



Ecclesbourne Express

*Newsletter of the Ecclesbourne Valley
Railway Association*

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The Wirksworth to Duffield Line

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Association

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(Charity No. 1106810)

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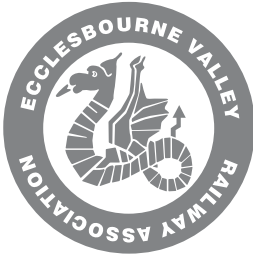
Website: www.evra.org.uk Web Master - Paul Rayner.

Next Edition will be published in April 2014 – Contributions welcome by email or post to Richard Buckby, see above, by **21st March 2014**.

Front Cover – Vince Ware in conversation with Phil Tarry and Mick Thomas during the re-construction of Idridgehay Level Crossing, October 2007.

Back Cover – Peter Taylor unveiling the restored Wirksworth Station Clock, March 2008.





NEWS UPDATE - Mike Craft

It is with great sadness that I have to report the deaths of two of our volunteers, Vince Ware and Mark Purrett.

Vince, better known as the Vince the Elder, was one of the original group of 8 volunteers who started work in November 2000 clearing the Station Yard at Wirksworth. He then worked with Richard Buckby from the Duffield end to clear the track and the many other tasks in those early days. He joined the EVRA committee, becoming treasurer and editor of the Ecclesbourne Express, two key roles at a time when our activities were growing, with grants, other sources of money and associated expenditure to keep track of. He continued working with the p-way team and was always willing to help with projects such as painting or maintaining rolling stock or displays. After he relinquished the editorship and treasurer's jobs he became our book-keeper. He was also a regular volunteer in the shop. His contributions to our meetings were always to the point and he will be missed.

Mark Purrett helped clear the track in the early days. Later on his knowledge of the furniture industry was of great value to us. He designed the layout of the Museum Coach and constructed the cupboards. He also helped with the conversion of a tube wagon into a coach. His contributions to several key projects were invaluable.

The 2013 Model Railway Exhibition had a lower attendance than the previous year and the hire of the Halls has increased dramatically. However, we did manage to make a profit of £687. The dates for 2014 are October 18th and 19th.

The Annual Draw was also successful with a profit of £658 and we are very grateful to those who sent donations and money for extra tickets and those who donated prizes.

In November last year we held our third race night at the Malt Shovel which raised £384 (making a total of almost £1282 for all three towards the restoration of steam engine Cathryn). We are grateful to all those local businesses and individuals who helped by sponsoring races. In early December we held a quiz night at the Malt Shovel and raised a more modest £47.50 for the restoration of the coaches. We are grateful to those who supported both these events, which also attract non-members and spread the word. In addition to these specific events, Linda and Chris at the Malt Shovel have allowed us to have a collection jar on the bar and over £405 has been raised in this way in the last three years. We are grateful to Linda and Chris and their customers for all their support. We will be repeating these events in 2014 and the dates have been included in the calendar at the end of the Express. If you can come along to support these events please do.

I must apologise if anyone has attempted to contact us by e-mail since mid-October. Some e-mails have filtered through but others haven't. We decided to change our provider to BT who have taken nearly 2 months to sort the problems, but we are now up and running and catching up! Our new e-mail address is inside the front cover. It has been agreed with the WyvernRail board that one of the Andrew Barclay steam engines will run up the incline on all Bank Holiday weekends and at other times to comply with the conditions of the HLF grant which helped us to restore them.

SALES MATTERS - PAT CRAFT

The autumn has brought mostly reasonable days in the shop, although one or two, for no obvious reason, have been disappointing for the volunteers who have given up their day. Even so the shop, takings are around £900 better than the same period last year and the whole calendar year is over £6,000 up on last year. In addition the EVRA stall and tombola at the Model Railway did well again and the attendance at other shows (4 days) has provided reasonable takings.

Thanks are due to all the volunteers who help in the shop and to those who donate books and other items for us to sell, without whom we could not achieve such good results, which help to support the Association's activities. Over the winter the shop will be emptied, cleaned and painted and more bookshelves added, then an entirely fresh range of second-hand transport and other books will be on sale for the new season, which starts on 16th February with trains running for half term.

THE NEW YEAR BECKONS - Martin Miller

2013 was quite a roller coaster that involved two visiting steam locomotives, the magnificent restoration of the Class 119 diesel multiple unit and the departure of two key players, Peter Taylor and Vince Ware.

The steam locomotives were a mixed blessing with the upside being the creation of a locomotive hauled set of coaches in a remarkably short space of time that were subsequently used in a two day film job for the BBC. The locomotives undoubtedly increased the visitor numbers but the additional footfall was not there to pay for the increased costs incurred. The visitors also illustrated that we are not ready to service these machines without considerable disruption to the rest of our activities, hence the additional facilities necessary being on the wish list of the Capital Projects Fund.

Our Railway has become the centre of excellence for diesel multiple units which was celebrated by the extremely successful Multiple Memories Weekend and the ultimate accolade of supplying a two car set to that bastion of steam, the Bluebell Railway, during the early months of 2014.

Footplate experiences grow in popularity. We have taken the adventurous step of selling these direct rather than through a third party, which may reduce volume but improve the net results. The steam and diesel teams delivering these experiences have developed a great reputation, attracting much praise from happy participants.

Our Pullman catering goes from strength to strength and now represents some 20% of turnover. Some small improvements are being made this winter to counter layout and drainage. The Santa season in 2013 has been the best we have ever experienced and justified the significant effort put into the planning and delivery. It will be quite difficult to move this essential part of our business further forward in 2014.

Thus the end result for 2013 was around a breakeven on trading as basic costs continue to rise as we all know from our domestic experiences. We have therefore

taken a cautious approach to 2014 majoring on our strengths with the emphasis on increasing the load factor on all our scheduled train services.

One of our tremendous strengths has been the development of web based sales satisfying customer demand 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, which was amply illustrated by 85% of Santa bookings being sold online.

The teams that maintain the Permanent Way, control lineside vegetation, service our fleet of steam and diesel locomotives, diesel multiple units, coaches and wagons and look after our structures, have unending work, often in less than ideal conditions, so deserve our thanks, as without them there would be no railway and no trains.

We do have the extremely tempting outlook of being able to pass trains at Shottle sometime in 2014 which will add an extra dimension to our operations.

My thanks, as ever, go out to all the active volunteers and those that help us financially through purchasing shares and contributing to the Capital Projects Fund.

Belatedly, I wish all a happy and healthy 2014.

THE CHALLENGES FOR 2014 – John Snell, Chairman WyvernRail plc

We are currently basking in the warm glow of our best ever Santa Season. A new formula combined with past experience brought a record number of seasonal visitors and a mountain of appreciative feedback, the result of sustained effort by many people across all the railway's departments and a splendid example of what individual effort and well-organised team work can achieve. Well done to all concerned. There are, as always, lessons to be learnt which should help to make next year even more successful.

Our Christmas and New Year trains marked the end of a year of continuing development of the railway to provide an interesting and enjoyable day out for our customers.

Despite atrocious weather well into the "spring", the year has seen a significant overall increase in visitors plus:

- significant improvements being made to our permanent way to give our trains and their occupants a more comfortable ride,
- Refurbishment, overhaul and return to service of the Class 122 DMU,
- Re-decking of the public footbridge north of Duffield station,
- extended platforms at Wirksworth and Duffield to accommodate the newly refurbished EVRA loco-hauled coaches that were run behind two visiting steam locomotives for nearly three months,
- the introduction into service of the second EVRA Barclay steam loco to be restored at Wirksworth,
- completion of the platform wall rebuild at Shottle,
- completion of the restoration and return to service of the Class 119 DMU – permitting us to run a 9-car DMU special.
- Hiring out by the DMU team of a 2-car set to the Bluebell Railway for its winter services – the first time that the Bluebell has used a DMU for its regular passenger services.

A formidable development list from a primarily volunteer organisation and one in which great satisfaction may be taken, hardly a railway that is resting on its laurels!

There now follows the difficult real winter period when earning opportunities are few but the fixed costs of keeping the railway in existence continue to accumulate. Analysis of last season's results has shown that a weekend DMU service can be viable from the late February opening for the school half-term week, so services are suspended in January until the February half-term to permit essential maintenance. This includes the Pullman Buffet, where the serving area will be re-arranged. During the period until Easter (late April this year) the only other earning opportunity will be driver experiences; and EVRA's support in making special arrangements to permit a steam loco to be available from February onwards is particularly welcome. We are also using the planned pause in operations to carry out an internal review of health and safety systems for all activities being undertaken on the railway.

The service pattern for the 2014 season will be based on the DMU fleet, supplemented by loco-hauled diesel weekends with the carriage stock. EVRA steam will return to the incline for 20 days; this will provide opportunities for crew training on a scheduled passenger service and we also hope to combine additional steamings with driver experience mornings so that they can be self-sustaining.

Driver experience itself will play an important part in revenue generation for both EVRA and the plc during 2014 and will be bookable solely through the www.e-v-r.com website, which will hopefully increase the net return for both organisations.

We are now at the point where the railway is able to balance its books with the current traction, service pattern, testing and driver experience activities but capital expenditure on new projects is dependent on plc Shareholder support and any available grant aid; there is very little opportunity for funding any significant revenue programme directly from our income. We also need to accumulate a working capital surplus to see us through the slim winter months when cash flow is difficult and to this end new revenue generation projects for the main season are being developed to encourage party visits, offer a new structured programme for school visits and further boost driver experience opportunities – all three of these strands will require enhanced marketing to succeed.

In the last issue of EE Martin Miller outlined the 10-point capital programme for the railway that totalled £515,000 and the reason for establishing a capital fund to back it up. This appears a daunting sum but bear in mind that it covers a 7-year period. The railway raised over £1m in the 10-year period of its basic reconstruction – other railways are demonstrating that such sums are achievable even in the present economic climate.

Out of the 10-point list the Board has decided that the immediate top priority is the new Transport and Works Act Order so that conversion of the lease to freehold may be achieved for the princely sum of £1! The costs of the new Order will, of course, be significantly more than that and a supporter has kindly guaranteed the finance for an application to be made this spring. Drafting and steering the application will be my prime responsibility as a Director and my personal challenge for 2014. Once

achieved, freehold ownership of the railway unlocks the scope for secure capital development of the railway so that its potential can be achieved.

Everyone has a view of what the railway should be but as its founder let me share mine with you. I wish to see a railway operated with mixed steam and diesel traction where a visitors can, during the course of their stay, travel behind a choice of heritage diesel and steam trains to appreciate our delightful scenery, enjoy a good value meal in comfortable surroundings, gain an appreciation of the line's history and its past and present importance to the locality, be able to view living railway heritage and to purchase souvenirs of their visit and other related merchandise. Their visitor experience should be such that they are encouraged to make a return visit and recommend the railway to their family and friends. Furthermore the railway should be easily accessible by road or public transport, encourage travel by the local community yet have the in-built flexibility to be able to develop further commercial and railway-related income streams.

We are part way to many of these objectives but a restraint to growth is our timetable: the length of the line restricts us to 4 round trips per day. As an entertainment business – I make no apologies for that description – a two hour wait to take (or even see) a train is unacceptable. Imagine the response at a National Trust property if you were told that you would have to wait two hours before you could be admitted.

A vital next step to raising our baseline revenue and making activities such as visiting steam traction viable is the completion of the loop at Shottle, whereby we can double the train frequency to 7 round trips per day within the current hours of opening, all connecting with north and southbound EMT services at Duffield plus our new through ticketing facility with Trent Barton buses. This would permit increased variety and make the railway more attractive to visitors and volunteers alike.

Most of the work can be achieved during 2014. Thanks to the work of our volunteer teams the main platform and the permanent way are almost complete but signalling requires installation. This will initially have to be a simple two-token system based on ground frames to ensure completion within a reasonable timescale; signal boxes look attractive but evidence locally is that a completed installation can take a number of years to achieve, even when all equipment is to hand and on-site. Other essential elements for hourly two-train operation are an initial 4-coach length timber second platform at Shottle, independent public access to both platforms and a secure crossing keeper's shelter at Gorseley Bank, so that the gates can be locally operated to permit more time for the passing operation at Shottle. With at least 4 trains traversing the crossing every hour this position would be far more interesting than currently!

We have a talented and enthusiastic volunteer labour force led by Mick Thomas who are more than up to the task but need capital input to support their endeavours. The overall cost according to the capital programme is estimated to be of the order of £40,000, including an allowance for track alteration and other preparatory work to enable a start on an expanded Wirksworth maintenance facility in 2015, because more train services will mean more maintenance demands. Nevertheless this sum is equivalent to less than £65 per EVRA member, the opportunity is there.

That's our communal challenge for 2014!



Quick cuppa for Santa! - *Martin Miller.*

Footplate Experience Participant waters No.3 under supervision - *Eric Hills.*





New arrival: Bubble Car 55012 test out the new Shottle Platform, 27.12.2013.

Patrick McLoughlin's visit, Friday 10th January 2014 - *Phil Richards.*



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DMU Report - Leigh Gratton

In to the New Year there is a short six week window for the DMU Group to gather themselves together before the 2014 season starts. There has been plenty to do: just recently the announcement that two of the vehicles in our care are being loaned to the Bluebell Railway. Primarily a steam line, the Bluebell Railway are doing some significant track work during the winter months and thought a DMU would be a great way to continue operating a service without run round loops and with reduced facilities. It is the first time a DMU has run on Bluebell metals so it has certainly grabbed the public's attention. Many enthusiasts will visit simply to ride on the DMU as it may not be repeated and others will go just to enjoy the unique view out of the front windows.

Class 101 E51505 and Class 108 E50599 are the two vehicles chosen for the loan. Both vehicles face the same way on the Ecclesbourne Valley so it will be the first time that these vehicles have operated services together as a pair. You may recall that 51505 underwent a yearlong refurbishment programme in 2011 where our volunteers replaced the entire ceiling, restored the original Tungsten lighting, reinstated the first class area which involved a new carpet and seating, and the standard class area received re-upholstered seats too. 50599, on the other hand, is the first-built Class 108 vehicle and recently also received upgraded seats.

Also of significance is Gloucester 'bubble car' 55012. This vehicle arrived with us in October for a contract repair, the engines and electrical system receiving attention. Initially, this was only a short loan for the duration of the repairs but it was decided that the vehicle will stay at Wirksworth to operate services for the foreseeable future. Single cars are very useful for us so this is welcome news. Joining fellow Class 122 55006, 55012 means that we are the only railway that can operate two Gloucester 'bubble cars' together which should be quite a spectacle at Multiple Memories in the summer.

In the Maintenance Facility the refurbishment of recently-arrived Metro-Camel Class 101 E50253 continues. We have recently repaneled the walls in the guards van and replaced rotten ceiling panels. The van is now having a complete repaint. At the front, work is in progress on the cab area to stop water ingress that has plagued this vehicle for years. The driver's cab will receive a brand new desk to replace the old, rotten one.

2013 has been a fantastic year for the DMU Group. It has really seen the team come together and we now have a fantastic range of ever increasing skills. We have seen the proud launch into traffic of Class 119 W51073 and have proved that we can run a successful and very busy DMU event. I really feel that the DMU Group can only go from strength to strength and we are all already looking forward to a fantastic Multiple Memories event on the 9th and 10th of August 2014.

Membership Secretary's New Year Muse - Vince Morris

I have to report that the day before I wrote this muse some 6,500 tons of debris was maliciously deposited on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. I can report that, due to forward planning, we have managed to clear almost all of it away, and the train service was not disrupted in any way. However, regular track patrols (walking the entire length of the track once a fortnight) will be maintained to ensure that any repeat of this dastardly deed does not cause any problems.

In other words, it rained. Our solution: drains and drainage. Not something you may want to think about, but just one more of the essential infrastructure elements that go to make up a safe operational railway. We have six bridges over the River Ecclesbourne (incongruously called underbridges) but far more culverts and cross drains that take surface water away from the track: most of them eventually discharge into the River. Whilst some of our culverts are little more than clay pipes, there are a few which are exquisite bricklaying masterpieces, completed by our Victorian forefathers and destined never to be seen again: we even have one which has a self priming syphon to lift the water away from the track.

One culvert is very posh, since it was relined with an inflatable plastic lining during a demonstration by the manufacturers for Network Rail. This process is now used on the Big Railway, but unfortunately the demonstration on our railway stopped at one. Some of our culverts are free draining, some are regularly blocked and require constant attention.

In the early days of restoration some of the blockages were massive, with tree roots growing through damaged pipework allowing debris to cling to them: one such, on the Incline, was the full diameter of the pipe and about three feet long. It completely blocked the flow of water and it required the pipe to be excavated and then broken to allow the obstruction to be removed by several strong men pulling at it. The pipe was renewed, the excavation back-filled and, as far as I know, there has been no repeat of the blockage. However there are still wet spots on the railway, notably just North of Ildridgehay, on the "Racing Straight" around Mile Post 139 and just North of Derby Road Bridge 1.

Water does cause problems: water under the track causes the soil beneath the ballast to become putty like, allowing it to slip and slide, so there is the possibility of both vertical and horizontal movement. Silt is deposited between the running lines, causing the sleepers to rot and allowing for vegetation to grow, which not only looks unsightly but also undermines the track, causes tripping hazards and blocks what drainage there is. It is a constant battle to keep the track safe: hence the fortnightly patrols: not just a walk in the countryside, but a necessary part of our safety management system. It all

goes to make up the vast tapestry that is the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway: unsung work that most passengers do not know about, but which is essential for their safety and our reputation. So next time it rains think of the unsung heroes who get down and dirty to ensure that we do not sink under the weight of water.

SOME PERSONAL MEMORIES OF VINCE WARE

Richard Buckby

It does not seem possible that we will not be seeing 'Vince the Elder' at our railway this coming year. He had been with us since day one of the enterprise and probably our hardest working volunteer.

I joined the team a few weeks after the clearance work had started. He and I made a start on vegetation clearing at the Duffield end of the line, while others worked from the north end. We had to start from the A6 bridge in Duffield as we were not then allowed to access Duffield station area, which was invisible in the trees. He would often phone me and tell me he was working on a particular area and I would join him, where he had already cleared a good stretch with a fire going. I would often have to leave in the afternoon for domestic chores but he would soldier on.

One day he phoned, quite excited, to say we had finally got permission to start on Duffield station clearance and did I fancy helping. By the time I got there he had already made great inroads on the vegetation and was really pleased that travellers on the A6 could finally see over the bridge and see our efforts. Duffield station is a fitting memorial to him.

At Wirksworth we have a small memorial area where we remember volunteers who are no longer with us, marked with brass plaques, but in fact there are quite a few memorials connected with Vince spread around the area, but you would never know!

In towns and cities we are of course used to having the names of the roads displayed on a street sign. However when you get out into the countryside, although many rural roads have names, they are usually known only to local residents and farmers. However, if you drive in the country in the Amber Valley District Council area, you will find even narrow rural lanes have their names displayed on signs at each end. It seems these signs were provided across the area on the initiative of Vince when he worked for Amber Valley Council. He had to fight hard to persuade them to spend the money, but he succeeded. Thus when you drive around the roads around here and see one of those signs, think of Vince! He was very proud of having those signs around the area, although he had to give up on one particular road, as the sign for 'Jackass Lane' - near the Bear pub, kept getting stolen!

Vince had been suffering ill health for quite a while. In fact Phil Tarry relates that he once announced he had 'a slight touch of cancer'. That did not stop him attending the railway and he was with us on the permanent way team only a few months ago. I do believe that without Vince and the Komatsu, we would not yet have the railway open! Farewell Vince, and thank you.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Association Prize Draw 2013

Income Ticket: Sales £954. Expenditure :Tickets £124, Prizes £165, Postage £7
net income £658'

- 1st Prize: Ticket 1535, Steam Experience**, M. Billings, Windley, Derbys
- 2nd Prize: Ticket 0919, £75**, Dr. D. Rickerby, Duffield, Derbys
- 3rd Prize: Ticket 5000, £50**, J. Cooke, Wirksworth, Derbys
- 4th Prize: Ticket 5664, Book: St Pancras Station by Simmons & Thorne**,
J. Wheat, Dronfield Derbys.
- 5th Prize: Ticket 0498, Book: Tickets Please by Paul Atterbury**.
J. Clark, Duffield Derbys
- 6th Prize: Ticket 7630, DVD Steam memories LMS Archive Collection**.
A. Baisden, Uckfield, E. Sussex.
- 7th Prize: Ticket 1775, David Weston's Railway Heritage Address Book**.
M. Birch, Combs, Derbys
- 8th Prize: Ticket 4851, Book: Paul Atterbury's An A-Z of Railways**, J. Tunley, Derby
- 9th Prize Ticket 5629, DVD: Diesels in the High Peak**. L. Smithurst, Ripley Derbys.
- 10th Prize: Ticket 7663, DVD: Power of the Tornado**, M. Rowley Breadsall Derby
- 11th Prize: Ticket 7290. Winner donated the prize back to EVRA**
- 12th Prize: Ticket 4994. Book: St Pancras Station by Simmons & Thorne**.
T. Arnold, Milford, Derbys.
- 13th Prize: Ticket 6987. Great Victorian Railway Journeys**, M. Sadler, Duffield Derbys.
- 14th Prize: Ticket 7444. DVD: Diesels in the High Peak**,
S. Thompson, Holloway, Matlock Derbys.

EVRA Fundraising at the Malt Shovel, Wirksworth Moor

March 8th Quiz Night starting at 8.30pm.

April 5th Race Night starting at 8.30pm.

EVR TIMETABLE: February - May 2014

Winter Timetable: Saturdays and Sundays on the Wirksworth-Duffield Service only from February 22 to March 16. Half-Term Service Tuesday 18 and Thursday 20 February. No 16.15 to Duffield or Ravenstor Service.

Day Rover Fares will be: Adults £12, Concessions £10; Children £6; Families (2+3) £29. Special Event Fares may be higher.

Summer Timetable starts 22 March. Trains depart Wirksworth for Duffield at 10.15, 12.15, 14.15 & 16.15 to connect with the East Midlands Trains Matlock Branch Service return at 11.15, 13.15, 15.15 & 17.15. The services are operated using Heritage Diesel Railcars. Trains to Ravenstor at 11.53; 13.53 & 15.53, return 12.02; 14.02 & 16.02. The Duffield service will also operate, Tuesday/Thursdays: 15/17 & 22/24 April and 27/29 May during school holidays.

SPECIAL EVENTS.

March 22-23: Home Fleet Weekend.

April 18-21: Easter Open Days, Steam on Ravenstor Service. Easter Egg Hunt, Wirksworth.

May 3-5: Bank Holiday - Rocks and Rails Weekend, Steam on Ravenstor Service.

May 24-26: Wirksworth Carnival and Bank Holiday, Steam on Ravenstor Service.

May 24 Cheese and wine Land Cruise.

Train enquiries - Tel. 01629 823076, See www.e-v-r.com for further details.

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Restoration of the 18th Century Building
St. John's Church



The clock was made in the 18th century and is one of the most beautiful pieces of furniture in the church. It was made by a local carpenter and is a fine example of the work of the period.

Restoration of the Building

The building was in a state of disrepair when it was first discovered. The roof was leaking and the walls were crumbling. It was a real eyesore and a disgrace to the town. The restoration was a long and difficult process, but it was worth it in the end. The building is now a beautiful and well-maintained structure that is a pride and joy for the community.

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