

Project Scotland, Feb. 2, 1995 -5

RAIL MAN GETS REWARD

Honour for civil engineer

THE civil engineer who led a £1m campaign to preserve the world's oldest surviving railway viaduct has been honoured by a Scots university.

Roland Paxton, one of the country's leading civil engineering historians, has been appointed to an honorary professorship by Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University.

In 1992, he took the initiative in forming a trust to save from collapse - and then conserve - the viaduct at Laih Milton on the former Kilmarnock and Troon Railway which was opened in 1812.

The project has now secured promises totalling £1m from various sources to carry out the necessary work and this is due to start in the spring.

The historian turned detective to prove last month that the Glenesk Viaduct near Dalkeith was built in 1829- 31 . . . eighteen years earlier than previously thought

Professor Paxton has spent a lifetime in the profession, first with Ordnance Survey and from 1955 in the design and construction of drainage schemes, roads and bridges with local authorities in Manchester and Leicester and latterly as senior principal engineer with Lothian Region.

Following his retirement, in 1990 he was appointed honorary senior research fellow in the department of civil and offshore engineering at Heriot-Watt.

For more than 25 years, Professor Paxton has been a leading figure in the little-studied area of the history of civil engineering and as chairman of the Institution of Civil Engineers' panel for historical engineering works, has recorded, promoted knowledge of and encouraged conservation of historic roads, bridges, canals, railways, lighthouses and harbours.

Of his many publications, his '100 Years of the Forth Road Bridge' to coincide with the centenary in 1990 was subsequently



Professor Paxton, the historian / detective.



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