



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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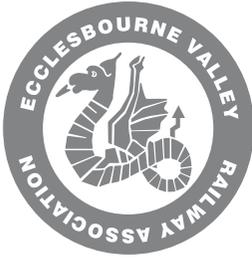
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Next Edition will be published in October 2015 – Contributions welcome by email or post to John Hastings-Thomson, see above, by **Friday 25th September 2015**.

Front Cover – The Shottle Soiree leaving Wirksworth 10th July 2015.

Back Cover – The Bubble car on its Welsh Holiday arriving at Berwyn Station above the River Dee on the Llangollen Railway. *Kevin Harper*.



NEWS UPDATE - Mike Craft

The Mk1 SK coach will shortly be in operation. LED lighting has been installed, the netting on the luggage racks has been replaced and the reupholstered seats have been fitted. New marmoleum has been laid where necessary and the old floors have been treated to improve their appearance. Outside the coach has had its final coat of paint; its lining and roundels have been added and the top coat of varnish applied.

Marmoleum has been laid in the north end of the Mk1 SO and some of the re-upholstered seats have been fitted.

Could I remind all model railway enthusiasts the the weekend of 17th and 18th October sees our 13th Model Railway Exhibition at Wirksworth.

Whilst the steam driving experiences on Ferrybridge no 3 and Henry Ellison have been extremely popular there are still a few vacancies in August. If anyone is interested please contact me by phone or e-mail (see page 2 for details) as the sales/shop website (www.evra-shop.org) is no longer functional.

As a result of the building of a new retaining wall along one side of the car park at Wirksworth, the power supply to the Talking tunnel (the standard gauge tunnel), was cut resulting in a loss of the recording, which was triggered by visitors approaching the tunnel mouth. We apologise for it being out of commission recently. However, a solar panel has now been installed to charge the battery which operates the recording and everything is now up and running again.

The costs of restoring the Mk1 coaches have become extremely expensive, together with items such as insurance and electricity, which have also increased. In January, each Trustee was asked to run a fund raising event or scheme and John Ball is to be congratulated on his success. The next one is the organisation of a 100 club, details of which are enclosed. (see page 6)

Thanks are due to Tony Watt who single handedly has designed, sourced materials and erected the secure compound for the visiting narrow gauge steam engine.

We were able to sell the redundant trailer at the Bric a brac sale over May Day Bank Holiday and the money raised went to the steam engine fund.

SALES MATTERS - Pat Craft

Late June saw the changing of the main transport books, for ones which had arrived in the last couple of months. Most of them were ones which we had not had in stock before. In addition we changed the non-transport books in the shop too. We have a good number of timetables from the fifties and earlier and I will be adding some from the sixties and seventies in early July. A number of new books have been reduced in

price and it always worth a visit to see what we have in stock – because it changes all the time.

Shop sales have been buoyant although there were a few poor days mainly due to the weather, but the increase in events on the railway and the increase in running days have counteracted that to some extent.

The May Day sale was a success again, thanks to all of you who brought such a variety of items from (small) furniture items, plants, crockery, craft items etc for us to sell but also to the stalwarts who came to price the items and those who came to set up and to man the stall over the three days. It raised over £450 during the weekend and another £150 with late sales and sales of some items at auction. It was acknowledged as enough of a success, for WyvernRail to ask if we could do another over August Bank Holiday weekend – so if any of you have not got to the back of your cupboards yet, we would ask you to have a look and if possible bring more along.

We have welcomed another new volunteer this summer but more are welcome to help us spread the load, especially as the summer running schedule means that the shop is open for 5 days a week.

Once again I must thank all those who help in the shop and who, as well as serving and keeping the shop tidy, take in boxes of donated items, sometimes in overwhelming quantities. Thanks also to Vince Morris who battles through the boxes of books as he prices them. Thanks are also due to John Kelsey and to Ann and Alan Aldred for selling items on e-bay and raising more funds for us.

NEWS FROM WYVERN – Mike Evans.

This is my first report as Managing Director since taking over the running of the railway in what could be its best year yet, mainly attributed to Martin's work over the last 15 years building it up to its current position.

For those of you who do not know my background, I worked for 20 years on the railway in train crew operating and yard supervisory positions. After leaving the railway I have been in accountancy roles and have run both a catering business and a taxi firm.

Passenger numbers this year have moved up to another level mainly due to Amazon and Groupon promotions.

The My Test Track Business had an early flurry due to the St. Pancreas to Sheffield electrification and its associated new road/rail vehicle build. Since taking up my post as MD two months ago it has become very clear to me that without this business the EVR could not survive, although at times it seems very inconvenient to accommodate.

I aim to address the issue of our dedicated volunteers working outdoors in all weathers whilst maintaining our rolling stock and road/rail vehicles. We now have quotes to build an extension of the maintenance facility with a central single track which allows room to store the folk lift and repair vehicles, plus maintaining our coaching stock. Up and over roller shutter doors at either end will allow us to heat certain areas during the winter months.

The conversion of the ex Severn Tunnel Rescue Railcar into a permanent way mess vehicle will ensure that the permanent way team can shelter from the elements.

The new Duffield Booking Hall will replace the garden shed which, I can assure you, is not the warmest place to work on cold days!

Please feel free to knock on my door and suggest where we may be going wrong, all ideas and suggestion will be gratefully received.

FUND RAISING AT MORRISONS, BELPER: SAT 10TH OCTOBER 2015.

Following our successful day fundraising at Morrisons in Belper on Saturday 10th May (we raised just over £125) we are back there on Saturdays 10th October this year. We will take the EVRA Display Boards and have collection buckets. The display will highlight current EVRA projects, especially those requiring funds.

Volunteers are required for two hour shifts. Times are 9.00am, 11.00am, 1.00pm, 3.00pm, 5.00pm, 7.00pm. We need a minimum of two people per shift. Please contact John Ball on 07419 759398 or email him at johnball187@yahoo.co.uk to volunteer. On arrival at Morrisons you need to sign in at reception and give them your car registration number so that you don't get booked for parking for longer than two hours!

This is a wonderful opportunity to raise money for EVRA projects and publicise the work of EVRA and the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway in general.

MANY THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED IN MAY.

NEW DUFFIELD STATION BUILDING - Geoff Clark & John H-T.

First of all a massive "Thank you" to everyone who has contributed to the appeal for contributions to the project in the last EE. So far we have received over £7,500 in individual donations and collections. Money has also been steadily coming in from donations and sales at Duffield, and as we write (late June) it is contributing approximately £100 a month, A couple of on board train raffles have taken place and we had a stand at Duffield Carnival on the 27th June where we raised £164.

Wyvern Rail has so far received £6,850 to finance their part of the project: The base, installing the necessary services and the final fitting out of the interior.

This is a magnificent response and puts us over half way to the total cost in just over three months. At this rate we should have the funds in place by the end of the year to allow the building to be erected during the winter, ready for the beginning of next season, so please continue to support this project as much as you can. It will make a great difference to the facilities and appearance of our railways southern gateway.

Meanwhile planning for the building is progressing steadily. The site of the building has been determined and it has been confirmed that a building 10m x 4m can be erected in the space available adjacent to the toilet block. The old concrete base below the tin shed will disappear and the new building will be at ground level with disabled access and be wheelchair friendly. The building will be delivered as a flat pack and be erected by our volunteers saving on labour costs.

Donation to the project can be left at in the EVRA shop at Wirksworth or at Duffield Station, Please Gift Aid your donation if you can, gaining us an extra 25%, Forms are available at both stations, If you have any queries please ring Geoff Clark on 01332-669497 or 07590-992627.

EVRA 100 CLUB - Mike Ball.

As you all may know, EVRA supports many projects financially, both past and present, which has helped our Railway progress to its present position. We need to maintain and build upon our progress and be able to support present and future projects. To this end, EVRA needs to raise more funds so the Trustees have decided to introduce "The EVRA 100 Club".

The idea is simple: Members of the "100 Club" pay £3 quarterly or £12 annually by bankers order or cheque. Each quarter (3 months) all the fully paid up members are entered into a draw for a cash prize – see the enclosed leaflet for details. 50% of all monies raised will go to prizes with the other 50% for projects. Once a year, at Christmas, there will be a special draw with bigger cash prizes.

Ideally 50 to 100 members would be a good start; more than 100 would give even better prizes and more funds for EVRA. The "100 Club" is not only open to members of EVRA but family, relatives, friends and supporters are welcome. Remember: The more members the bigger the prizes and the more projects EVRA can support. You can have as many entries as you wish.

Please support the "100 Club". If we can all make it a success then our Railway will benefit. In with this copy of the Ecclesbourne Express you will find an application form. "Don't delay fill it in today" for your chance to help our Railway and win a prize in our quarterly draws!

JULY MUSE - Vince Morris.

Looking back, I realise that my last few muses have been rather negative, so this time I will try to be more up-beat and write about the combination of two obsessions which several people suffer from: railways and books.

A quick glance into the EVRA shop at Wirksworth shows just how many railway themed books have been published. Some are just picture books, with the minimum of text and often the minimum of logic of how the photographs are ordered: Others are works of scholarship on, say, the steam injector, yet others are one in a series of books on a specific theme, such as Bradford-Barton books on steam and diesel types, or the Middleton books on rural (and not so rural) branch lines. Oakwood Press publishes several series: Locomotive Monographs, Railway Histories (try number 72!) etc. Maybe the ultimate in that genre is the Past & Present series with comparison photographs taken from the same location but typically about 50 years apart, so the express train in 1960 is now replaced by the housing estate of the 21st Century; the colliery line now a nature reserve or the steam hauled train that has morphed into an HST.

But my personal favourites are the publicity books published by the “Big Four” pre nationalisation (1948) companies. Truly works of art, many companies employed well regarded authors and artists to produce them. The undoubted leader in the field was the Great Western Railway whose progressive general manager, Felix Pole, was all in favour of publishing books extolling the virtues of Castles, Cathedrals and Abbeys in the area served by the company, whilst the Southern Railway published guides to the continental countries reached from their channel ports, and the LNER had their “rambles” series. Surprisingly the GWR, alone amongst the big four, did not publish a book telling the story of their railway in war-time, but relied upon a book, “The Un-beaten Track”, published by Cassell, to highlight their role. On nationalisation many of the series were continued by British Railways, including the annual “Holiday Haunts”. BR produced documentary films, made under the auspices of British Transport Films. In the 50s, 60s and 70s BTF were world leaders in the field. Before anyone tells me, “Night Mail”, probably the most famous railway film, was made with the co-operation of the LMS by the General Post Office (GPO) film unit in 1936.

But despite the intrusion of the technological world the number of railway books seems to be mushrooming, witnessed by our sagging shelves and the number of cardboard boxes awaiting sorting. But the demand from our visitors is growing to keep pace with the supply, and we will never turn away donations. Railway books are not an aphrodisiac, but often approach a fetish! If you are not yet hooked visit the bookshop on platform 1: you will be in good company!

EDITORIAL COMMENT – THE PERMANENT WAY.

As I write this the last of the track donated by Celanese at Spondon should be arriving at the railway including several hundred yards of plain track and three turn outs. It is the culmination of several weeks of work by the Permanent way team and investment by both EVRA and Wyvernrail in transporting the very heavy and bulky materials involved. A significant cost but a fraction of the value of the materials recovered (about £40,000), a magnificent effort by all concerned.

However in spite of appeals to the wider volunteer base it was mainly the long serving stalwarts who turned up to take up the track at Celanese This is worrying for the future. There are occasions when it really is necessary for all railway departments to pull together on a major project. For the long term it is also vital that new volunteers join an existing team. Many of the people working at Spondon were the same people who relayed the first length of track we opened to Gorsey Bank 2002-4. The only snag is that they are now 13 years older and the average age must now be approaching 70! The permanent way team are literally the foundation of the railway – no track, no railway. The achievements of the department over the last 12 months in Wirksworth Yard, at Shottle and at Spondon are outstanding. There is also a long list of projects requiring their skills stretching way into the future. They really do need younger, fitter people to join their ranks. So please do consider joining them or at least volunteer for the special projects like Spondon when the call goes out. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you will be contributing to the essential base of the railway, an essential part of its wellbeing and future.



Shottle Signalling 1 - Finishing touches. *Richard Buckby.*

Shottle Signalling 2 - In use.





Track reclamation at Celanese, Spondon.

Narrow gauge steam locomotive "Fernilee", makes it first moves.- *Steve Moores.*



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PERMANENT WAY REPORT – Tony Watt.

At last! The permanent way team have returned to Shottle to complete the passing loop, and as I write this we are about to run our second evening dining train, which will use the loop to run the steam loco around the train.

The northern groundframe was installed (complete with Annet's lock), as were the benches for the two cranks, to turn through 90 degrees the driving force for the facing points lock and the switches. In addition, a wire cable was run from the ground frame, under the track, and down the far (down) side so that the down starter signal could be pulled 'off'. It might seem a fairly simple project, but it has involved much thought and effort to position the items correctly (allowing for clearance of obstructions such as footpaths), dig holes deep enough, and set everything in concrete mixed on site. We were fortunate to have a supply of components (point rodding, roller stools, cranks, etc. – almost the last of our stock), but also the knowledge and experience of Mick Thomas. Without him this, and much more, would not get done.

That one project is not the total of our work since that last report. We complete the rebuilding of P8 (the three way point), despite snow in January. That was followed by renewal of the next point in the yard (P10). New crossing timbers were purchased to give this track a suitable working life.

For the weeks following those labours we made use of recycled sleepers and rails, building a third road for the maintenance facility. The line has been extended for the full length of the shed, but is not yet connected to the 'pit road'. At present it runs outside the shed, on the western side, and will be uncovered until money allows for extension of the sheds framework and cladding, and setting the track in concrete to provide a firm level base to support jacks, for lifting vehicles. Until it is covered, this road will provide much needed additional storage space.

P-way's toolkit isn't limited to picks, shovels, hammers and jacks: we have brick laying trowels also. The diesel fuel store was moved (temporarily) to make room for the new shed road, but needed an acceptable 'bund' to protect against environmental damage, in the event of a spill. To provide this we have excavated a level area (thanks heavens for the Komatsu!), poured a reinforced concrete base, and on it built an enclosure of concrete blocks. The walls are being rendered inside, and capped with concrete coping slabs. I suppose that we should have a 'topping out' ceremony and a grand opening!

While all this is going on we have the mundane, but essential routine tasks of track patrols and spraying of weedkiller. Every fortnight the entire line is walked by a number of inspectors from the team. Often there's little new to report. Always there are comments about some sleepers needing replacement, or the lack of ballast in

certain areas. When a significant fault is spotted (a broken fishplate!) it is dealt with as a matter of urgency. Biting winter winds and downpours, make these patrols a trial, but in summer months they can be a pleasure. Who could complain about a walk in the countryside, probably followed by a ride on a train?

A WELSH HOLIDAY – Leigh Gratton.

W55006 was the first DMU to arrive at Wirksworth some 11 years ago now and since then it has operated a considerable amount of mileage carrying our passengers up and down the valley. It is not surprising that this gets recognised by other DMU Groups around the country from time to time and this year was no exception.

Each year Llangollen Railcars, who operate 4 two-car sets on the Llangollen Railway in Wales put on a spectacular two-day gala in June. The event normally features around 18 departures per day from Llangollen Station (yes 18, we can only do 4 at the moment!) and also a BBQ special on the Saturday evening. They get a visiting unit in each year. This year they wished to hire 55006 and we were all too happy to let them as they have a fantastic reputation. Our 'bubble' went hand in hand with some of their excellently restored sets, including the famous unique Wickham 109 set and the very loud Class 104 ex-Buxton set.

The vehicle landed in the Dee Valley on Thursday 18th June around lunch time. Members of the DMU Group arrived shortly afterwards to find a small number of their team doing a Fitness to Run examination. It was commented on the exemplary mechanical condition of the vehicle in comparison to previous gala visitors, which seem to have caused them some extra work. After the exam, some test runs were done between the carriage and DMU depot at Pentrefelin and the steam depot further towards Llangollen Station.

After an easy day resting on Friday, there was an evening photographic charter. 55006 set off around 17:30 and we observed the arrival to drop off the participants from our waterside viewing spot at around 21:30.

The Saturday and Sunday saw the most running, with around 180 miles for the unit operated. The railway has some fantastic scenery and is very comprehensively signalled. It was full to bursting on the 09:30 from Llangollen to Corwen East and good loadings were observed all day, on both days.

Happily though, despite the nerves, 200 miles were clocked up with no problems for the engine at all. In fact a blowing EP valve which was rectified with the application of a hammer, was the only fault during the weekend.

BAGNALL 2746 THE DUKE -PROGRESS REPORT – Tim Oaks.

Boiler:

Preparation has begun on the firebox following a thorough inspections and consultation with the intended contractor. The extent of the work is greater than we had expected, but we will get a better and more reliable engine at the end of it.

To save on cost we are carrying out as much of the preparation ourselves as we can, and the boiler team have been busy inside the firebox, cutting the heads off the tubeplate lap rivets and punching them through. Most of the throatplate stays have been drilled out. The lower outer sides of the firebox will also be renewed to deal with saucer corrosion around the stay heads; in theory the plate could be welded up and ground flat, in practice it is easier and cheaper to weld in new plate as the lower stays have to be renewed anyway. Simon has have burned round the heads of three rows of stays on the sides, and two at the front and rear. The palm stay rivets have also been drilled and burned out.

Cylinder Block:

The cylinder block, is being cleaned down and generally fettled ready for the replacement of the pistons and cylinder end covers. Alen Grice showed me a piece of industrial archaeology on the cleaned area, a small patch of copper about the size of a sixpence. The block is made in two halves and bolted together. There is a groove lengthways between the two, top and bottom. When the block has been assembled this groove is filled with a wet mix of iron filings and sal ammoniac (ammonium chloride), hammered in tight and the ends sealed with copper plugs. The cylinder block still has the hydraulic test certificate, stamped on a brass plate and screwed to one end. Simon is going over the end face with a die grinder, and we have bought a compact needle gun to use in the confined space. The piston rings have arrived from HP Rings of Chesterfield.

Brake Gear:

The new brake blocks have been fitted. During February we managed to free off the brake pull rods and their locknuts; fortunately the 8F team can produce items such as 1 1/2" whitworth taps and die nuts at the drop of a hat. The locknuts on the cross beams were well greased and reasonably free but needed the threads cleaning up. The main brake adjustment turnbuckles were something else again; these are very close to the back of the ash pan and no doubt suffer from that, but they obviously had not moved for a very long time. At the first attempt we had two big stillsons, scaffolding poles to extend these with big men swinging on them and a propane blowtorch and they just would not budge. As the second attempt the 8F crew set them up on firebricks and used oxy-propane until they were cherry red, then sat them on a railhead and belted them with a big hammer - you could see the powdered rust falling out of the threads. Once the turnbuckles and their locknuts were freed off we cleaned out the thread roots carefully and greased them. All brake rod nuts now turn easily with a finger and thumb. The worst of the stillson marks on the brake rods have been filed off and painted over.

EVR TIMETABLE: JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015

Day Rover Fares will be: Adults £13, Concessions £12; Children £6.50; Families (2+3) £33. Special Event Fares may be higher. **NB this does not include the Ravenstor Branch which is run by The Ecclebourne Valley Railway Association as a separate service. Day Rover Fare: £2.50; concessions £2.00.**

Trains depart Wirksworth for Duffield, Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays 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. This service will be steam operated and will run on the following dates: July 25 & 26 August 1 & 2, August 8 & 9, August 22 & 23, August BH August 29,30,31, September 5 & 6.

SPECIAL EVENTS.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION DAY SAT 25TH JULY. Following on from a successful event in 2014, the Royal British Legion will be at Wirksworth with a range of activities and stalls.

AFTERNOON TEA TRAIN. 14:15 or 16:15 on Tuesday afternoons from 2nd June to 29th September on board our new dining train. Sit back and relax on our heritage diesel locomotive hauled train as we serve afternoon tea to your seat. Two Day Rovers, including one return journey in our new dining train with afternoon tea served at your seat. Further details, see www.e-v-r.com. Advance booking is essential and bookings are taken online. Places will be limited and early booking is advised to avoid disappointment. You may be seated with another couple.

DIESEL DAYS. Tue 28th, Wed 29th, Thu 30th July, Tue 4th, Wed 5th, Thu 6th, Sat 15th and Sun 16th August 2015. Services will be operated by heritage main line diesel locomotive's on these days.

BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND. Sat 29th, Sun 30th and Mon 31st August 2015. A great way to spend a Bank Holiday weekend! Bric a brac sale

Tunes and Chips Evening Land Cruise. Sat 5th September 2015. We will have our popular Tunes and Chips Evening Land Cruise with live music on the train and fish and chips served at Duffield. Advance booking for the evening train is essential.

Wirksworth Festival. Sat 12th and Sun 13th September 2015. Leave the car at home and take a gentle journey through the valley to the popular Wirksworth Festival taking place in the town. Please note a change of date from the town's Festival organisers.

Vintage Tractor Meet. Sun 20th September 2015. There will be a collection of vintage tractors at Wirksworth Station.

Multiple Memories featuring The Railcar Association Annual DMU Convention. Sat 26th and Sun 27th September 2015. Travel back to the 50s, 60s and 70s and celebrate the unsung heroes of British Railways with our annual Railcar Gala, operated in conjunction with the annual Railcar Association Convention. Our heritage railcars will run in a variety of combinations through the weekend and there will be a pre-bookable special on the Saturday evening.

Annual Wirksworth Model Railway Exhibition. Sat 17th and Sunday 18th October 2015. Our popular Model Railway Exhibition will be taking place around the town and the big trains will be playing their part, with steam on the Ravenstor incline.

Jazz and Chips Evening Land Cruise. Sat 17th October 2015. Enjoy live jazz music during an evening land cruise along the line, together with a delicious meal of fish and chips. Pre-booking is essential for this event.

Train enquiries – Tel. 01629 823076 or see www.e-v-r.com for full details.

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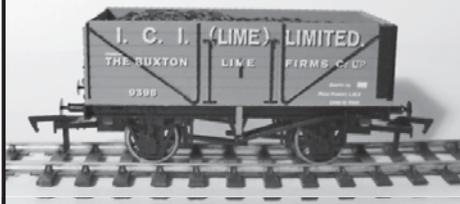
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