

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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Next Edition will be published in January 2017 – Contributions welcome by email or post to John Hastings-Thomson, see above, by **December 23rd 2016.**

Front Cover – John Evans sharing his passion for the EVR at Shottle. Richard Buckby.

Back Cover - 33103 near Hazelwood on driver experience, 2.9.2016. John Weaver.



NEWS UPDATE - Mike Craft

As many of you will know the railway has lost John Evans, who died suddenly in mid-September. It is difficult to cover all the activities which John became involved in on the railway over his time with us – but we are finding out because there are so many gaps which John used to fill. As Safety Officer he was always vigilant, he was often Responsible Officer for the day, led yard tours and as a guard he was always informative,

often talking about his other interests in gems, geology and herbal medicine. EVRA is especially grateful to him for being the first face our steam driving experience participants met, with a friendly run down on health and safety and an introduction to the railway. Then while the driver got to grips with the engine, he entertained the friends and family by not just giving them a spectators' role but by enabling them under his supervision to participate actively being a guard and brake man. Sadly, just after he died, we received an e-mail thanking us for the special time he had given one group.

We have already made progress in spending some of the legacy on projects outlined in the last Express. Materials for track work totalling over £10,000 have been bought and more will be spent this year to take advantage of bulk buys. Work on Cathryn's boiler has begun. The BSK Brake Coach has been prepared for work by a contractor to repair certain areas, do the initial undercoating, fit exhaust and steam heating. Already the seats have been re-upholstered and some of the woodwork has been prepared for staining and varnishing. Drawings and calculations for the steam engine shed have been obtained, we have purchased jacks for the maintenance shed and a forklift with a bucket for loading coal.

We are in the process of hiring a steam engine for 2017, the multi-anniversary year, to provide 29 timetabled days at EVR. It is likely that the 3 phase electrical supply will be brought to the edge of the railway before too long. Investigations are underway into improving the supply of water to steam engines from the tank on the ballast dock and also into the removal of the dust dock. So quite a lot is happening or being planned and we are sure that the wishes of Sam Winfield for us to use the legacy to benefit the EVR are becoming a reality.

The AGM will be held on 12th November at the Red Lion, Wirksworth and the papers were enclosed with Summer 2016 Express.

The steam hauled Cheese and Wine evening was another sell out and the SO (with its bar) was used successfully over the Diesel gala in August and was deemed an asset to catering on the railway. The SK and the CK have remained in service over the summer with the Tea trains.

The second car boot sale in September attracted more stalls but fewer customers. It is clear that the sales have to be held regularly eg. monthly or more often, and with all the other demands on car parking this is not possible. Thanks are due to those who helped stage the two events. At least we tried!

By the time that you receive this, 32 people will have been on a steam driving experience, bringing enjoyment to them and their families and friends as indicated above. In addition 34 afternoons of incline trips have also been undertaken. These bring in money essential for maintenance of the steam engines but also ensure that we meet the HLF conditions of the restoration grant. This level of activity would not have been possible without the dedication of the drivers and firemen who arrive very early to get the fire going and then spend the day delivering a first class service. The maintenance team is also essential to ensure that all goes smoothly on the day.

SALES MATTERS - Pat Craft

As it is EVRA's 20th Anniversary next year we have a special diary for sale in the shop, priced at £4. It has a special cover, a gift sleeve and a handy notepad inside. Please come and have a look and hopefully buy one – for yourself or as a present for someone else. I will bring some to the A.G.M. in November.

The shop volunteers have noticed that income has been affected by the short time which passengers have at Wirksworth; if they are returning immediately there is hardly time for them to visit the buffet or cross to platform 1 to the shop or to the Booking Hall, (which has also experienced a lower increase in sales than could be expected, related to passenger numbers). However there have been enough days when the weather has allowed a table or two to be put outside and make us more visible (with an A board as well) to help the daily sales.

Sales were boosted by the impromptu sale which June Cooke bravely offered to hold on 17th and 18th September and which raised £150. Thanks to June, for working 3 long days and also to Sue and Frank Dawson for helping set up, serve and pack away.

As some of you will know I had a new hip in early September and I was not there, as usual, several times a week to remove items gradually. I am amazed by the amount of donations, but please if you are bringing boxes of books, magazines etc. contact me first, since we have little storage in the shop or elsewhere on site; on some days there have been up to 6 large boxes delivered, forming a hazard both in the shop and the Information Room.

Again I must thank all of the shop volunteers for coping with everything and especially for covering my absence in recent weeks.

JOHN EVANS - Tom Tait.

The void created by the sudden death of someone as well liked as John is still hard to grasp. He was someone we took for granted, someone who was ever present at our railway. Someone we could always count upon to stand in at the last minute. John was reliable and dependable and we will miss his contribution to our railway.

In the film Young Guns, Billy the Kid said, "The good die young." These words have never seemed so true. John was taken from us far too early. But it said that the good always go first. John's laugh, his tall stories, his obliging nature, his guard's whistle, his determination to do a job properly and his quest to make sure every visitor to our railway enjoyed themselves; these are qualities and memories that we all share fondly.

John was a great ambassador for the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. He epitomised everything that is good about volunteering at a heritage railway. His friendship, his wise counsel, his willingness to help others, his enthusiasm are qualities we would all do well to emulate. A good role model, a good guard, a good colleague, a good friend of the railway and a good friend to me.

John understood the importance of keeping physically active and it was remarkable he could carry out the range of tasks he did at the railway when you consider his disability. But to be honest, that was something we didn't really notice as his abilities were far more evident in every task he undertook. It is widely known that John was a knowledgeable and proficient railwayman and forever sought opportunities to pass those skills onto others. He took the responsibilities of his role seriously and enjoyed welcoming and training new operational volunteers to our railway.

It is incredibly sad that John's life ended so soon and I find it difficult to put into words how much we will miss him. Even though John may be gone, his memory will live on in all of us forever.

First Impressions - Vince Morris.

Whenever I am around the station I chat to visitors I meet. It is usually possible in the first couple of sentences to gauge whether they want to be bothered by a beardy weirdy, or prefer to do their own thing, if the latter I back off rapidly. But most people like a chat, and from what they tell me the first impression of the railway is an important indicator of whether they are going to enjoy their day with us. Comments such as "easy to find", "plenty of parking", "clean and welcoming" abound.

I compare this with my own experiences at other railways. My wife thinks that our car has a built in sensory system which can smell out heritage railways (actually the car is so old it probably calls them preserved railways), since it seems to take us via remote stations on every trip. But when we arrive I am never sure what to expect. There was one railway where there were three staff in the booking hall, but they were so preoccupied with their own conversation that they completely ignored me, so I walked out, vowing never to return. There was another where the booking clerk was so intent on her telephone conversation (on a non-railway subject) that she merely pointed at the timetable and fare chart to indicate when I could travel and what to pay: she literally did not speak a word to me. There are also what I call the dead railways: I arrived at one very well known heritage line five minutes before departure of the train. Since it appeared crowded I decided to let it go and spend the couple of hours before it returned exploring the station and rolling stock. So I bought my ticket but intentionally watched the train go out. Then nothing; all the staff disappeared, and not an item of rolling stock was accessible, the platform seemed devoid of information, the small shop was closed as the train left. I was left to form my own opinion of what might have been. Compare that with an equally well known railway where, once the timetabled train has left there are normally some shunting movements being carried out within the station area which, by observation, are conducted purely to ensure that any chance visitor has something to see and where the workshops are open and the staff keen to talk. I know which railway I prefer and would recommend for a visit.

But is this a case of the kettle calling the pot black? To see how we compare I have imagined below a not particularly railway-orientated family on holiday in the Peak District arriving at Wirksworth on the off-chance of having a day out on the EVR whose timetable they picked up at the local pub.

"We saw it at the same time: the brown sign at the top of Coldwell Street with the cartoon like picture of a steam locomotive, pointing down the hill to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. Well, would it be worth coming? Isn't it mainly a DMU railway, from main-line experience smelly and sounding like a lorry? Turning down Coldwell Street the first thought was that we were leaving the town: typical of a country railway with the station miles away from the town whose name it bears: probably should be called Wirksworth Road! I expect it will be in the middle of a field with nothing to do, and parking will be in a lav-by. No. after less than a minute there is Station Road. We turn left, past a board telling us that the buffet is open and through the double gates. A sudden thought - will there be a car park? Yes there it is, large enough to be both apparently full and have spaces! As we drive towards a parking spot there is the first sight of a train spied through the Midland style angled fence. Maroon, and with an unconnected corridor connection suspended in mid-air from the last vehicle: a set of real coaches awaiting an engine, not one of those modern "trains" with a cab at each end and their engines hidden from view - they may be fast, they may be computer controlled, they may be air conditioned, but they have no personality and the seats don't even line up with the windows, will they ever make "heritage" status like the coaches we have just seen?

The car parked, the first orange clad person we see flashes a smile and wishes us good afternoon. That's a bonus: sounds as if they want us here. As we take the short walk towards the station buildings we see, across the tracks, a couple of coaches in Pullman livery — must be the buffet advertised at the gate, and we know it is open. Then on past an information board fixed at an angle on what looks an attempt at dry stone walling (must read it on the way out), towards the doorway above which there is a sign proclaiming it to be the booking office. This is apparently the oldest railway booking office in the world, although it was only opened this year: how does that work?

Suddenly the peace is shattered by the sound of a steam whistle and a white plume appears above the rake of coaches. So there is steam! Then a two tone horn pierces the restored calm, accompanied by the squeal of brakes. Looking across the track through the coach windows we get glimpses of a green DMU arriving in the adjacent platform. But our eyes dwell on what is inside the coaches: tables covered with white cloths and laid up for what looks like a veritable feast. This must be the legendary "tea train", at rest between duties. But back to the DMU: it was not one of the modern ones, but looked more like a product of the 50s, when windows were large, and aligned with the seats, but above all the ones where you can sit behind the driver and look out his front window. Haven't even got onto the platform yet, but already there are real coaches, steam and DMUs like they were meant to be. The platform is beginning to fill as passengers from the DMU cross the tracks and come up the slope, under the watchful eyes of staff manning the crossing. The air is full of happy conversation when a loud speaker announces that the train standing on Platform 2 is for Duffield, calling at Idridgehay (so that is how you pronounce it!) and Shottle. A twotone whistle alerts us that there is shunting going on in the yard, and I can see signs

on the platform pointing us to the shop, the museum, the children's play area, the buffet, the miniature railway, the model railway; there is going to be plenty to do.

Yes, it was worth choosing to come to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, now to sample what they have to offer. We enter the oldest/newest booking office in the world (have to find out how that works: there seem to be staff eager to tell us) and ask for our tickets....... We are enjoying ourselves already and we haven't even got onto the platform yet."

First impressions really do count, let's all make sure that on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway they count to infinity. It does matter that the station is clean, the staff, whatever their duties are friendly and not too precious to pass the time of day with our visitors, that the attractions we offer are of a high standard and accessible to all, that we are not a dead railway. Not just to-day, but every day. Our guests may not share our enthusiasm, but if we can enthuse them sufficiently during the first few minutes of their visit they will become our friends, our ambassadors and we shall deserve the soubriquet of "Derbyshire's friendly railway".

EDITORS THOUGHTS.

The sudden and unexpected death of John Evans has been great shock to us all. I am sure that we all mourn the loss of a good friend. I was particularly sad to be away for his funeral and therefore unable to say good bye in person. I had the good fortune to regularly work with John. Footplate Experience courses and Santa will not be the same without him. I will miss your cheery company John. RIP.

Mike Evans article got lost in the ether, my apologies for its omission.

Have you Joined The "100 Club" yet? Help fund projects to develop the EVR.

REMEMBER

"YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT"

With your help we can achieve so much more.

Membership is open to all, including
non members of EVRA. All welcome!

Volunteer's Buffet. Saturday 19th November 3.00pm All this year's active volunteers welcome.



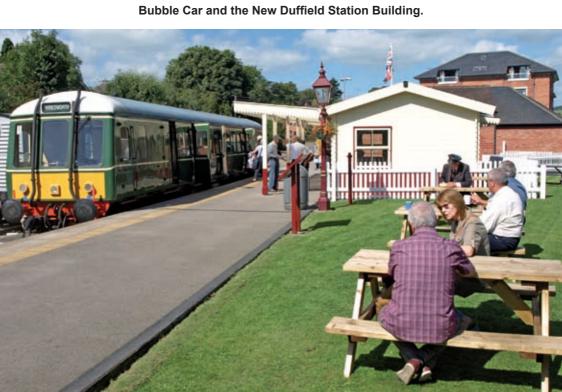
Iris at Norchard High Level, Forest of Dean Railway. Leigh Gration.

D8098 approaching Shottle during Diesel Gala. Mark Fowler.





Ferrybridge No.3 at Duffield during the Cheese and Wine Special, 30th July 2016.



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DUFIELD BOOKING HALL UPDATE - Geoff Clark

Further to my last report we, the project team, have finished the new Duffield Station Booking Hall/Waiting Room and applied a new coat of paint in Midland Red and Cream, we have also given the toilet block doors a fresh coat of red as well. The whole Station area has been uplifted and our staff are eager to get in and start work in their new surroundings, as I'm sure our visiting public will be as well. The building itself has been, as one of my colleagues put it to me recently, "A Howling Success", certainly from my point of view having chatted to our staff and visitors alike there has been nothing but praise heaped upon us in achieving success with this project which was so badly needed for all concerned, But it is also "thank you" to our supporters, colleagues and visitors, both local and from all over the UK, who have rallied around us and shown us their generosity in helping to erect this fine building. In addition to congratulating all of our supporters, I take this opportunity to thank our project team who have done a tremendous job with digging out really hard concrete (ably supported by a mini-digger), trenching, laying down electrics and water pipes, digging out and laying tarmac for the new pathway and of course the making up of new fencing. That may sound all there was to do but believe me as one of the team I certainly knew by the end of the day I was out of shape! To the project team and those associated colleagues on the EVR who pitched in when needed and you know who you are without going through the list of who's who "A big heartfelt thank you to you all".

FARADAY LATEST - John Stokes.

I can't quite believe that it was May the last time I wrote about Faraday. In that short time, we have managed to tick several tasks off the list.

The fuel injectors that I mentioned in the last Express have now been returned to us and refitted. As part of the engine refurbishment the fuel pump has been retimed and the fuel lines cleaned out. This has greatly improved the locomotive's starting ability and the engine now starts first time every time. No need to use easy start anymore as the injectors are firing at the correct times. The retiming of the fuel pump has also cured the problem we were having with the engine randomly shutting down. Other work "under the bonnet" has included the resealing of the leaky oil priming pump and the refitting of the tacho drive.

Meanwhile in the cab we now have a full set of working gauges. The tacho and speedo are now working thanks to the maintenance undertaken in the engine compartment. The brake pressure gauge has been cleaned out and is now also fully operative.

At some point in 1988 loft insulation had been fitted inside the cab, covered by aluminium sheeting. We know this as the installation date was written on the back of one of the

sheets. The sheeting and insulation has been removed. Both were in a poor state of repair. Doing that has also revealed an area of corrosion at the front of the cab under the windows. There will be much grinding, cleaning and painting required to make it tidy again.

There are still several other mechanical jobs to sort out on the locomotive. However, with the availability of some shed time we have moved on to external projects while we have the undercover accommodation. Many of you will have noticed that the loco had a large inward dent in the rear cab sheeting. We can only assume that this was a result of an accident during its ICI ownership. It has now been straightened out. We managed to push the top half of the cab sheet back into place using a 50 ton Jack. However, the bottom half was too far gone and so a new sheet of steel has been inserted into its place. With the bend gone and the insulation mentioned earlier removed, the cab interior now feels much larger.

I know that many volunteers are itching to get at the controls of the loco. We still have lots more work to do before we can let you loose. Never fear we will keep you posted so just watch this space.

As always we are grateful for all the help that we have received. It is especially pleasing that some of the railways cadets have been assisting us. Thanks to you all.

PERMANENT WAY REPORT - Tony Watt.

Our Summer (?) of re-sleepering is over. We have completed four quarter mile sections (more than 400 sleepers replaced), with three of them re-ballasted, and with their fishplates greased (more than 500 nuts and bolts). This has continued throughout weeks of service trains, without incidents or delays, no overnight or bank holiday possessions of the line, and no replacement bus services.

Our attention is now directed to some remodelling of Wirksworth yard. We have removed a redundant 'single slip' which used to allow movements to and from the 'tram siding', at the side of the maintenance facility. Much of this was buried in the roadway across the yard, and years of contact with limestone had corroded chair screws and fishplate fastenings. If the spanner won't shift the nut, you just apply some light oil to any exposed thread, and make the spanner longer with a length of scaffolding tube. The track was rebuilt as plain line, with a right hand turnout at the far end, which will lead to the line for the steam shed. All of this is bullhead rail, as is most of Wirksworth yard, so, yet again, we sourced our materials from the stock recovered from Spondon. That was a most useful and valuable exercise, from which we will benefit for some time to come.

We will be working in this area for a few weeks, and also making preparations for the extension to the maintenance facility. Then we will swap metalworking tools for woodworking ones, and start on the construction of the components for Shottle Platform 2.

BAGNALL 2746 "THE DUKE" - Tim Oaks.

Over the summer we have been fitting together the components which had been obtained or manufactured. The result is that the pistons are now back in the cylinders and the valve rods are back in the valve chest with the various covers bolted on.

The most significant item was probably the realignment of the slide bars; some painstaking measurements showed that these were not perfectly aligned with the cylinder centre lines and Mick Clarke spent several days adjusting these with an electric micrometer and making and fitting new shims until he was satisfied. When he had finished Alen Grice commented that the results were better than Derby Works would have achieved.

The connecting rods have been delivered to Loughborough for machining of the new big end brasses. Meanwhile Tony Joyce continues to rub down and paint the boiler cladding sheets. The No.2 van now has a watertight roof, but will need a new floor before it can be used to store the cladding sheets over the winter.

We still have plenty of wagons for sale as advertised, and just four of the Bachmann "Galatea" Jubilees, the latter at £90 + £9-00 p+p from the same address.

IRIS' HOLIDAY - Leigh Gration.

Each year the Railcar Association, the members of which consist of DMU owners and restorers, holds an annual convention which is nomadic and moves around to various different railways. This year the event was at the Dean Forest Railway in deepest Gloucestershire and they hired our flagship 'Iris'.

A lot of work was done in the weeks leading up to the transportation date to get the vehicle fit. It was out of traffic from our Multiple Memories event in mid-May to allow this work to take place. Various items were attended to including an overhauled fuel pump being fitted to one of the engines, the old failed dynamo was converted to an alternator to match other DMUs along with the associated wiring, oil filter modifications were made to both engines to modern screw-type filters as the old ones are unobtainable and one engine had a sump gasket replaced. On top of this, one of the vacuum cylinders was replaced which required stripping the brake rigging to get it in to place.

The Dean Forest DMU fleet consists of 5 Class 108 vehicles including a now rare 108 centre car. They are all clean and well maintained and both sets includes a bar serving drinks, snacks and ale. It was great to see Iris working in multiple with these 108 vehicles as the class was the 'modernised' version of the early Derby Lightweights. They share many of the same features as the early Lightweights including the aluminium construction, seating layout and vestibules but differed in having stronger steel ends, upgraded Leyland engines rather than the AEC variants and had Blue Square multiple working. Of course, Iris has been converted in preservation to enable the multiple working to take place.

100 CLUB - Mike Ball.

Due to being on Holiday which resulted in a later than planned Special Summer Draw the copy date of the Ecclesbourne Express was missed. Please except my apologies. The winners have been notified and were: 1st Prize, Mr R. de Saeger, £98.50. 2nd Prize, Mr J Thompson, £59.34. 3rd Prize, Mr C Adams, £39.56. The September prize Draw was held at Wirksworth 20/09/16 and picked out again by 3 working Volunteers. 1st Prize Mr A.H. Ormond £75.60 ,2nd Prize Mr P.J.E Tyson-Woodcock £45.37, 3rd Prize Mr G Lee £30.25. The next draw will be the Christmas Draw. Thank you to all our supporters and Good Luck in future draws. I will be sending out renewal letters to those members who pay by cheque and whose renewal date is October. I do hope you will continue to support the EVRA 100 Club.

EVR TIMETABLE: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2016.

Day Rover Fares will be: Adults £13, Concessions £12; Children £6.50; Families (2+3) £33. Special Event Fares may be higher.

Wirksworth to Duffield, In October trains between Wirksworth and Duffield will operate on Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays In November trains will run on Saturdays and Tuesdays. In December Santa Trains will be running, see separate notice. Please see also below for the Special Events Weekends. The services are operated using Heritage Diesel Railcars.

The timetable is more complex this year, Please see website or printed timetable for details.

SPECIAL EVENTS

SANTA EXPERIENCE DECEMBER 2016.

Santa Train will run on: Saturday 10th, Sunday 11th, Saturday 17th, Sunday 18th, Tuesday 20th, Wednesday 21st, Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th December 2016

Fares: £14.00 for Adults, £12.00 for Children and £5.00 for Infants 0-11 months.

There's a mince pie and festive drink for the adults or juice for the children in Santa's Refreshment Area, which opens 30 minutes before each train followed by a train journey between Wirksworth and North Pole (Duffield) and return (18 miles) Children get a present from Santa in his grotto on the train. On train entertainment by a magician plus other festive activities.

Full details at www.e-v-r.com or phone 01629 823076.

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