



MAKING CONNECTIONS

TAKING THE STORY OF SCOTLAND'S RAILWAYS
TO NEW AUDIENCES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

THE
**SCOTTISH
RAILWAY**



PRESERVATION SOCIETY



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MAKING CONNECTIONS

Taking the story of Scotland's railways to new audiences and future generations.

Railways transformed Scotland from a rural economy to an industrial powerhouse. By transporting raw materials such as coal and iron, ore and manufactured goods, they made possible the industrial revolution. By transporting people to their work in the towns and cities they transformed Scottish society and opened up the whole country to tourism, while the railway industry itself became a major employer.

Connecting the people of Scotland with their railway history has been the aim of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society for over 45 years. In that time the Society has amassed Scotland's largest railway collection, the popularity of which is shown by ever-increasing numbers of visitors to the Society's showcases – the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway and the Scottish Railway Exhibition.

The Society now has to build on this success and to realise the potential of its collections; this document outlines initiatives to create new capacity, new opportunities for involvement and learning, to attract and inform new audiences, and to ensure that future generations can learn and appreciate the vital role of the railways in Scotland's history.

Achieving these aims, and safeguarding a collection which is a national asset, will require new resources, new partnerships – and new connections.



EXISTING CONNECTIONS

Extended services



Apart from their economic significance, Scotland's railways were, and remain, a part of everyday experience.

The railway provides comfortable travel, to which the steam locomotive formerly added elements of excitement and romance. In its heyday, the railway was a giant complex of main lines, branch lines, shunting yards and sidings, connecting people and industry across the country.

The railway that the Victorians created remains in daily use but it has changed, and continues to change. The Scottish Railway Preservation Society's collections at Bo'ness reflect these changes.

The collections can be enjoyed as a spectacle of man's ingenuity, of the art of design, of power, of economic and technological change, of stories about the lives of our ancestors, as demonstrating scientific and engineering principles, but always in a Scottish context due to the national provenance of the objects.

The collections are presented in several ways. First there is the Scottish Railway Exhibition, 3,250 sq.m. of covered space packed with displays, locomotives and rolling stock. In addition there is a large and growing collection of small objects and archives.

From its inception the Scottish Railway Preservation Society recognised that nothing would connect its collections with future generations as effectively as an operational railway. Today, more than 65,000 visitors each year enjoy the Bo'ness

& Kinneil Railway, created by the Society on a cleared dockside site, with track, buildings and infrastructure relocated from other parts of Scotland.


Such is the significance of these relocated buildings that the station at Bo'ness and its environs have been grade A listed by Historic Scotland.

The Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway allows the collections to be seen in operation in an authentic environment – Scotland's railway history is truly alive at Bo'ness, from the best of Victorian engineering all the way through to the results of post war modernisation.

Steam and diesel galas, transport and historical weekends place an emphasis on particular aspects of railway heritage, while many visitors enjoy the railway during special events,

Picture: 419 hauls a train of historic coaches up the long gradient to Birkhill.

 **45 years**
of connecting Scotland's people with their heritage

 **5.6 km**
(3.5 mile) passenger railway created

 **150 vehicles**
in the historic Core Collections

 **3,250 sq.m.**
(35,000sq.ft.)
Scottish Railway Exhibition



EXISTING CONNECTIONS

“More than 65,000 visitors a year enjoy the Bo’ness and Kinneil Railway.”

such as a young audience on Days Out with Thomas, and family groups on the Santa trains.

The Bo’ness & Kinneil Railway and the Scottish Railway Exhibition are currently open to visitors every Saturday and Sunday from the beginning of April to the end of October and daily during the school summer holidays.

During the summer school terms the railway operates on a number of midweek days to encourage school visits. Facilities are available for special charters on non-service days, and the railway is used regularly for filming, weddings and parties.

Operations are not confined to the Bo’ness & Kinneil Railway. Every year since 1970, SRPS Railtours has operated a programme of railtours over the railway network, including all the finest scenic Scottish routes. Volunteers manage the programme, staff the trains and maintain the heritage coaches at Bo’ness.

The Society connects with the community at many levels. Guided tours are available for groups, and the good facilities for the disabled both at Bo’ness Station and on the train services make the railway a popular destination for special needs groups.

Regular placements from the scheme “Making Tracks” funded by the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, formerly known as Scotland Against Drugs, provide recovered drug addicts with periods of sheltered work experience so that they can re-enter the world of work.

Community Offenders have a base camp at Bo’ness Station from where they provide community services through out the Bo’ness area. Over the years this group – known as the Motley Crew – has provided many enhancements to the appearance of the station buildings and its environs.

Some of the Society’s existing connections with local and national governmental and non-governmental bodies, heritage and museum organisations and specialist agencies are listed in the Developing Connections Section of this document.

The Society’s most important existing connection is with its volunteers; it is managed and run by volunteers, and extends an open invitation to everyone to get involved. Volunteers may use their existing skills, or may learn new ones, and are at the core of the Society’s efforts in making a connection with the past.



6,300

artefacts collected



65,000

visitors a year



250 vehicles

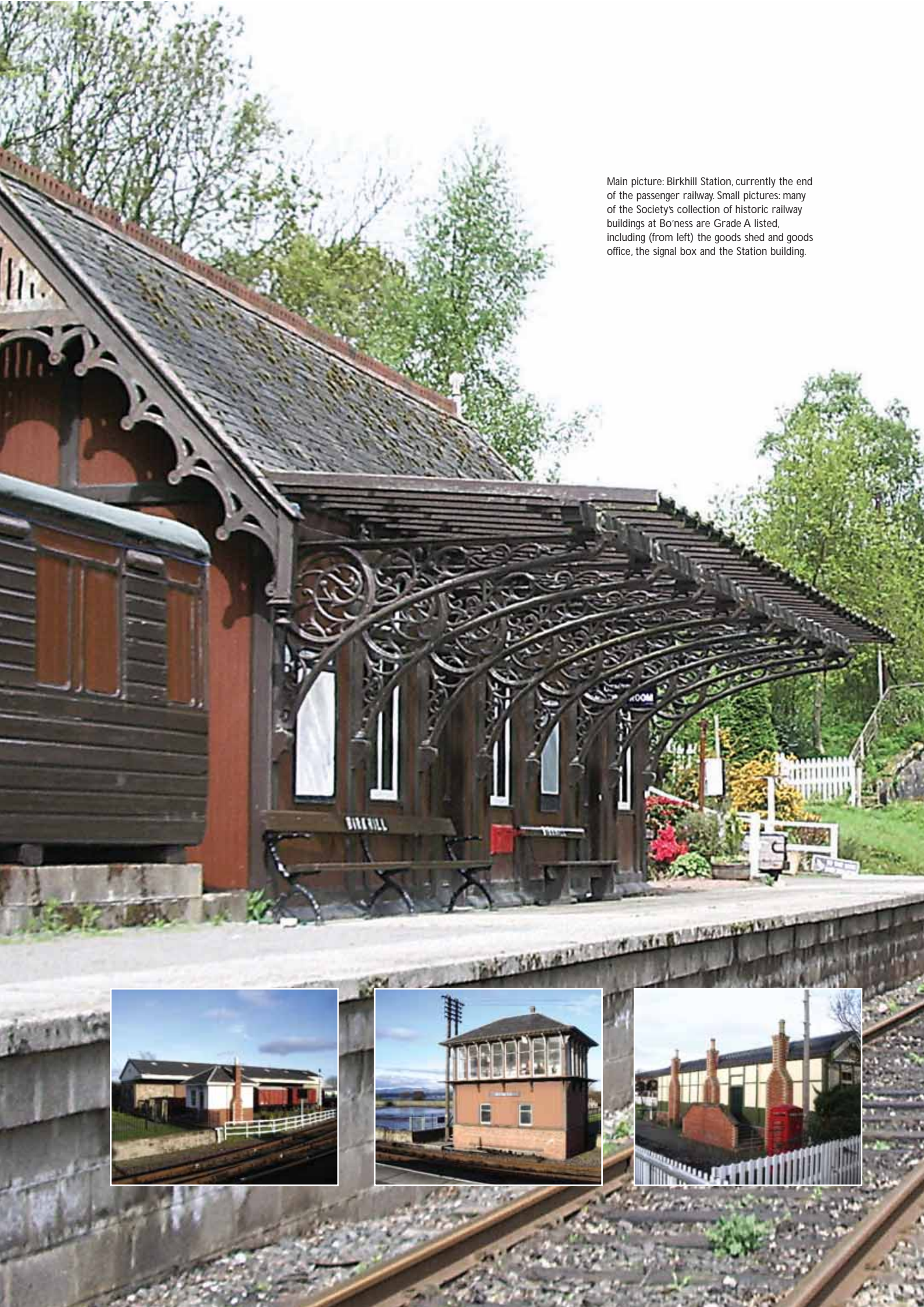
brought together
and conserved



350

volunteers

Main picture: Birkhill Station, currently the end of the passenger railway. Small pictures: many of the Society's collection of historic railway buildings at Bo'ness are Grade A listed, including (from left) the goods shed and goods office, the signal box and the Station building.





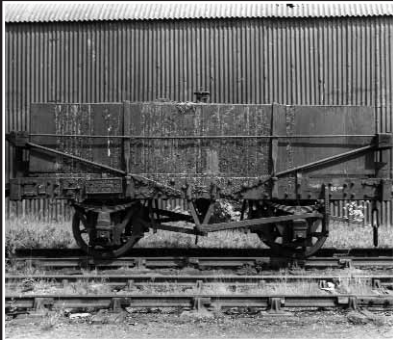
MANAGING THE COLLECTIONS

Shaping and caring

The collections are unique. There are approximately 250 rail vehicles (steam and diesel locomotives, carriages and wagons) at Bo'ness, of which 150 are accessioned to the historic Core Collection. And these are supported by a growing collection of 6,300 smaller artefacts.

These collections must be managed and developed if they are to achieve their full potential.







MANAGING THE COLLECTIONS

Active management of the collections – acquisitions, disposals, new displays and presentations – requires knowledge of the significance of objects. Collections knowledge must be shared and retained, and developed where it is lacking – the connection between objects and knowledge is vital to understanding their significance and narrative potential.

From developing collections and collections knowledge come new opportunities for engaging audiences, new stories for presentations and new opportunities for delivering education for all. Railway history can be understood on many levels – as social history, as technical progress, as one way in which Scotland made its unique contribution to the world.

To properly exploit the collections, the Society considers that additional salaried staff are needed to support the existing high levels of volunteering and is actively seeking new sources of funding to achieve the necessary capacity.

The elements and opportunities of collection management include:

- Working with other museums, higher education bodies and subject experts to share knowledge and collections
- Maintenance and development of collection support systems, policies and procedures
- Coordinating collection level and subject level research and publications
- Coordinating acquisition and pre-disposal assessments and process
- Publishing and maintaining a web based catalogue
- Identifying and involving audiences in evaluating existing services and developing new ones
- Proposing, planning and mounting new displays and use of collection objects
- Management of conservation and restoration
- Development of educational uses of the collection
- Managing the displays as a visitor attraction
- Developing relationships with national and local governmental and non-governmental organisations; other museums and railway collections
- Monitoring the condition of buildings which contain collections





Main picture: some of the Society's impressive collection of diesel locomotives.

Small pictures: both the Station and the Exhibition are full of historic items





IMPROVING COLLECTION CARE FACILITIES

Suitable accommodation



**The care of large railway objects
poses particular challenges.**



Main and small pictures: the Society's volunteers maintain and repair the Society's operating vehicles, and also restore and conserve items from the remainder of the collection.

The Society has built with past grant support a considerable amount of storage and display space for locomotives and vehicles, and the small objects are in secure stores.

However some wooden and many steel vehicles remain exposed to the weathers. These vehicles are considered to be "AT RISK" as they will be damaged irretrievably within 20 years if covered accommodation is not found.

The Society's immediate covered accommodation needs fall into two classes:

Preventive Conservation

Simple accommodation is needed to protect the "at risk" collection items. Since deterioration is active and progressive, this is an urgent need.

Core Collection items including the newly restored Diesel Multiple Unit and the recently acquired Glasgow Blue Train require a **Carriage Shed** for their protection.

The Railtours coaches require constant repetitive effort to keep them presentable, and require a **Carriage Sidings Canopy**, so that this effort can be better used on other conservation work.

A **Stabling Point Canopy** is needed for the diesel locomotive collection, which is showing progressive deterioration.

Covered accommodation is needed for the "at risk" group of the smaller steam locomotives which are currently in open store. This may be provided by the Steam Locomotive Works mentioned below.

The growing small objects and archive collection requires extended facilities, and could be made more accessible by relocation to new construction at Bo'ness Station.

Restoration and Maintenance Facilities

Extended and improved facilities are needed to protect the collections, to provide good working conditions that will encourage additional volunteering, to extend the range of

conservation work that can be undertaken and to allow use of workshops by trainees so that craft retention schemes can be undertaken.

The existing **Modern Motive Power Depot** (which was completed in 2006) shows what can be done, and provides excellent conditions for diesel locomotive repairs and restoration.

In contrast the **Steam Locomotive Works**, currently located in a 'temporary' building, is cramped and inconvenient. Replacement would achieve all of the above benefits, and in addition provide additional visitor displays and allow visitors to see the engineering processes involved in the conservation of large objects.

Restoration of carriages, excellent work currently carried out in primitive conditions in an unsuitable building, requires a **Carriage Workshop**.

Further **Stores** buildings and a **Paint Shop** are needed to serve the needs of work in progress, while the Signals and Telecommunications collection needs a **Store** associated with a small workshop.

The structure of a typical late 19th century workshop building is already stored on site, and could offer an authentic environment for any workshop or large scale visitor facility. This is the **Penman Building**, which was first erected at Kelvingrove as the Machinery Hall of the 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition. It was recovered from Dalmarnock, Glasgow, and brought to Bo'ness with a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.



CONNECTING WITH HISTORY

Engaging people

Education and access are fundamental rights, while creating comfort, entertainment and amenities for customers is one of the Society's core aims.

Better facilities are needed both to bring more visitors to the Railway and the Exhibition, and to persuade them to stay longer. Enhanced access to the collection through the Internet will also help to increase worldwide connections.







CONNECTING WITH HISTORY

“Collections can be used to deliver on the Scottish Curriculum and on life long learning.”

Education for All

Implementation of the Society's Education Policy (created as an output of our Strategic Change Fund project, jointly with Falkirk Council) will increase the use of the collections for learning. This will seek to inspire, provoke and stimulate interest in the heritage.

Provision will be inclusive and welcoming, and will recognise the diversity of audience needs. Collections can be used to deliver on the Scottish Curriculum and on life long learning. Volunteering offers opportunities for immersive learning.

While education initiatives may be delivered in schools, delivery on site will require the provision of a **Classroom** and **Library** facility. In the self-help tradition of railway footplatemen, these will be provided in a Mutual Improvement classroom. Access by researchers to collections information also requires a **Search Room** facility. This may be combined with the Library, dependant on the arrangement of new buildings.

Access for All

Connecting the collection with visitors and researchers requires longer opening hours and better physical and intellectual access. Barriers to access will be identified and removed.

The current open season from Easter to end-October, with daily opening in July and August, can be greatly extended. As with other visitor service issues, this is only feasible with increased resources to employ staff.

For visitors with mobility problems, direct vehicular access to the Scottish Railway Exhibition is needed. This can be provided by a combination of newly metalled roads within the site, and new fences to protect visitors from train movements. This delivers access benefits for all by fencing in sidings outside the Exhibition buildings for extended out door displays.

The need for more covered accommodation for the collections meets the need for more access by more visitors to more objects. New buildings will include visitor access to the greatest extent possible.

Virtual access

Aspirations for increased visiting, and for increased educational use of collections can be supported by

development of website information. The current website provides service information, and can be extended to give more consistent and complete collections information.

The audiences for this include potential visitors, educational users, ancestral tourists and researchers. Development will showcase the collections and the railway before a world wide audience.

Identifying Visitor Needs

Consultation with existing and potential visitors will establish what facilities are most needed. The opportunities:

- Identification of the intellectual and physical needs of visitors
- Identification of current and potential audiences
- Development of exhibitions to suit different audiences and learning styles
- Evaluation of the success of services and displays
- Improved visitor services. The site currently has a three-star award from VisitScotland, and can develop to four-star quality
- Tours of the site, workshops and displays, guided by knowledgeable working volunteers. Experience has shown that this provides excellent advocacy and visitor engagement
- Community involvement in volunteering opportunities, thus growing capacity, benefiting the community and creating a wider sense of ownership of the museum's purpose
- Revised access to an extended Scottish Railway Exhibition, both by road and through linking buildings between the Station and the existing Exhibition or by bridge access across the railway
- Development of the extended Exhibition displays to suit all audiences, including the under-12s. This includes opportunities to develop outdoor spaces for entertainment and display
- Creation of interactive and audio visual displays in the existing buildings with platforms (and lifts for the disabled) providing access to the interior of vehicles

Previous page and opposite: popular events such as 'A Day Out With Thomas' allow the Society to showcase their locomotives, carriages and wagons to enormous numbers of people of all ages.





CONNECTING WITH HISTORY

Developing the railway

Surveys have shown that visitors (and volunteers) want a longer train journey. Key proposals for developing the travel experience are to:

- Extend the line from its current passenger terminus at Birkhill across the grade B listed 5 arch viaduct over the River Avon to a new terminus at Bo'ness Junction alongside the Edinburgh-Glasgow main line
- Keep in review the future possibility of a further extension of the line, westwards to an interchange with the Union Canal at Lathallan
- Enhance Birkhill Station by providing a second and longer platforms, install new signalling to allow two trains to operate simultaneously
- Enhance the visitor facilities at Bo'ness, Birkhill and eventually Bo'ness Junction stations to cope with increasing numbers of visitors. Crucially, this must include a fully fenced and surfaced car park and visitor circulation area at Bo'ness Station

Managing volunteering

Volunteering offers the best access to the collections, to the railway and to individual personal development. Maintenance of the collections, the buildings and the railway itself places great demands on volunteer commitment.

Volunteers require subtle management and active support so that benefits are achieved for individuals and for the Society. Work opportunities have to be pleasurable and creative, while also directed to the Society's objectives.

Picture: one of the best times for the Society to connect with its largest audiences is at Christmas.







DEVELOPING CONNECTIONS

Working with others





Main picture: 419, the Society's flagship steam engine, prepares to pull out of Bo'ness Station.

Small pictures: Bo'ness and Birkhill station buildings were brought from their original locations at Wormit and Monifieth.

The Society's connections with local and national governmental and non-governmental bodies, with heritage and museum organisations, with specialist agencies, community and other groups have been a crucial factor in its success to date.

To connect with and support others, the Society seeks to be the national Scottish lead body for coordinating and developing the understanding of railway collections, and for improving the standards of care and presentation.

These old and new relationships will be the cornerstone of the future development of the collection.

Partnership with Falkirk Council

Past support by Falkirk Council has been vital. Real benefits were demonstrated by our joint Strategic Change Fund Project, completed in 2006. A current Joint Working Agreement specifies benefits to be delivered to both partners.

Specialist Subject Network, Inland Transport

The Society will share skills and experience with the whole museum sector in Scotland, with railway heritage operators, and with private collectors, so that railway collections are safeguarded by being understood and appropriately cared for and displayed.

This can be achieved by leading a Scottish Railway sub-group of the national SSN.

Scottish Technology & Industry Collections & Knowledge Network

As a member of the Steering Group, the Society will continue to provide expertise to protect Scotland's railway and engineering heritage knowledge base from loss.

Railway Industry

The Society already enjoys excellent commercial relations, and seeks to increase involvement so as to act as the heritage arm of the railway industry in Scotland. This will make its heritage more accessible to the industry, make heritage displays and presentations possible at railway sites and events, support industry events hosted at Bo'ness, and provide us with current and recent material for temporary and permanent display at Bo'ness.

Heritage Railway groups

Sharing knowledge, facilities, opportunities and exhibits with other groups has always been of considerable value to the Society, and maintaining and improving these links will be a major priority.

Community Engagement

The Society seeks to involve local and wider communities in planning and contributing to the work of the museum, and focusing the national affection for railways by enabling people to contribute their skills, or their memories.

Funding Partners

The Society will grow its facilities by finding shared priorities with funders, and exploiting these for joint benefit.



ALL CHANGE!

New connections

“there are great opportunities for development – to create enhanced visitor facilities”

There are great opportunities for development at Bo’ness – to secure parts of a collection threatened by lack of accommodation, to use the collection to connect with more people, and to create enhanced visitor facilities.

Taking advantage of these opportunities will require enhanced collection management methods and resources, and the provision of fit-for-purpose buildings for storage, conservation and display. It will also require more and better displays, increased access to the collection both physically and through electronic media, and extended capacity and opening times.

Over forty five years, the Scottish Railway Preservation Society has established a stable and successful visitor product which can be funded and managed within existing resources – but new resources are required if the Society is to take advantage of all the opportunities which are available to deliver the full potential of the collection.

The Society’s connections, existing and yet to be established, will be vital to establishing these resources, and in ensuring that the impact of the story of Scotland’s railways – a key part of the story of Scotland itself – is available to benefit all of Scotland’s people.

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Page 16	Andrew Girdwood
Page 19 (Birkirkhill picture)	Iain Lothian

PUBLISHED BY The Scottish Railway Preservation Society, February 2007

DESIGNED BY **aka:** Ltd. Tel 01506 884839

ARTWORK BY Alan Winney Tel 0131 477 2486

PRINTED BY Summerhall Tel 0131 555 8260



SCOTTISH RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY
BO'NESS STATION
UNION STREET
BO'NESS
EH51 9AQ

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