



Ecclesbourne Express

*Newsletter of the Ecclesbourne Valley
Railway Association*

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The Wirksworth to Duffield Line

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Association

(Company No. 5257082 - Limited by Guarantee)

(Charity No. 1106810)

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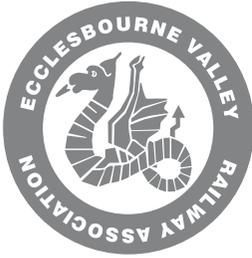
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Next Edition will be published in October 2013 – Contributions welcome by email or post to Richard Buckby, see above, by **Friday 20th September 2013.**

Front Cover – Wirksworth bound - 52322 leaves Duffield Tunnel 19.7.13 – *Andy Fowler.*

Back Cover – Newly restored Class 119 at Wirksworth, 14.6.2013.



NEWS UPDATE - Mike Craft

Since there has been so little time between the last Express and this one, my news is fairly brief.

The concentrated effort to restore the CK for use at the Steam Gala in May certainly paid off with the rake of coaches in a similar livery receiving many compliments. The work has continued to finish the CK which was used with the 31 diesel engine in June, by which time the toilets at both ends were functional, after volunteers received some impromptu showers from the perished rubber pipes from the tanks in the ceiling. We also managed to get the wash hand basins working and finished the varnishing. Finally the lining outside was completed.

Our attention is now focussing on the SK, with the aim of completing it for next year. All the ceilings have had to come down due to a number of leaks from the air vents, which have had to be sealed. The south-east corner of the coach is open to the elements, resulting in some difficulties in fabricating the corner; several options are being investigated, but we are slowly getting there.

The Dream Steam Team and the 8F group have spent a considerable amount of time stripping Cathryn's boiler down and thanks are due to them for all their efforts. I have recently heard from certain sceptics that we will not achieve the restoration of Cathryn – possibly some of the self-same people who questioned our ability to restore the two Andrew Barclays, which are now running on the EVR. Cathryn is a unique engine, money is available from a number of grants and Rome was not built in a day. Incidentally, at the Steam Gala, two ex-NCB drivers claimed they had driven Hudswell Clarke engines (like Cathryn) over 34 miles a day between collieries on the main line in South Yorkshire in the late 1950's. Whilst I appreciate this engine is now years older, whether, once it is restored, it will get from Wirksworth to Duffield and back again is debatable but only time will tell.

It is with sadness that I have to report the passing of Peter Taylor in June. He was a great supporter of the railway, injecting funds when needed. He also helped EVRA with a large loan at a critical point in the restoration of Henry Ellison. We will always remember him for his timely help and it was good to see a good number of EVR volunteers at his funeral.

SALES MATTERS - Pat Craft.

The shop has continued to contribute a significant sum each week to EVRA's finances and we are grateful to the members who volunteer each day it is open.

Thanks to friends of the railway in Derby, we were alerted to a collection of books, which relatives were seeking a home for when clearing a house. Three Trustees, with cars and a trailer helped to clear the house and in the end over forty boxes of books plus railway and modelling magazines have been priced. The collection had many rare

and uncommon books and these will be on the shelves in the shop over the next weeks as space is made for them.

AN UNSUNG HERO - Martin Miller

My contribution for this edition of the Ecclesbourne Express rightly concentrates on the immense contribution by John Peter Taylor to our enterprise that is so remarkable because one man made such a difference without being in the public eye.

Peter is owed a tremendous debt of gratitude by all of us and it is only recently that the reasons for his support have emerged.

Peter was born on the 6th July 1928 and died on 10th June 2013. He joined British Railways as a Porter at Matlock Bath in April 1950 and was recruited as a trainee signalman by May of that year.

He loved the countryside, its ways and atmosphere, admirably represented when he occasionally acted as a relief signalman at Idridgehay, not an onerous task but gave ample opportunity to watch the seasons change there – and the primroses often mentioned by our Royal Saloon steward.

Later in his career he became responsible for the whole operation of the Wirksworth branch and its trains of limestone in the 1980s but had retired before the last train ran at the end of that decade.

Peter bought a few shares in our emerging enterprise when they first went on sale in 2002 but remained under the radar.

He very quietly approached Board Members after the 2007 Annual General Meeting and offered £100,000 to complete the refurbishment of the line between Wirksworth and Idridgehay. It's fair to say we were somewhat suspicious – was he making a takeover bid! – But quickly learnt that he was serious in his intent, his part in the line's history and of his love for our Railway. In some ways this was the most difficult section of the line as it included two public level crossings which required a lot of money to make them as they are today.

Make no mistake, we wouldn't have reached Idridgehay by now yet alone Duffield without Peter's help!

Peter wanted no recognition or publicity and remained in the background advising on safety matters from time to time. I began a firm friendship with Peter and took his considered guidance seriously. I also learnt that a firm sense of fun lay behind his sometimes stern demeanour.

Despite his lengthy battle with illness we kept in touch and he realised that we had reached something of a plateau after the excitement of opening the whole line to Duffield in 2011. Early this year he asked how much it would cost to get a "decent" steam engine for the summer season to inject a "wow" factor and could it be done.

After some research and negotiation I advised it could be done. As he said – “I am reaching the terminus but want to put the money in place in good time” - it is very sad that he will not be with us to see “his” loco in action.

I am sure he will be looking down on us from the great marshalling yard in the sky and approve. The line through the Ecclesbourne Valley will be a lasting memorial to his generosity.

Peter is truly an unsung hero and our thoughts are with Evelyn, his partner, who gave so much joy and comfort to Peter.

BOMBS IN THE PEAK - Vince Morris.

In this final delve into the Hindlow papers I examine the impact of the construction and operation of the underground munitions store the Air Ministry (or RAF, both names are used) built in a quarry at Harpur Hill in 1938.

When the Cromford & High Peak Railway was opened in the 1830s, the route north of Hindlow went via Ladmanlow to Whaley Bridge. Rationalisation in the 1890s meant that the line was diverted to Buxton, Ladmanlow becoming the end of a line from Hindlow: a very busy branch, with numerous industrial sidings. To get to Ladmanlow from Hindlow meant going through the remote area of Harpur Hill. It was this remoteness, but with good rail connections, which made the site ideal for a bomb store, where it was intended that 25,000 tons of bombs, including mustard gas could be held. The Ministry contracted Sir Robert McAlpine to construct their sidings, but needed a “main line” connection with the LMS at Hindlow. The LMS Commercial Manager obliged, by agreeing to build the connections, both to the north and south of the site. He intimated in a letter (marked Secret) to the District Goods & Passenger Manager (DG&PM) at Derby that this was a matter of urgency and that the railway engineer would start construction of the north connection immediately, without waiting or estimates. The DG&PM passed this information to Mr Edgar, the Hindlow Station Master, asking to be kept informed of progress. The DG&PM quoted the Commercial Manager directly, but provided a correction: the latter’s letter had said that Ladmanlow was the south end connection and Hindlow the north end. This is, of course, geographically wrong, presumably the work was being done to the south of Ladmanlow, and the north of Hindlow.

The DG&PM was having a confusing time. When Edgar wrote to tell him that the LMS engineers had installed the “north” connection at Old Harpur Sidings, but were waiting for McAlpine to complete the entrance to the Station, the DG&PM replied that he was unsure to which station Edgar was referring. Eventually, Edgar replied that, “Of course, he meant the RAF Station”.

This was nothing compared to the confusion the District Engineer Stoke had. Edgar had received a request from McAlpine for the supply of 400 tons of ash as a base for their sidings. He passed the request to Stoke and received the reply: “The ballasting of the sidings will be carried out by my men, and I shall provide the ashes. I do not think that McAlpine has anything to do with these ashes.” When Edgar pointed out that the sidings were inside the RAF Station, the Engineer curtly replied: “I have written

to McAlpine asking him to make his application through Loco Stores, Crewe." McAlpine had written an earlier letter to Edgar, which probably confused him, too. It stated that: "As no whistles, sirens or hooters are allowed in the present emergency, we will use a blasting horn as warning".

The District Estate Officer, Manchester then gets involved when he writes to DG&MP Derby on 27/10/39 saying that he has received a communication from the Air Ministry stating that: "In accordance with the powers of Reg 50 of the Defence Regulation 1939, a 5 inch water main, as indicated by the blue line on the plan attached shall be laid. Compensation will be paid". He then asks that the plans be returned, as he has no copy! DG&MP writes to Edgar asking to be kept informed of progress. Edgar writes on 15/12/39 to say that work has not yet started on the main, and only on 9/4/40 is he able to report completion.

On 27th December 1939 Edgar wrote to DG&MP to say "The connection at the North End of the sidings was completed yesterday". Yesterday was, of course, Boxing day: the work had taken 14 months. But before the depot could become operational the RAF requested, via DG&MP, that a cross-over road be constructed to allow their diesel engine to obtain "certain run-round facilities". Edgar is asked to "explain the necessity for a cross-over road" (rather unfair since it was not him who asked for it), and to confirm that "No Company engines will be required to work over any of the lines, but only to and from the clearance points of these sidings at the main line end." and to answer the further question "Do any Company engines work main line to main line" (presumably through the siding from Hindlow to Ladmanlow). Edgar responds by saying that Company Engineers are constructing the cross-over road at the request of the RAF to assist in the operation of the sidings, and that Company locomotives are not required to run through the sidings. Despite this the RAF requested that LMS engines "working in the depot" be fitted with spark arrestors. When asked by Derby if spark arrestors were fitted Edgar replied "not yet, but locomotives have been passing into the sidings for the past month!" The RAF Diesel was, presumably, venturing onto the "main-line" since on 24/09/40 RAF drivers Heath & Allcock signed to say that they had received the LMS Rule Book.

Snow in the Peaks was a problem, and the RAF appealed to the LMS, via Edgar, to help them keep the sidings clear. Edgar contacted Derby who asked the District Engineer, Stoke, and got the curt response: "The strength of my gang at Harpur Hill is insufficient to enable them to undertake the work. At present they have 51 sets of points to keep in working order: the most I can offer is to keep the trap points and double lead inside the gates at the Ladmanlow end in working order. I have received no information from HQ about maintenance arrangements, but my Inspector tells me that the Ganger has informed him that the RAF have taken over the sidings themselves" Once again Edgar was asked to sort things out. He was spared the job when the Divisional Operations Superintendent stepped in and said that "arrangements can be made for the four siding roads to be cleared by our snow plough when it is in the area, but that it will only put the snow into the 6 foot and I cannot supply the staff to clear the 6ft". Edgar passed this partial solution to the RAF who thanked him for his efforts and seemed to accept it as the best that could be done. It seems to have worked since the next year the RAF asked that the procedure be repeated. Meanwhile the District Control Office at Rowsley suggested running engines up and down the siding to keep them clear of snow.

Then, in early 1942 came the blow: the underground storage facility in a slate mine at Llanberis collapsed. The construction techniques at Harpur Hill were similar, so the Ministry decided to close the site, and move all the ordinance to County Durham. After 14 months in the construction, the site was largely unused after 21 months. It was eventually re-opened but was never used for high explosive storage again: the Ministry sold it in 1960 (to become a mushroom farm!). It became a foot-note in history: but we are obliged to Peake, who had taken over from Edgar at Hindlow in 1941 for two corrections to the records. In 1946 the RAF was listing transport facilities and showed Buxton as the “home” station for RAF Harpur Hill for passengers and goods. Peake overwrote the record Buxton for Passengers: Hindlow for Goods. He also corrected the entry in the draft post-nationalisation Handbook of Stations where an entry: “Sidings, Air Ministry No. 28 Maintenance Unit Harpur Hill, Hindlow” was proposed. The pencilled annotation Peake returned to Derby altered Hindlow to Ladmanlow, and that is the entry which appeared (at least in my 1956 edition). However, since Ladmanlow station shut in 1892, Ladmanlow itself is described as “Branch from Hindlow”.

There is still a link between railways and Harpur Hill: elsewhere on the site is the Health & Safety Executive Fire and Explosives Laboratories. It is in the quarries at Harpur Hill that mock ups were built modelling the King’s Cross Station Fire, the Ladbroke Grove derailment and fire, and the 7/7 terrorist attack on London Underground: the world has turned another full circle.

PERMANENT WAY REPORT - Tony Watt.

Another ‘Express’, yet another platform extension. Yes, having lengthened Duffield platform, it was decided that it would be far more convenient if Wirksworth platform was extended also. So, more wood, nuts, bolts, screws and nails, and Wirksworth platform 2 will now accommodate another coach. Perhaps we could sell the design to Ikea?

There’s more woodworking to be done at Duffield, as the footbridge (F1) needs the decking replacing and this work will be done by the time you read this. This was in the process of planning, but has been brought forward by the County Council imposing an emergency closure.

Elsewhere we have continued with routine work: we have completed this year’s fishplate greasing, so that the entire line has been treated, and future greasing will be performed on joints which were treated comparatively recently. Spot resleepering has been undertaken also. This has been at a slower rate than the marathon preceding the grand opening, because the rotten timbers are not close together, but spread out along the line.

Our activity in the summer is likely to be limited by restricted access due to the visiting steam locomotive, but doubtless we will find something to keep us busy. Then we can gear up for several projects in the autumn and winter: drainage work, bridge maintenance, pointwork at Shottle, pointwork at Duffield, improving the track in the yard.....



One of the Stars of The Classic Bus Rally.

Newly restored Bubble Car 55006 South of Idridgehay, 4.6.2013 - *John Jarman.*





Restoration of LMSCAs LMS Open 3rd making steady progress, 10.7.2013..

Wirksworth Platform 2 extension nears completion, 8.7.2013. Another PWT Masterpiece.



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“MULTIPLE MEMORIES” LOOMS – Leigh Gratton.

So here we are. After some five years of hard work, our rare Class 119 vehicle has been transformed from an empty unusable shell to a beautifully restored vehicle that everybody can be proud of. It has eighteen large first class arm chairs at the front, accompanied by stylish red curtains and carpet. Behind, it features just sixteen comfortable second class seats with arm rests – an unusual feature for railcars. On the outside, the decision was taken to return the vehicle to the livery it carried during the late 1970s and early 1980s when it was regularly seen taking passengers to and from Gatwick Airport. The blue and grey is accompanied by excellently reproduced “Passenger Luggage Stowage Area” vinyl transfers for the body side which originally informed those about to embark on their foreign holiday or business trip that the enlarged guard van was the place for their cases.

Following a day of successful test running at the end of February, work concentrated on the guards area of the vehicle. This area had to have significant repairs to the ‘cant rail’ which is the area of steel which runs the length of the vehicle effectively joining the roof to the body side. Once these repairs had been completed, new wall and ceiling panels were installed and much painting took place. Reconditioning of the guards equipment was undertaken and the original parcels shelf has been installed.

On top of the work in the Class 119, the team maintain the other eight vehicles that are with us forming the backbone of passenger services. The completion of our ‘bubble car’ W55006 allowed entry into service in April after the 14-month rebuild and this vehicle has clocked up over 3000 miles since then, working in tandem with unique Derby Lightweight ‘Iris’ to contribute to the success of the railway’s Market Tuesdays. A three-car worked alongside the visiting steam locomotive in May and a two-car could be enjoyed at Easter and late May Bank Holiday.

Repairs to the defective air system on one of our Metro-Cammell vehicles were dealt with swiftly, but more complicated problems with the electrics on our first-built Class 108 confused the team for a while longer. Time had to be spent tracing the fault but happily everything has been rectified ready for the event.

The “Multiple Memories” event is partially a celebration of the restoration of our Class 119 and will feature the launch into traffic of this vehicle (12:20 from Wirksworth on Saturday 10th August). It will be the first time the vehicle has operated a passenger train in 20 years, after withdrawal from British Rail’s Network SouthEast in 1993. The event is also a chance for visitors to enjoy our large and varied fleet together over one weekend. A special train will depart Wirksworth at 18:20 on Saturday 10th August featuring all of our railcar vehicles in one train. We will take fish and chips on arrival at Duffield so pre-book now at www.e-v-r.com/shop if you would like to join us on this special occasion!

It is a small team of dedicated volunteers, many under 25, who have worked tirelessly to both restore the Class 119 and keep the rest of our large fleet running to meet the demands of an expanding railway. We do hope you will join us on August 10th and 11th to celebrate not only these often unsung heroes of British Railways but also the hard work of our team.

THE OAKS REPORT - Tim Oaks.

Bagnall No 2746 “The Duke”

Now the good weather is here at last, we have been able to make a serious start. At a recent 8F board meeting I was able to report that the pallet van had been made secure and fitted with electric light, that our accident liability insurance was in place and that Simon Hunter had just finished removing the crank pin collars. At this, the meeting rapidly adjourned and the directors marched off in a body, stripped off the coupling rods and lifted them into the van.

Shortly afterwards, Alen Grice arranged to borrow a purpose made Austerity crosshead splitter from Loughborough and Simon split the piston rods from the crossheads under his direction in the course of an afternoon. The splitter is a 2” diameter chisel around two feet long and specially curved to get the best possible leverage inside the crosshead.

Since then the big ends have been dismantled, cleaned and re-assembled and put into store together with the connecting rods. Dismantling of the motion continues. Alen advises that the general condition of the motion is extremely good, with little trace of wear. We are extremely fortunate to have the benefit of Alen’s experience: he signed on at Longmoor Shed on the Longmoor Military Railway in 1946 aged 14 and at one time had 25 Austerities in his care.

The remains of the smokebox floor plates have been taken off and the top of the cylinder block cleaned up. This was found to be in good condition, which is one worry less, as sometimes Austerity cylinder blocks have been known to suffer serious corrosion. The bolts holding down the coal bunker have been cut out, and the general plan is to prepare to lift the frames as soon as possible so that we can get at the springs and axleboxes. The whole of the underside of the locomotive is caked in oil and grease, and while it is filthy to work with, the individual components are beautifully preserved underneath it, and the nuts come free fairly easily.

We have finished cleaning down and conserving the boiler barrel, the next job here will be to organise a thorough washout prior to a further inspection. We have just bought a brand new hydrostatic lubricator as a strategic spare and have spread the word that we are looking for further items. We intend to hold as many working parties as possible while the weather holds.

Our 00 Wagon sales have recently gone very well. The two latest wagons are:

1. 5 plank wagon, Wilcocks of Chapel en le Frith. Grey with white letters. Coal load. The edition is limited to 200 items. £13-00.

2. 7 plank wagon in the livery of “Imperial Chemical Industries – formerly Buxton Lime Firms”. Grey with black strapping, white letters shaded black. The first part of this edition is 200 items, the second batch of 200, has a different running number. We can supply these with coal or limestone loads as required. £13-00.

SPECIAL ITEM: We recently acquired a small batch of Bachmann 00 gauge Jubilee locomotives, No. 5699 in red LMS livery. These are the remnant of a limited edition produced several years ago and are new mint boxed, they have been recently test run. They come in a red presentation case with a numbered certificate. When they are sold there will be no more. £90 + £8 p+p. See advert on p 15 for details of how to acquire any of these models.

Note from JHT: This limited edition was produced in 1996, when it was hoped to restore Galatea at Tyseley. It is based on the older version of the Bachmann Jubilee, with the correct long firebox. An unexpected opportunity to acquire this good quality model, as new, I have already got mine!

London Midland Brake Van.

This has taken a bit of a back seat, but work continues on the second bench and Craig Hibbert has been able to resume painting on the outside.

“YOUR RAILWAY NEEDS YOU.” - Mike Parker.

The lifeblood of EVRA is its' membership and many of you will be aware that we are at the start of an active recruiting campaign. We urgently need new members if we are to survive let alone go forward.

So here is a simple challenge for all of us. It is a matter of basic mathematics that if each one of us recruits just one new member then we double our membership. Surely with a bit of effort we can all recruit one member, or even another volunteer!

Not all volunteering involves physical effort!

OVER TO YOU!

Many thanks to all the people who have submitted photos and articles for the magazine. Some of the photos are published in this edition and several more plus two articles have been held over for future editions. Challenge for the next edition. A photo of the nine coach fish and chip special on August 10th please!

EVRA LOCO AND COACH CLUB.

Many thanks to all of you who have already signed up to make one off or regular donations to EVRA Loco and Coach Club. This is now yielding a small but steady flow of money to help finance the restoration of EVRA's recently acquired Mk 1 coaches and the 0-6-0T Cathryn.

The first of the three Mk 1s, the CK, is now in traffic and has already received many positive comments. Work is now progressing on the SK and the aim is to have it in traffic for next Easter (2014) before starting on the major job to restore the SO.

As has been reported elsewhere Cathryn's boiler is being stripped for the boiler inspection and a more accurate assessment of the likely cost of overhaul.

All this costs money so we would welcome more donations, either one off or regular, to continue these important restorations as rapidly as possible. Club Membership Leaflets are available from the EVRA Shop and information Centre at Wirksworth or from Mike Craft, see P2.

Both restoration teams would also welcome more help with the actual restoration work.

ECCLESBOURNE VALLEY RAILWAY EVENTS: August – October.

**Summer Timetable: Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays on both the Wirksworth-Duffield and Wirksworth-Ravenstor Lines. (Thursdays 25th July to 29th August)
Tuesday service finishes September 24th**

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

Trains depart Wirksworth for Duffield at 10.20, 12.20, 14.20 & 16.20 to connect with the East Midlands Trains Matlock Branch Service and return at 11.10, 13.10, 15.10 & 17.10. The normal services are operated using Heritage Diesel Railcars.

SPECIAL EVENTS.

Steam to Duffield at Weekends from 20th July except August 10th-11th, to September 1st. Also Thursdays from 25th July to 29th August.

NB When steam is operating to Duffield the 10.20 Service is by Diesel Railcar.

August 10th-11th: Multiple Memories Weekend. All the Diesel Multi Units in action including launch of newly restored Class 119 Unit. Saturday Evening 9 coach Fish and Chip Special to Duffield. Depart Wirksworth 18.20.

August 24th-26th: August Bank Holiday Open Days. Steam to Duffield.

September 7th- 8th Wirksworth Festival. Saturday Evening Tunes and Chips Special departs Wirksworth 18.20 with "Please Y'Self Skiffle Band."

September 21st-22nd Diesel Locomotive Weekend.

October 12th-13th Wirksworth Model Railway Exhibition.

Wirksworth Station is open from 10.00am to 5.00pm on operating days and 10.00am-4.00pm for viewing when there no services are running. The Buffet is open every day.

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

ECCLESBOURNE EXPRESS BY E MAIL.

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All unaccredited photographs are by Richard Buckley or John Hastings-Thomson.

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All profits from the sale of the models will be used towards restoration of our locomotive 'The Duke' at Wirksworth.



Delightful photograph of the cattle dock at Wirksworth Station taken during the SLS/MLS "High Peak Railtour" on 25th April 1953 hauled by Midland 0-4-4T No. 58077.

Derek Plumb.



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