

# Network Rail chair to headline HRA conference

October 4, 2022



Sir Peter Hendy will be the keynote speaker at the [Heritage Railway Associations'](#) annual conference this November, leading a field of some 23 speakers and contributors across a two-day event.

With a new government, a new Secretary of State for Transport and a new Rail Minister in place, Chair of [Network Rail](#), Sir Peter, will be discussing the reform and modernising of Britain's railways and how changes on the national rail network could influence heritage railways and our visitors. He will also shed light on plans for celebrations to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

The conference, taking place in Birmingham city centre, is the biggest in heritage rail and brings together the best thinkers and latest ideas in the sector, to focus on the huge challenges facing heritage railways in 2022 and the years ahead, including the difficulties of overcoming spiralling costs at the same time as potential visitors have less money in their pockets. Discussions will cover how railways can diversify their offer and West Somerset Railway General Manager Kerry Noble will also be talking about how the Minehead-based line turned around their business after a period of turmoil.

Governance will be a hot topic during the conference. Experts in charity and not-for-profit sector governance, Wrigleys Solicitors, will be providing the latest thinking and advice on navigating current guidance and putting best practice into action.

Taking place on Tuesday, November 1 and Wednesday, November 2, the event is also set to hear from senior figures in the Office of Rail and Road on how heritage rail can improve its safety management processes, including Richard Hines the new Deputy Chief Inspector of Railways at the Railway Safety Directorate, ORR, and ORR Head of Non-Mainline Railways, Patrick Talbot.

A host of other speakers will also be taking to the stage, including Ian Purkis from the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, and Paul Vidler from the Kent and East Sussex Railway, who will be talking environmental sustainability; plus there'll be a variety of sessions on everything from branding, and mental health, to the challenges of heritage infrastructure.

Heritage Railway Association Chief Executive, Steve Oates, said: "Six months ago, if you'd asked me what the biggest challenge in heritage rail was, I would undoubtedly have said coal. Right now, though, it's more complex as the world in which heritage rail now exists has changed massively in a very short space of time. I'm pleased to say that help is at hand as our conference in Birmingham will cover all the latest issues in the sector.

"Of particular note, our panel session on day two is drawing members from within heritage rail, and from the wider visitor economy, to discuss the realities of the current economic climate, the need to rethink things businesses thought were sacrosanct, and to look for credible ideas for 2023 and beyond.

"There are no better opportunities in heritage rail to hear from the best thinkers in the sector than this conference. There is no better chance to give yourself, and your railway, the latest information and knowledge relevant to heritage rail. And there are no better ways to share your challenges with like-minded individuals and come away brimming with ideas. It really is a must for managers and directors at the sharp end of heritage rail."

Tickets for the conference are available now with keen rates for one-day and two-day tickets for HRA members and rates also available for non-members. For more information, and bookings, visit [www.hra.uk.com/events](http://www.hra.uk.com/events)

The full agenda for day one of the HRA conference is available here: <https://www.hra.uk.com/hra-conference-2022-day-one>

The full agenda for day two of the HRA conference is available here: <https://www.hra.uk.com/hra-conference-2022-day-two>

*Photo credit: Network Rail*