitors are actually family people that at least one member of the family has probably got some interest in steam trains rather than it being a group of enthusiasts that haven't got a wife and kids which is where we started from.

TB: That's interesting. So, the audience is moving in that respect?

CS: The other thing that we haven't mentioned thus far is Barrie, the scrap yard at Barrie, where there were two hundred and fifty steam engines put to one side by a wily scrap merchant or a kindly scrap merchant, depending on your definition. And all of those were sold into preservation, every single one of them. And this meant that you had two hundred and fifty projects to spread around the countryside.

TB: Oh, I see, yes. That's right. So, it's going to take them... It could be ten or twenty years until those things are ready to go?

CS: Oh, you're speedy, sir, you're speedy.

TB: Really?

TE: Out of over two hundred that is preserved there is now about a hundred of fifty of them that have actually been worked on, that have now operated in preservation. Of that hundred and fifty, fifty percent of them are now awaiting boiler work and are actually stood around in museums, not in working order, but fully restored.

So, you can look around many of the preserved railways now and see engines nicely polished up in sidings that aren't in working order waiting for the next... And they actually came out of the scrap yard with the intention that these were the ones that were going to keep people going for the next hundred years, and it don't work that way.

TB: (00:55:21) Okay, I see. So, one minute there is a huge pent-up demand or potential in terms of these engines and over the decades you will see this play out as they find homes and little bits of line can be restored and preserved?

CS: Well, yes, but, bear in mind that we haven't really mentioned the steam engines yet, have we? I got involved with... I got VCT involved, that's a bit grandiose but I was a bit involved in... Heritage Railway Association and we were told about the PRISM scheme.

TB: What's that?

CS: Which was a fifty percent grant towards purchase and restoration. And the fifty percent only applied to the purchase because it was designed to allow you to buy an old master, a painting, you would get half the cost of the old master and then they generously threw in the restoration costs at full cost. So, there was no reason at all why you shouldn't apply this to a steam locomotive. So, I took this to the railway and they said, "No, Chris, you must have misunderstood, it can't possibly work like that." So, we, VCT, went and bought an 1874 steam colliery locomotive called Bellerophon. We bought it from the railway, it had been brought into Howarth yard, one of the earliest ones in the...

TE: 1966, from the National Coal Board.

CS: And it had just lay there because it was too small, too small, too old. It was like our hen huts. The railway again didn't dislike it but there was no way they were ever going to do anything about it. But we managed to get the money to restore it and we found the people willing to restore it. And we had a nagging voice from its home over at Haydock, which was a guy called Vernon Smallwood, who kicked us hard enough and often enough to make us move the project forward. We had a guy called Terry Sykes, who is still about who drove that initial restoration through. And we finished up with this very old and quite saleable steam locomotive, saleable in terms of filming and this sort of thing.

TB: (00:58:01) I see, yes. So, you got half the money... Was it a government scheme?

TE: It was the Department of Education and Science, through the Science Museum.

TB: (00:58:11) Right, okay. And they paid for the restoration as well or some of it?

TE: Fifty percent of the purchase price and the total cost of restoration.

TB: Wow.

- CS: What did we pay, was it a fiver or a pound?
- TE: Yes, the railway, shall we say, the railway decided that we didn't have to pay a lot of money so, as Chris says, I think we had to pay fifty pence. I think the purchase price was a pound so, VCT had to pay fifty pence for it. But then the Science Museum paid for the full restoration.
- TB: (00:58:45) How much did that cost?
- TE: At that time, probably about fifteen thousand pounds it was not extortionate. But it's actually, as a locomotive, it was built in the collieries in 1874 and is one of the earliest examples of piston valve steam locomotives which was twenty, thirty years ahead of its time. It was probably a development job for the London North Western Railway because the engineers at the colliery knew the engineers at Crewe Works. And it was probably one of these where it could done in quiet in a colliery where all the other railway companies didn't realise that this sort of thing was happening.
- TB: I see.
- TE: It does actually feature in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest operational piston valve locomotive in the World.
- TB: Really, wow. That's amazing.
- TE: So, that was the reason why it was classified as a master.
- TB: Right, so, it clearly was facing...
- TE: Yes.
- TB: (00:59:42) That's lovely. We've been going about an hour so, please... I don't want to take too much of your time but just to move to a museum, because as you said, it was a big step. So, how easy was that, going from focussing very much on physical preservation and restoration, moving to something that is very kind of publicly focussed. I'll be interested to hear about that process and how easy it was?
- TE: I think as a registered museum, a lot easier now... Then, as it is now, as an accredited museum.
- TB: (01:00:16) When did you go for registration, do you remember the year?
- TE: Hmm?
- TB: (01:00:18) What year were you registered, if you remember?

TE: In the 1990s wasn't it? I forget exactly what year. Somewhere in the region of '92 to '96.

TB: So, that's quite early... Okay. So, that process was fairly straightforward?

TE: It was reasonably straightforward, but the goal was the fact that if we did then there was more funding available. So, it was a goal with an incentive.

TB: Yes, because then you could apply for all sorts of museum-based funding?

TE: But it was a lot easier... Although the paperwork, the railway decided to have an exhibition shed and lose the word museum from its side of it, we've just got an undercover siding to the Vintage Carriages Trust deciding that they wanted to go around the accredited... Or the registered museum route as a way of looking for extra funding for projects that were always going to be difficult to fund internally as a total.

We could certainly find sufficient money to do some of the work, but we couldn't actually find all the money if we wanted to do major restoration projects. It also meant that instead of just restoring a carriage to run on down on the railway, we looked at the correct ways of restoring them to their original condition. Which was definitely in line with museum practice and we decided that we wanted to go down that... We didn't just want to restore the carriages to keep using them, we wanted to make sure that they were historically correct.

And getting that... That was, shall we say, ground-breaking in the preservation movement of actually looking at being part-way between a railway preservation society and what the National Railway Museum was doing, and this was the in-between one of looking at what the National Railway Museum was doing about accurately restoring vehicles to preservationists of what we're interested in, is a carriage so, that people can actually sit on the seat. When the seats get thread bare, what do you do, do you just put some modern material on or do you go and do the research and put the correct material on that it would have originally had?

TB: I see, okay.

TE: It's a completely different concept to the early preservation world.

TB: (01:02:33) You're saying that actually was quite a new thing for the preservation world to go for that middle ground?

TE: Yes, you started through the preservation world, you met up with people like the National Railway Museum and if you look at Anthony Coulls now, as our museum mentor. At the time that we first started in this thing, he was actually Richard Gibbons' tea boy.

So, he has actually come up in his own right within the national museum's movement to being one of the leading lights in the curatorial side of a national museum, now mentoring us. Whereas, we remember him from our earliest thoughts of him, just bringing the cups of tea into the meeting room where our previous museum advisor had been given us the guidance. We've moved on a generation in national museums as well.

CS: Now, there is a background history on museums on the railway. Because in the mid-sixties, as we've said, firewood chitty, you could get all sorts of stuff. And the idea was to create a museum on the top floor of Howarth Shed, accessed by a spiral iron staircase of traditional design with no other form of exit.

(laughter).

TB: Okay.

CS: So, people had collected a vast amount of signalling equipment, and some of the stuff that is now around our walls. When the railway and the committee, the railway runs by committees, but the station's committee, was known as the Stations and Museums Committee. So, at the time, before we were running trains, this was quite important.

When we started to run trains, it gradually dawned that the museum on the top floor of Howarth Shed was not going to be a starter. So, we had a debate with the guy, Brian Slater, who put a lot of the stuff together. We finished up with one of these interesting debates as to who owns what when you've collected things under a firewood chitty.

And eventually, Brian took some of the stuff away and left some of the stuff to the railway. It went up to Oxenhope, didn't he? And take quite a bit of it, where it wasn't very well looked after because there wasn't a museum mentality and some of it has now come back to us. I'm not quite sure just how much...

TE: There are over a hundred items that are on our walls, that, when the railway got rid of its 1970's built exhibition shed when they decided to remove the asbestos

cladding, they needed another place to move the signs. They came down here fifteen or twenty years ago with a view of, "Well, we'll get around to re-cladding this and then we'll have it back."

And we're now at the point of suggesting to them that they might want to make a museum of Oxenhope and actually take some of their stuff back because we'd like to relocate some of our stuff onto the walls and redevelop the museum in line with our present visitor, which is more to do with family orientated. Explain the class distinction side of things, social side and we could redevelop our own museum but at the moment, the walls are full. Without taking some signs down, we can't redevelop, and it would be an ideal time to move things up to Howarth.

Our audience development coordinator that worked with us for five years, has now moved to the railway as a heritage manager and she is now battling with the idea of how we move the railway from being a preserved railway to understanding what the museums at Ingrow are doing and probably, develop Oxenhope on similar lines. And that is a challenge that has still to be overcome.

TB: (01:06:55) Yes. And for you, you are moving to more thematic displays. And so, you're thinking about, what you said, about rejigging things a little bit?

TE: Yes. We've set ourselves a number of themes that we are wanting to do under the guidance of our museum mentor. And then, we have a bi-monthly meeting to do with that. In a month, the bi-monthly meeting that we had with Rail Story, with the Bahamas Society, and the Worth Valley Railway, to look at developing the whole site. So, we're independently looking at what we're doing in our museum in line with what we want to do overall on the site, so, it's got a coherent feel to it.

TB: Right, you don't want to be repeating stuff everywhere?

TE: So, you'll finish up with a leaflet showing people what to see on-site and then within the museum, you get a further leaflet to say what the other is to see within that individual museum on the site. And obviously, we're going into social media, and Alexandra has now started doing the social media side. So, we're actually moving up into the realms of stuff that, shall we say, us older hands don't understand to actually push out the information to people of a younger generation of what to do. We're getting more involved in the education side with the Bahamas Locomotive Society having a learning coach. There is now a schools programme which they do things in the learning coach as part of the classroom event. But then they spend

time at both their museum and our museum to actually do the hands-on feel of what the carriages are about that they did in the classroom.

TB: Lovely.

TE: And it's working mainly with local schools, we're hoping that we can develop that more regionally, rather than just locally in future. It's a way of expanding our visitor attraction.

TB: Sure, fantastic.

CS: One thing we haven't mentioned is the Railway Heritage Registers which VCT has been very heavily involved with over the years. And probably, had a quiet role to play in bringing us more together with the other railway museums. Now, I was reminded of this when you were saying that you found there were rather more museums than you had been told.

A group of us got together to discuss recording the heritage coaches that had been collected across the movement. And we, as the experts, said, "Oh, there will be about four hundred." When we started to list them, we found that there were about four thousand. So, the experts had not known as much as they thought they did.

And the idea of our registers, at the moment, they are still based on the VCT site, they may move but there will be a pointer to them in due course, I'm sure. And the idea of these registers is that they are searchable, they are searchable by location, by builder, by railway they built for, and there is a feel to describe their condition. Are they at risk? This sort of thing.

TB: Fantastic.

CS: And there are other registers have grown up, you will find a very good one for trams. Again, these are all currently on the Vintage Carriages Trust website.

TB: I see.

CS: By contrast, I got peripherally involved in the nineties, with Peter Mann of the Science Museum who was trying to gold star the horse-drawn carriages of Victorian gentry as to say what the best ones were. And the problem there is that they missed the first step, which is, the first thing you have to do is record what is on the ground. You can't choose the best until you know what is there. And they didn't get around to this so, they finished up squabbling and there was a lovely debate over

whether restoration was vandalism or not. There were those present who felt that if it wasn't the original paint, then it wasn't a proper museum vehicle.

TB: Wow, gosh.

CS: And of course, they have a point. If you've got some original paint, you've got to look after it, you mustn't strip it all off so that it's all modern. But they didn't get their funding to proceed and I'm recently back from a fascinating trip to Belfast where at Cultra, they've got a wonderful collection of horse-drawn carriages, luxury vehicles. They know what they all are, but the documentation is poor and knowing what you could get to see elsewhere, is difficult. On the railways, you go to the VCT website.

TB: (01:12:04) So, you've got a register of all the carriages that you know of, heritage carriages. Is there a similar one for the trains as well, for the steam trains?

CS: Ahh, wagons, yes, turntables, yes, locomotives, not now and I am personally under pressure. The reason we didn't do locomotives was that it was a known field, there were a lot of people who knew what steam locos there were. Many of them only the main line engines but some, like the Industrial Railway Society going right down to individual collieries and narrow gauge lines and this sort of thing. So, the argument was, you start with the carriages because they are not currently documented.

Some few years further on...

TE: We're documenting the locomotives, shall we say, that have changed owners and people can't remember where they are.

CS: So, the action... I go about once a year to a heritage registers meeting and one of the things that is coming up is, is it perhaps time that we grasped the nettle and put something online for locomotives?

TB: (01:13:20) Yes, I see. Who is coordinating that work that you mentioned, that meeting?

CS: Well, it's coordinated by the gang of three. The gang of three is the National Railway Museum, the Transport Trust, and the Heritage Railway Association.

TB: Right, okay.

CS: But the work is done...

TB: By you...

- CS: By what has been known as the group of five. So, it's VCT, and individuals from various places like the Scottish Railway Preservation Society. So, the gang of three add lustre that they are leaders of the movement and they are held in good regard by the nation. So, it is very good that they are involved but equally, you've got to have people who are going around re-photographing vehicles that have been repaired, recording anything that has been lost. Debating whether you should get excited about the occasional scrappage among four thousand vehicles.
- And it depends what the vehicle is. We have, on the whole, over-collected and therefore the loss of occasional vehicles is not a disaster but, I'll give you a specific. Bulleid, on the Southern, developed around about 1950 suburban train, he built two units. So, within the British loading gauge you had these two levels, you went in through a platform door and to get to the upper level, you went up and above.
- So, there were two trains, I think it was eight coaches, it may have been twelve built, it is obviously desirable for one of these to be kept. The problem with them was they were slow to load, so, the idea was not pursued. They were perfectly successful otherwise, whether they would be so successful with the larger people of today, I'm not so sure but they worked perfectly well, and I think it's three of those vehicles have been preserved. One, well looked after, would probably be sufficient but they are all, I'm afraid, to some extent, at risk. So, if we could transfer three at risk to one in good order and looked after, that would be good.
- TB: (01:16:09) I see, yes. So, now, knowing what you have, it might be possible that this can inform some strategic decisions about some things like that?
- CS: Now, how strategic can you be with a box of frogs?
- (laughter)
- Because that is the problem. We are all fiercely independent and we can point things out. People like the Lottery, who use the registers, they are one of the users, as are film companies. So, yes, it isn't just a totally enthusiast option. People like the Lottery, are able to look and say, "This is important, we will put money into it." And of course, then, they have the whip hand of saying, "You will do this, and that, and so on. And you will open it to the public and..."
- TB: Yes, yes, sure, and all that comes with it. Guys, thank you so much, that's brilliant. If there is anything that I haven't covered that you would like to just put on, great, but

otherwise, I'm going to wrap up. I feel like we've... I know just now it's hard to cover everything. The only thing that we haven't covered, just in terms of any big things that the PCT's development that we haven't...?

TE: Not that I can think of, I think we're...

CS: I'll say filming.

TB: Yes.

CS: Because if you look at your Sherlock Holmes and Poirot now recycling on several channels, and our coaches were used in quite a few of those. Again, this was somewhere downstairs, what are we up to in terms of...?

TE: We've got eighty-six films that have now been... Films or TV that we've been involved with. And it's one with... Especially ladies on the pensioner's trips, which is Rail Discoveries, which is our main coach parties. If you want to interest ladies in something interesting to do with railways, then telling them about films is one to actually get in by the back door, of telling the historic importance of our carriages. First of all, tell them which seats Cliff Richard sat in and things like that.

To them saying, "Isn't this a nice coach?" And then they're sitting First Class of 1898 and all of sudden, they'll say, "Why haven't we got carriages like this today?" And it is going up from Third Class of 1876 which was bare boards, to First Class by the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century where you got the plush First Class, to modern stock that we've got today, where they're saying, "It's actually going backwards." Isn't actually an unfair criticism.

TB: Yes. That's lovely. So, on the back of the film, you can then... That journey and you can get the learning and there is that sense of history?

TE: Yes, and of course, the other is the... The learning one, what I said earlier, with the schools is, if people are going to learn social history then railways is the best place of social history, movement of people for the first time around the country. It's all there to be told and it fits in with the STEM subjects that they're doing in education these days. So, it actually builds on our future in that we're actually attracting more than just railway enthusiasts. We're railway enthusiasts that are now actually running a museum for the general public. It's a completely different concept from where we set off.

TB: Yes, what a journey.

CS: The intriguing thing is when the railway ran a Victorian Day, we had loads of lords and ladies and one, count him, one, chimney sweep. And you've got to try and get the message over to say, "Well, yes, but it was the other way around." You would have had one rich man in the First Class and the rest of us... I'm very careful to 'us' would have travelled on the bare boards.

One other thing we haven't mentioned is our policy of controlled use. We are quite keen to see our vehicles aired and in use on the railway. We are equally keen not to see them used for school parties week-in, week-out as used to apply in the summer and used to bring them back very ragged if we weren't careful. So, we have vintage train days, we offer... Trevor is very firm in that he tells the railway each year, "If you want them, the following three coaches are available for service. No, don't ask for any others because they're not available."

TB: I see, yes.

TE: Whenever we take a carriage out and as I say, the vintage train days are generally in the summer, we have a gala event generally in March. And on those occasions, we allocate which coaches are going to go out so that we can then set the museum up for the majority of the summer without it being disturbed.

The more historic carriages are kept in the same locations, so they are easily accessible, we've got central walkways where we have to move boards about to actually get people in and out of the carriages. So, every time we move a carriage of a different length, to a different location in the museum, we've got the job of lifting out fairly substantial fence-work that allows access into the vehicle.

So, it's a matter of... We're ringing the changes, we have certain vehicles that are available on certain years and then the next year, they'll be offered a different vehicle so, there is a change in what is actually available to travel in but at the same time, we also have a change of vehicles within the museum. Because we're doing work at the moment, of splitting carriages that were built in the 1880s, of the body lifted from the underframe to carry out full conservation work. And the difference between conservation and restoration of conserving as much as possible and restoration of restoring what is, with new, is always going to be a challenge.

But while we've got that, we've actually got one vehicle that is actually loaned to the Embsay and Abbey Railway, our most modern coach of 1950, is now actually working on a different preserved railway as part of the dining trade and they've

installed original-style tables into that. So, it's working ten miles away from where we are now on a different railway earning us money, but at the same time, ten free days use for accepted covered accommodation for the full year. And so, again, another vehicle, running offsite, spreading the word of what we're doing and it's out of the present museum to give us some flexibility in what we're wanting to do.

TB: And you've got some space to do other things, yes. Fantastic. Wonderful.

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