

South Devon Railway's Dick Wood shortlisted for top tourism award

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The [South Devon Railway](#)'s PR and Business Development Manager and former General Manager has been shortlisted for a Devon Tourism Award.

Volunteer Dick Wood, who is also chairman of the Devon Association of Tourist Attractions (DATA) is a finalist for the Business Leader of the Year Award.

He was nominated after being instrumental in steering DATA throughout the pandemic period, adapting a radically changed strategic direction and reduced budget, and contributing in the remodelling of the association's activities.

Dick has also been very active in publicising the very successful 'SOS' funding appeal for the South Devon Railway over the last year, and has also assisted with the nearby West Somerset Railway's 'emergency' appeal - which raised a staggering £2.5 million between them.

He said: "It was a pleasant surprise to be nominated for an award, and being recognised as a finalist is not only an honour for the South Devon Railway and the Devon Association of Tourist Attractions but also for

me personally of course.

“And seeing that so many other DATA members have reached the finalist stage too is a great honour for everyone. It just goes to endorse the quality of our Association and the high calibre of our members. It augurs well for the future that we are going into 2021 as a stronger, unified organisation and with more members than last year to promote the best of Devon.”

Dick has been involved with the railway for decades, in which time he has done nearly every job.

He said: “I’ve been involved with the old Totnes Branch line – but now truncated at Buckfastleigh when the A38 was built – since late 1971 when I joined the old Dart Valley Railway Association. So, it’s been a 50-year love affair really and 2022 will be a big personal anniversary for me since my first railway visit to Devon.

“In that time, I reckon to have done almost every job on the railway at some point from permanent way and cutting back to checking tickets and other commercial work, and being a footplateman, train guard and loco maintenance man, but never a signaller.

“Becoming just the line’s third General Manager in 2008 was a particular honour for me and a role I enjoyed and worked very hard to succeed. The SDR is the classic quintessential former Great Western Railway branch line and oozes heritage charm and nostalgia almost everywhere you look. Long may it last.”

The finalists of the Devon Tourism Awards will have to wait until March 12th to find out if he’s been successful.

Photo credit: Steve Edge