



# Press Release

## Railway Heritage Trust sponsors the creation of two new walking routes over viaducts on closed lines



The Railway Heritage Trust has awarded two grants, each of £200,000, to Railway Paths Limited to create new walking routes over viaducts on closed railway lines.

Torksey Viaduct links Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire over the River Trent. Built in 1847 by the Manchester, Sheffield & Leeds Railway, to the designs of John Fowler, it is widely considered as the first box girder bridge ever built, but it was not satisfactory in service. In 1897 it was strengthened by the insertion of a centre set of main girders. The viaduct closed to rail traffic in 1959, but has been listed. BRB (Residuary) Ltd transferred ownership to Railway Paths Ltd many years ago, and the Railway Heritage Trust has been pleased to give a grant towards partial repainting of the structure, and the provision of a walkway that will create a new link between Torksey in Lincolnshire, and Cottam in Nottinghamshire. These two villages are less than two miles apart physically, but currently it takes a journey of over ten miles to get between them.

Lumb Viaduct lies on the Ramsbottom—Accrington branch of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, opening in 1848, and closing finally in 1966. The viaduct is a conventional masonry structure over the River Irwell, and by restoring the parapets it becomes possible to extend an existing cycle route from Stubbins, which ends at the south end of the viaduct, to link with Helmshore, a mile to the north.

Construction work is now underway and, subject to gaining final planning approvals Railway Paths Ltd hopes to complete the work to both viaducts by March 2015.

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**Andy Savage, Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust, said:**

**‘We are delighted to be able to fund the restoration of these two viaducts to public use, allowing Railway Paths Limited to continue its excellent work of reopening closed railways and bridges as pedestrian and cycle routes.**

**We are also most grateful to the Highways Agency (Historical Railways Estate) for continuing the sponsorship of the Trust formerly given by BRB (Residuary) Ltd. It is only due to this sponsorship that we have been able to award these grants.’**

**Huw Davies, Chief Executive of Railway Paths Ltd said:**

**‘We are extremely grateful to both the Railway Heritage Trust and the Highways Agency (Historical Railways Estate) for their support in helping us, working with Sustrans, to open up these routes for local communities by giving a new life to these former railway structures.’**

#### **Note to editors**

#### **Railway Heritage Trust**

The Railway Heritage Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee, which aims to:

- encourage the conservation and enhancement of railway buildings and structures which are listed or scheduled and are of special architectural or historic interest, and;
- act as a catalyst between outside parties and owners in the conservation and alternative use of non-operational property, including the possible transfer of responsibility to local trusts or other interested organisations.

The Trust awards grants to a value of some £2 million a year to achieve these objectives.

#### **Railway Paths Ltd**

Railway Paths Ltd. is a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, which owns and manages a portfolio of former railway land to provide routes, roads and paths suitable for cycling, walking, horseriding and wheelchair use.

For further details or pictures, please contact the Railway Heritage Trust

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