Railway Heritage is big, important business.

Get it wrong and, at best, business opportunities may be lost; at worst, valuable nationally and internationally important collections and artefacts may be placed at serious risk.

However, get it right and it can play a major part in enhancing the cultural offer of the tourist railway or museum concerned, with significant benefits commercially, economically, and of course in terms of tourism growth and visitor footfall. But the benefits of railway heritage are not just confined to the ‘traditional’ spheres of preserved railways and museums. The contemporary main-line railway of any country can also benefit from an imaginative involvement in heritage operations, attracting both domestic and overseas customers, with potentially significant commercial and reputational benefits.

The former Chairman of British Rail, the late Sir Peter Parker, commenting on heritage operations on Britain’s main line railway network, said that special trains hauled by steam locomotives “warmed the market” for the modern railway.

This holds true today.
The United Kingdom is widely recognised as enjoying a sophisticated and comprehensive railway heritage sector. The sheer concentration of heritage railways, operations and museums, underpinned by a significant main line railway heritage steam and diesel operation, is arguably unparalleled.

The expertise which created this situation did not appear overnight, rather it took time to evolve as railway preservation developed and grew in the UK from the 1950s onwards. Consequently the UK enjoys a plethora of talent across a wide range of railway heritage disciplines including engineering, restoration and conservation, high quality painting of stock, archives, cataloguing, interpretation and display, education and railway operations.

This list represents only a narrow selection of the functional expertise to be found in the country which gave birth to the modern railway, and which now flourishes around the World. Railway heritage is also big business internationally. Some countries already display high levels of expertise in this area and need little support; others by contrast can benefit from access to the skills already to be found in the UK.
The International Railway Heritage Consultancy Limited® has been formed to provide a one-stop-shop for railway heritage organisations internationally, in order that they might access the skills they need to support their operations. From helping to establish a railway heritage museum or attraction from scratch, through the enhancement and improvement of an existing heritage operation, to the master planning required to move an operation from good to great, we are able to bring together the expertise required to meet the client’s needs be it modest or on a grand scale, or perhaps somewhere in between.

The core team already possesses considerable expertise, and its members enjoy powerful national and international reputations as experts in their respective fields. A wide range of other specialists are on our books and available to bring their respective expertise, skills and wealth of knowledge to bear to meet the client’s requirements.
Led by its Managing Director, Steve Davies MBE, former Director of the National Railway Museum in York, England, the core team comprises two Directors and two Associate Consultants. Depending on the client’s needs, expertise for the task would be drawn in the first instance from this core team, with additional support harnessed as required from elsewhere within the UK’s railway heritage sector. This team works supremely well together, is very focused on the task in hand, and will provide outstanding value for money. Working alongside the client, the team’s collective depth of knowledge and organisational ability is such that persuasive and constructive recommendations and proposals flow naturally, and are communicated succinctly and in a way which is useful and relevant to a broad range of stakeholders.

We are as expert in dealing at national political levels as we are advising on a museum gallery or locomotive restoration. Support to the client in delivering the recommendations is also available if requested.
The key point is that our clients will have access to the very best advice with positive impact on their ability to attract funding and broader support for their projects. The core team already has collective experience in supporting and developing overseas railway heritage projects, The Sierra Leone National Railway Museum in Freetown being a case in point, and it is this positive experience working with the Sierra Leone Government which has motivated Steve and his team to make a similarly energetic offer available to the broader international railway heritage community.

The Sierra Leone experience is an excellent case study illustrating just what the team is capable of in the most trying of circumstances, and illustrates powerfully the strength of the Consultancy’s capabilities.
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Steve Davies MBE

A former Colonel in the British Army, Steve has been a lifelong railway enthusiast, and is involved in a significant number of heritage railway projects both on a professional and voluntary basis. His Army career saw him serve in a wide variety of countries, many on operations. He rose to become the Commanding Officer of his Regiment. He enjoyed two tours in the United Kingdom’s Ministry of Defence in London engaged at the military/political strategic level, and his final military appointment was as Chief of Staff of a Division with responsibility for military planning across 45% of the UK land mass.

It was whilst on secondment to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces that he exercised his personal initiative to create the Country’s National Railway Museum, in close cooperation with His Excellency President Kabbah, which continues to thrive today and with which he remains closely associated as President of the British Charity The Friends of The Sierra Leone National Railway Museum.

On retirement from the Army he subsequently served as Director of the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester – site of the world’s oldest surviving railway terminus (circa 1830) – then as Director of the National Railway Museum in York, during which time he devised, negotiated and implemented the repatriation of two 160 ton steam locomotives from North America to take part in an Award-winning exhibition marking the 75th anniversary of Mallard achieving the World record for steam traction of 126 mph. Steve is President and a Director of a private company owning and operating a main line steam locomotive. He is foremost a charismatic and natural leader, organiser and communicator with experience on TV and radio, notably appearing in the ‘Caravan Train’ episode of Top Gear alongside Helen Ashby! Steve looks forward to positive and constructive engagement with international clients.
DIRECTOR

Helen Ashby OBE BA FMA

Helen graduated in Modern Languages (French and Spanish) with Economics from Bradford University in 1981 and completed the Museums Association Postgraduate Diploma in Museum Studies in 1989.

She joined the National Railway Museum in July 1982 as a junior curator rising through the ranks to Head of Knowledge & Collections in 2003, managing all collections activities at the museum, with a team divided between collections management and collections access, during which time she managed the collections and curatorial aspects of the development of Locomotion, the National Railway Museum at Shildon and Search Engine, the NRM’s archive, library and research facility. Between 2000 and 2001 she spent a brief period away from the NRM, on secondment to the Collections Trust to work with the Standards Team on the development of SPECTRUM Knowledge, the UK Standard for Collections Information Management. During that period she also published the Railway Object Names Thesaurus in association with colleagues across the railway heritage sector.

Helen is a mentor for candidates for Associateship of the Museums Association helping new curators to develop specialist expertise in collections. She serves on the Heritage Committee of the Heritage Railways Association and is Chair of the British Charity Friends of The Sierra Leone National Railway Museum. She is also engaged as a consultant advising a joint enterprise between Leicester City Council and the nearby heritage railway – The Great Central Railway – in developing a brand new museum. During her time at the National Railway Museum she was de facto Steve Davies’s deputy, thus cementing a powerful working bond which will be of significant value to our clients.
Colin enjoys an international reputation as a railway historian with a particular expertise in heritage and museums. From 1995 until 2014 he headed the Institute of Railway Studies & Transport History, the National Railway Museum’s unique partnership with the University of York. The author or editor of six books, including *Making Histories in Transport Museums* (Leicester University Press, 2001), co-written with Andrew Scott CBE when he headed the National Railway Museum, Colin brings his extensive knowledge of global railways to open up the past to a wide range of audiences.

Colin’s main research interests are in the history of transport and mobility, the history of technology (particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), and the public histories of both of these fields. Colin is a member of the editorial board of the *International Journal for the History of Engineering and Technology*; he was until recently a contributing editor of *Technology and Culture* and until 2013 a Vice President of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility (T²M).

He is a member of York Management School’s Centre for Evolution of Global Business and Institutions. Colin is a presenter of choice for Television and Film companies covering the subject and is frequently to be seen on TV as a subject matter expert on a variety of railway-related documentaries and programmes. Currently professor emeritus in railway studies at the University of York, and a member of the UK’s History & Policy Network, Colin strongly believes that heritage and history have powerful roles to play in shaping our understanding of the railways’ future.
ASSOCIATE CONSULTANT
Richard Gibbon OBE, BSc Eng, C Eng, FIMechE

Richard Gibbon is one of the most accomplished and experienced railway and mechanical engineers in the United Kingdom, with a strong focus on heritage equipment.

Formerly the Head of Engineering at the National Railway Museum in York, he has been intimately involved in the restoration and operation of a number of important steam and diesel locomotives. His engineering career included appointments with Ferodo, Blue Funnel Line and Associated Electrical Industries (AEI). He is heavily involved in establishing engineering training regimes, notably amongst junior apprentices, and he created a syllabus for training young boilersmiths. He enjoys international standing and has appeared on many TV programmes as an expert consultant, most notably on Channel 4’s Scrapheap Challenge, BBC2’s What the Industrial Revolution did for Us with Andrew Cruickshank, and BBC2 Timewatch’s recreation of the Rainhill Trials Rocket and its Rivals. He also featured with Richard Hammond (of Top Gear fame) as a steam expert on the programme Engineering Connections.

Richard has experience of overseas railway heritage operations, and travelled to Ecuador with Steve Davies to provide advice to the Government on the restoration of their fleet of steam locomotives. He has authored twelve publications and papers. Amongst the numerous accolades bestowed on him in recognition of his considerable achievements are the Institute of Mechanical Engineers 150th Anniversary Gold Medal (in 1997), the Heritage Railway Association’s Plaque for Outstanding Achievement (in 2003), and appointed Honorary Chief Mechanical Engineer to the Friends of the National Railway Museum in 2006. Richard will make a powerful contribution to the work we undertake in support of our clients.
We are ready to discuss your needs via the following channels:

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