

2023 Awards Ceremony

Wednesday 6 December 2023

Merchant Taylors' Hall
30 Threadneedle Street
London EC2R 8JB

Awards presented by
Bill Reeve, Director of Rail, Transport Scotland

National
**Railway
Heritage
Awards**

Supported by the
Railway Industry

Review of the year 2023

There were 50 entries this year from across all four nations of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland from community groups, private individuals and companies, as well as public authorities and train operators. They ranged in size and scope and were judged for the competition for the 10 award categories. There will also be an additional award for the best overall entry.

The entries included two turntables that have been restored and made operational: one at **St Blazey** near Par and the other, was relocated from Hither Green to the **Rother Valley Railway** at Robertsbridge. Two signal box restorations, neither operational, **Caersws** and at **Pwllheli**, a footbridge restoration at Chepstow, new lineside fencing at Bath's Sydney Gardens, repairs and redecoration of an underbridge at **Whaley Bridge**, the restoration of the water tank at **Didcot Railway Museum** and at **Frinton on Sea**, the station canopy.

Smaller but equally important are a host of restoration schemes; these included two for station clocks, at **Ladybank** and **Lincoln**, new **NER**-style crossing gates at **Crakehall** (Wensleydale Railway). New London Underground heritage signage roundels at **Bethnal Green**, a therapy centre in restored platform buildings at **Ladybank**, wall mounted rails and a Paxton canopy at London's **Paddington Station**, wall tile repairs at **Coventry**, the relocation of the Bristol Peoples' **Brunel Statue**, and a row of railway cottages in **Rosslare** (Eire).

Edinburgh provided three schemes. The redevelopment of **Granton Gasworks Station**, a long derelict private station, into a function/office space, and **The Engine Yard**, a scheme creating residential units within the former Shrubhill tramway depot buildings off Leith Walk and the nearby **Pilrig Muddle** wheels, a project to conserve and put on public display a unique survivor of Edinburgh's Victorian cable-operated tram system.

Six viaduct schemes featured this year. Two are in operational use: Stirling's **Forth Viaduct** and the iconic **Border Bridge** at Berwick-upon-Tweed. The former railway structures of **Westfield Viaduct** near Bathgate, which is currently isolated but should eventually form a vital section of railway path, and the **Teviot Viaduct** whose attached footbridge formed the entry. The other two were both imaginative elevated garden schemes, the **Randalstown Viaduct** (NI) by Tidy Randalstown, and the National Trust's Reimagining **Castlefield Viaduct** that temporarily uses a section of the disused railway viaduct in central Manchester.





Community based station schemes at **Eynsford**, **Hollingbourne**, **Okehampton** and **Shawford** that provide new uses for redundant buildings on operational stations. Other improvement and restoration schemes undertaken at operational stations were received for **Bishopstone**, **Carlisle**, **Ely**, **Holyhead**, and **March**. An unusual entry involved the re-routing of the narrow-gauge Leighton Buzzard Railway to allow a new housing development at **Chamberlains Bridge** which meant that the full length of this historic railway was kept rather than lost. Other new work was the installation of a lift at **Cockfosters Station** as part of Transport for London's desire to make access to stations step free.

Aberdeen Concourse and **Morpeth Canopy** are the culmination of ongoing projects or, as at **Peckham Rye**, form a vital part to the eventual total station scheme. This was also the case in bringing-back into use of the redundant **Findlater's Corner** arches under the railway at London Bridge. Total regeneration was a feature of the renovation of **Folkestone Harbour Station**. At **Cullybackey** (NI) and **Rowden Mill Station** both now provide holiday accommodation; one situated next to an operational railway and the other on a long-closed line.

Sensitive conservation was a feature of two schemes: the refreshment room at **Leamington Spa** and some heritage furniture at **Warwick**. Two entries have been deferred, the **York Goods Office**, which now forms part of the National Railway Museum and some **GWR**-style Spear-top fencing around part of the **Bath Spa's** station car park; we hope to see them at a future awards ceremony.



The shortlisted nominees

The BAM Nuttall Partnership Award	Edinburgh, Granton Gasworks railway station
	London Paddington, Barlow and Brunel Rails
	St Blazey Turntable
The Great Western Railway Craft Skills Award	Cullybackey Railway Station
	Morpeth, restoration of canopies
	Warwick, restored furniture
The Arch Company Award for Urban Heritage	Aberdeen Station concourse
	Peckham Rye Station, Façade and Interior Restoration
	Coventry, Heritage Tile Restoration and Repairs
The Translink Structures Award	Bathgate, Westfield Viaduct
	Berwick-upon-Tweed, Royal Border Bridge
	Roxburgh, Teviot Viaduct footbridge
	Stirling, Forth Viaduct Refurbishment
The London Underground Operational Enhancement Award	Bath, Sydney Gardens balustrade wall and railings
	Cockfosters, step free access
	Robertsbridge, Preservation of Hither Green turntable
The Network Rail Conservation Award	Didcot, Water Tower
	Holyhead, train shed
	Leamington Spa, Refreshment room restoration of Heritage Features
The Hendy & Pendle Trust Volunteers Award	Crakehall, replacement level crossing gates
	Hollingbourne, Community Cafe and Hub
	Randalstown, community garden
The Avanti West Coast Community Award	Okehampton Station main building
	Bishopstone Station
	Eynsford Station
The National Highways Award for Restoration on a Closed Line	Rowden Mill Station
	Edinburgh, The Engine Yard
	Manchester, Castlefield viaduct
The Southeastern Commercial Restoration Award	London Bridge, Findlater's Corner
	Ladybank, restoration of platform rooms
	Leamington Spa, Restoration of Heritage Features

TO BE ANNOUNCED
AT THE CEREMONY

THE GREATER ANGLIA AWARD FOR
THE BEST OVERALL ENTRY FOR 2023

About the awards

ANDY SAVAGE MBE

Chairman of Trustees

The National Railway Heritage Awards is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which gives awards to recognise and celebrate the restoration and re-use of the built heritage of the railways and tramways in the British Isles. It all began in 1979 when railway publisher the late Ian Allan, in conjunction with the Association of Railway Preservation Societies, launched a competition to recognise the 'Best Preserved Station' on a heritage railway. Although initially focussed on such railways, the competition gradually broadened to cover the entire national railway network of the British Isles, including the Republic of Ireland and the Isle of Man. It also encompassed structures as well as buildings, and assets on closed lines as well as open ones regardless of ownership.



By the millennium it was clear that the competition had outgrown its link with what was, by then, the Heritage Railway Association, and in 2004 we launched an independent charity, which we have restructured to a CIO this year. The CIO is directed by a board of Trustees, who are assisted by a small number of committee members, with all taking executive roles. All Trustees and Committee members are all volunteers.

The competition is funded each year by members of the railway industry, with most of the funding coming from the national and London networks, for which we offer our grateful appreciation. An award is linked to each major sponsor.

Most years there are between ten and a dozen awards, depending on the number of entries that merit short-listing for an award, the number of sponsors, and the decisions of the Adjudicators and Trustees. The actual awards are related to a range of subjects and specific criteria, so that entries large and small all have a chance of winning an award. Award categories are shown listed against this year's shortlisted entries.

The history of the awards is well shown in former Trustee Robin Leleux's splendid book, *Restoration Rewarded*, which tells the story of the first 40 years of the competition.

We encourage entrants for any built railway or tramway heritage asset, whether it is operational or non-operational. We look at the quality of the restoration, but equally at how the asset has been re-purposed to give it an economically sustainable future, so it may be that we will recognise modern interventions inserted into older buildings. As a rough rule of thumb, most entries tend to



be from the pre-World War 2 era, but as time moves forward, a few from the 1950s through to the 1970s are now being entered and are being short-listed and winning our awards.

We have a panel of volunteer judges, who visit all the entries, and report on them against a standard set of criteria. This judging process takes place in the summer each year (entries open in the New Year, and close in late spring), and in the early autumn our team of independent expert Adjudicators then review all the entries and recommend short-listing for awards to the Trustees. Once the Adjudicators' report has been accepted and the awards finalised, preparation begins for today's ceremony, the highlight of our annual competition.

Over the years, we have made awards for projects that vary in size from very small, such as restoring an 1830s set of mileposts, to years-long major station reconstructions.

When a large Network Rail station has a major rebuild (for example King's Cross, St Pancras or London Bridge) and significant heritage objectives are included, we tend to leave it outside the competition and make a special award, so as not to affect the chances of smaller entries.

The actual awards are cast plaques, and we expect the winners to unveil them on or near the winning entry to publicise both their achievement and our work. Those entries that are short-listed but do not receive an award receive a 'Highly Commended' certificate in recognition of their achievement in reaching the final stage in this competition. Sometimes we also make special awards to recognise significant merit made for entries not meeting specific award criteria.



Programme

10.15 Tea and coffee served in the Cloister

11.00 Awards ceremony

13.00 Canapés and drinks in the Parlour and Cloister

14.30 Ceremony ends

PROGRAMME PHOTOGRAPHIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Findlater's Corner clock (Front Page), Railway Heritage Trust / Paul Childs
Bishopstone Station, Govia Thameslink Railway
Crakehall level crossing gates, Mike Ashworth
Teviot Viaduct, Bob Gardiner
Royal Border Bridge, Greg Beecroft
Baths Sydney Gardens lineside fence, Railway Heritage Trust / Andy Savage
St Blazey Turntable, Michael Harris
Peckham Rye Station, Railway Heritage Trust / Paul Childs
Forth Viaduct, Story Contracting
Leamington Spa Refreshment Room, Railway Heritage Trust / Paul Childs
Folkestone Harbour Station, Robert Thornton
Rowden Mill Station, Andy Savage
Okehampton Station, Tony North
Eynsford Station, Railway Heritage Trust / Paul Childs
Aberdeen Station, Tim Hedley-Jones
Findlater's Corner, Railway Heritage Trust / Paul Childs
Randalstown Viaduct, Douglas Ferguson

The ceremony is being broadcast live on-line and also recorded, and the details are at nrha.org.uk

Photography is not permitted during the ceremony except by the official Awards photographer Duncan Phillips from whom copies will be available.

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There will be an opportunity for unofficial photographs to be taken after the ceremony.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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