

Rail trust again on award track

RESTORING viaducts and creating a footpath along a disused railway has enabled the Northern Viaduct Trust to win a national railway heritage award for a second time.

Yesterday (Tuesday), trust chairman Michael Sewell was presented with a plaque by Virgin Trains for the best volunteer sector entry at a ceremony in London.

The award was given for the work in restoring two historic Grade II listed viaducts and creating a one-and-a-quarter mile-long footpath on a disused railway, near Kirkby Stephen.

The trust now owns three viaducts in the Kirkby Stephen area. The first to be restored was Smardale Gill in 1990 when a similar award was won and a plaque was presented by the Duke of Gloucester.

The charitable trust comprises just nine local people whose efforts over five years have raised some £250,000 from grants and from a very successful appeal, demonstrating the value which the public places on the historic structures in the landscape.

As well as restoring the viaducts, building a new footbridge over the River Eden, and clearing and surfacing the old railway trackbed, two derelict platelayers' huts have been converted into attractive information points containing descriptive panels and photographs.

This latest project was officially opened last July by Sir Neil Cossons, chairman of English Heritage.

The national railway heritage awards, now in their 26th year, are made annually to encourage high standards of restoration and environmental care throughout the railway and allied industries, heritage railways, and by owners of former historic railway structures.

Prestigious awards for two Kirkby Stephen railway projects

KIRKBY Stephen projects scooped two prestigious National Railway Heritage Awards at a glittering ceremony in London on Tuesday.

Sid and Barbara Jordan, who are caretakers of the Kirkby Stephen railway station on the Settle-Carlisle line, won the Railway Heritage Trust conservation award, while the Northern Viaduct Trust won a national railway heritage award for the second time for its work in restoring two historic Grade II listed viaducts and creating a 1¼-mile long footpath on a disused railway, near Kirkby Stephen.

Plaques were presented by John Armitt, chief executive of Network Rail, at a ceremony at the prestigious Merchant Taylors' Hall, in London. Mr. and Mrs. Jordan picked up the award for the work they have done in helping to breathe new life into what was a cold and old ailing station.

"We are absolutely delighted," said Mr. Jordan. "I held my breath before they announced which of the three on the short-list was going to win the award. It was like waiting to see if we had got through to the next week on *Strictly Come Dancing!*"

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