

Lord Hendy becomes heritage railway chair

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Network Rail Chair Peter Hendy has taken a top position on the board of the Heritage Railway Association.

The trade body that serves Britain's steam railways, tourist trains, tramways and cliff lifts has strengthened its board with the appointment of the well-known and well-connected Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill. Also a trustee of the Science Museum Group, plus trustee and a director of the London Transport Museum, he is no stranger to transport heritage.

Peter took on the role as Chairman of the Heritage Railway Association at the organisations' Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on Friday, 10 March. On the HRA board he joins a number of figures from across the heritage rail sector including North Yorkshire Moors Railway Chief Executive and Talylyn Railway President, Chris Price, Seaton Tramway Chief Executive Jenny Nunn, and Kent & East Sussex Railway Chairman Simon Marsh.

Lord Hendy said: "I am grateful to the board for appointing me as Chair of the HRA. The heritage railway

sector is of immense importance to communities around the country. Heritage railways are hugely significant draws for tourists and for wider investment and are vital for the preservation of technological and social history in a way that makes it interesting and accessible for all. Like the mainline railway, heritage railways face some significant challenges, but I look forward to working with colleagues at the HRA as well as the wider community, including the thousands of passionate volunteers, to address these and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector”

Appointed to the Chair of Network Rail in 2015, Lord Hendy was previously Commissioner of Transport for London and led the operation of transport for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. He has also been international and UK president of the Institute of Logistics and Transport and is a fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers. He was knighted in 2013 and took his place in the House of Lords in 2022.

Outgoing Chairman of the HRA and former Member of the European Parliament Brian Simpson will remain a key part of the organisation’s board. Brian said: “It’s brilliant to be able to welcome Peter Hendy to the board and I wish him all the very best in his role as chairman.

“Most people in the heritage railway world know of his passion for transport and heritage. He has been a strong and influential supporter of the heritage rail sector for a long time and I’m really pleased that he is able to take on this role with the HRA.

“He’s taking over at a challenging time for the sector, but the Heritage Railway Association has never been stronger or better equipped to help railways and tramways throughout the UK to weather the storm.”

The HRA represents more than 150 heritage railways across the UK, together with dozens of groups and societies devoted to the restoration and preservation of historic locomotives and rolling stock. Heritage rail contributes more than £600m to the UK economy each year, directly employs 4,000 people and supports more than 22,000 volunteers. HRA members provide the cornerstone visitor attractions in towns as diverse as Bridgnorth, Porthmadog and Swanage, generating more than 13m visits a year across the UK.

Chief Executive of the Heritage Railway Association, Steve Oates, added: “The heritage railway sector is a vital part of Britain’s cultural and tourism offering. Icons like Flying Scotsman are as recognisable the world over as buildings like Big Ben. Being able to welcome someone of the calibre of Lord Hendy to the lead team at the HRA speaks volumes about how important the sector is to our national heritage and economy.”

Photo credit: HRA