

Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Conservation Statement

The context

Our Vision is to recreate the golden age of the Great Western Railway.

Our Mission is:

- To be a nationally accredited independent organisation
- To maintain Didcot Railway Centre as a working museum dedicated to the Great Western Railway
- To provide suitable facilities to demonstrate restoration and maintenance of the Collection
- To be open to the public for the enjoyment, benefit and education of the community.

Our challenge is to become a more commercially orientated organisation in order to achieve the Vision.

Introduction

Caring for its collections is a fundamental duty for any museum and in our case, we care for the Great Western Society Ltd., Great Western Preservations Ltd. and Great Western Trust Collections. Great Western Society Council approved this Conservation Statement on 14th March 2006.

Conservation of the collections

The care of our collections is based on a combination of preventative and remedial conservation, both designed to ensure preservation. Preventative conservation covers the measures necessary to retard or minimise deterioration of objects and structures. Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

Practical considerations

Our aim is to restore locomotives and rolling stock to working condition to give visitors the opportunity to see examples of the Great Western Railway (GWR) in action.

Steam locomotives are relatively robust and our aim is to maintain them on open display under cover in our genuine GWR Engine Shed. We have recently repaired the Engine Shed's roof and the building is now in full operation. We have long term plans to restore the Shed to its original condition. GWR coaches are less robust and we maintain our fleet under cover in our Carriage Shed.

Our small artefacts in the Great Western Trust collection will, in general, be displayed in more closely controlled conditions. Artefacts of a particularly sensitive nature and items of archive material will be displayed in glass cases. Items such as posters and paintings may be exhibited on open display but in closed museum spaces, where environmental conditions, in particularly light levels, can be controlled suitably. We monitor the temperature and humidity of the Small Relics Museum display area.

Future plans

We recognise that our current display spaces require upgrading and the installation of full environmental controls. To that end, we are developing plans for an extension to the Relics Display Building to provide improved temperature and humidity control for conservation work and we have long term plans for a new museum, library and visitor centre.

Ann Middleton
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