



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)

- Patron** - HM Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, William Tucker.
- Secretary** - Mike Craft,
Director) - Honeysuckle Cottage, 35 Rise End,
Middleton-by-Wirksworth,
Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4LS
Tel - 01629 825213
email - pat/mike@crafriseend.freerve.co.uk
- Other Directors** - Pat Craft (Marketing) – Tel. 01629 825213
John Gratton – Tel. 01629 824752
John Hastings-Thomson - Tel. 01773 880586
email - hastingsthomson@btinternet.com
Mike Parker – Tel. 07870 804275 (Co-opted member)
Paul Rayner – Tel. 01332 557709;
email - pjrayner@ntlworld.com
John Rhead – Tel. 07971 172084.
email- jdrhead@live.co.uk
Joe Ruddock - Tel. 01629 822800.
Graham Walker – Tel.01332 511489.
email – grahamrw@virginmedia.com
Vince Ware -Tel. - 01332 372788;
email - v.ware@ntlworld.com
- Membership Secretary** - Vince Morris - 530 Kedleston Road, Derby
DE22 2NG Tel. - 01332 551072
e-mail – vc.m@ntlworld.com
- Editor** - Richard Buckby – 20 Eden Bank, Ambergate, Belper
DE56 2GG *email – g3vgw@w3z.co.uk*
Tel. 01773 852475.
- Website:** **www.evra.org.uk** Web Master - Paul Rayner.
- Train enquiries** - Tel. 01629 823076 (Wirksworth Station)

Next Edition – will be published in October 2012 – If you wish to contribute an article, photograph or letter, please send it, preferably by email, otherwise by post to Richard Buckby. (See above) by Friday 7th September.

Front Cover – 33035 stops at the reopened Shottle Station with the first public train 24th June 2012.

Back Cover - Ferrybridge No. 3 with ballast train at Shottle 28.5.2012. Tony Watts.

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



NEWS UPDATE - Mike Craft

Hopefully, the restoration of Henry Ellison should be completed by the beginning of August. On behalf of the Trustees and members I should like to register our deep appreciation and thanks to the Dream Steam Team who have carried out this work. Having completed one Andrew Barclay engine, the layman might have expected the second one to be easier but that has not been the case! On behalf of the Trustees I should also like to take the opportunity of thanking 'The Friends of Andrew Barclay Engines for their support as the steam engine fund is nearly empty and without their significant financial support we would not have been able to complete the Henry Ellison Project.

Now comes the next plea for help. Cathryn, an ex-NCB Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 steam engine, is the third steam engine which we have leased, which if brought back into traffic would be unique, being the only automatic coal fed/fired engine remaining, according to the NRM. It is our intention to apply for a grant of approximately £50,000 to restore it. If we are successful, we have to find 20% of that figure. We will be approaching those who signed up as Friends of Andrew Barclay Engines to see if they will be happy for their money to go towards the restoration of Cathryn in addition to the Andrew Barclays. We will also need to be raise additional money to progress the work.

It would be very remiss of me not to mention the fact that Joe Ruddock, one of the original Wirksworth Eight who started in November 2000 will be 80 years young in August, when we hope to give Joe and his family a steam train ride down the line. Over the years, Joe has undertaken many tasks on the railway, which some younger volunteers would not have attempted, as well as taking on regular maintenance tasks. He has been a trustee of EVRA since 2001. We wish him well and hope he continues on for another 20 years.

Although a number of new drivers and guards have been trained for the narrow gauge, we are finding it difficult to meet the grant conditions of running it for 26 days a year. It is not rocket science since it only travels at 5mph and is an opportunity to talk to visitors, provide information and earn a bit of money for the steam engine fund! If you would like to guard or drive the Lister, please contact me.

Two Trustees have resigned since the last Ecclesbourne Express: Yvonne Hastings-Thomson and John Birkinshaw so the number of Trustees is the lowest it has been for some time. The papers for the AGM on 20th October at the Red Lion Hotel, Wirksworth are enclosed and as you will see there is a form for proposing new trustees. We hope that some of you will come and join us – to bring new ideas and energy.

Enclosed with the Express are two books of draw tickets and we are grateful to those members who buy and sell tickets. Last year you raised over £1033 net.

SALES MATTERS - Pat Craft

After the first full three months of trading, the decision to expand the shop, taken with some caution due to the general financial situation in January, has been fully justified. The volunteers report many favourable comments and the takings have certainly improved, even though comparing them with the same period in 2011 is not possible since then there were the effects of the opening to Duffield. The early onset of Tuesday trains (replacing previous year's Wednesday midweek services) has also been a boost to takings – at least there is something to see and do in Wirksworth on a Tuesday!

The specialist books left by Mr Burnby were sold at auction and raised almost £500, but there are still several hundred general interest and railway books, which are being gradually sold through the shop. Several other major donations of books and magazines (i.e. several hundred at a time), as well as the steady smaller donations of books, magazines and bric a brac have kept us busy and more importantly raised vital funds for the various projects and the site maintenance for which EVRA is responsible.

All of these donated items would be valueless without the band of people who regularly give up a day to serve in the shop. Some of them volunteer regularly, others for a day a month and others for less, so if you feel able to help please contact me.

John Kelcey, who had been selling second-hand model railway items for us has volunteered to sell other items, following my appeal in the last Express.

We have extended the Bachmann and Graham Farish range, together with new items as they appear, including their Tidy Track system of track maintenance items for both gauges. We have also taken stock from three more book publishers, including the best-selling facsimile Bradshaw's Handbook from 1863. So do pop in to see what there is.

THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR – Martin Miller.

I write this in mid June after a consistent period of chill weather which has dogged all our significant earning opportunities with a depressing effect on our bank balance. Nonetheless, it has demonstrated that we have taken the right approach to 2012 to not be too adventurous in the emerging economic climate and tightly controlled our costs.

There are, however, some rays of sunshine in that the bold decision to trade the Pullman Buffet Car seven days a week is just showing signs of being the correct one as the take moves upwards week on week. After some initial teething problems the team seems to have settled down and the comments from our customers are universally upbeat. Our volunteers have also responded well to this new opportunity and may be putting on a little extra weight!

The demand for charter trains has grown steadily through the year and is enhanced by the new catering offering. The decision to extend the weekday operation to every Tuesday for four months again seems to have been the right one as passenger numbers are showing signs of reaching profitable levels.

The downside of increased passenger operations is the reduction of opportunities to access the line for maintenance with both the Permanent Way Team and Vegetation

Clearance Team having to make adjustments to their traditional ways of working. Mondays are increasingly used for maintenance and weed treatment work as this is the day least in demand for testing and charters.

Many of you will have read of the Office of Rail Regulation's concern about a spike in the level of accidents on heritage railways and a recent death of a volunteer of the North Yorkshire Moor Railway brings home to us the need to be ever vigilant and professional in our approach to safety. A tremendous amount of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure our documentation and competences are kept up to date with the great help of Dawn Swebstone who devotes one day a week to this essential task. John Evans also deserves thanks for running our Personal Track Safety, First Aid and Fire Training courses.

We continue to receive accolades from visitors who have been very taken with the warm and friendly attitude of the staff they have met. This is incredibly valuable for our future as we have all encountered gloomy welcomes at other venues. Word of mouth is the strongest form of advertising and we should be justly proud of our reputation.

As ever, I extend my thanks to all the working volunteers and our shareholders who keep the show on the road.

STEAM LOCOMOTIVE REPORT – Bob Gibbens.

This quarter the loco department was almost in the position to report steady progress and no problems on all fronts until, in the last week of June, No3 disgraced itself.

2360: No. 3.

During a routine boiler wash out it was noticed the left hand main steam pipes in the smoke box had developed a crack. The locomotive was stopped immediately and with some difficulty the pipe was removed and sent to the boiler makers for repair.

The boilermaker crack detected the pipe and found the crack was longer than was first thought. The boilermaker suggested we crack detected the right hand pipe which was found to be defective as well. Both pipes have been refitted and No.3 is back in traffic.

Up until this incident No.3 had been performing well and earning the company and association much needed money, but unfortunately this is the nature of locomotives, you never know when they are going to let you down. The maintenance team have worked hard overcome to these setbacks to return the locomotive to traffic.

2217 Henry Ellison.

The frame of this locomotive can be considered to be a rolling chassis and, with exception of one or two small jobs, can be considered finished.

The boiler has been steam tested three times. The second time to see if we had managed to stop a few small leaks noted during the first steaming, which we did. On the third steaming the boiler inspector was present and passed the boiler. The boiler has been reunited with the frames and final assembly is now progressing rapidly.

Thanks to all members of the loco gang for their work on both locomotives. Very often the heavy and dirty work they carry out for the pleasure of our customers goes by unnoticed, to members of the 8F group whose help has saved EVRA a considerable amount of money and helped to speed up progress on 2217 and to the "Friends of the Andrew Barclays," who's financial contributions are helping us to maintain No.3 and progress the overhaul of 2217 "Henry Ellison." If you do not already contribute to the fund, please consider doing so. Contact Mike Craft for further information.

Level Crossing Safety: 1940s style – Vince Morris

Continuing my series of snippets from the records of the Hindlow Station Masters, I move on to the problems besetting the powers that be over the safety at the Dowlow occupation crossing. An occupation, or accommodation, crossing is a private level crossing for use by specific people or groups of people. We have several on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway used by farmers to move their stock across the line. The one at Dowlow was for use by the Dowlow Lime and Stone Company (DLSCo) to allow their lorries and employees to get in and out of the works.

Dowlow Halt was constructed in 1920 at the cost of the DLSCo for use by their work people. DLSCo was responsible for the lighting of the platforms and additionally they guaranteed sales of tickets to a value of £150 (rescinded in 1930), and to pay £8 per annum to maintain the platforms and crossings. A petition was forwarded from Hindlow in 1922 for Dowlow Halt to be opened to the public, but the L&NWR District Superintendent, Manchester, wrote to the Station Master (Mr Nicholson) at Hindlow, saying that he could not accede to the petition since it "has been opened for the work people of Dowlow Quarry only". However, on 25th October 1929 the Superintendent at Derby (on the LMS by now) wrote to Nicholson to say that it had been agreed to open the station to the general public from 4th Nov. 1929, and could local arrangements be made accordingly.

Now to the level crossing. The LMS produced a circular in early 1939 following a fatal accident at an occupation crossing, requesting that local officers establish procedures at such crossings in their area. This request eventually filtered down to Hindlow's Station Manager (by this time Mr Edgar), who replied that the gates at Dowlow were operated by the DLSCo Weighman during working hours, and after hours the key was left with an employee residing at Dowlow Cottages. This letter, dated 20th April 1939, appeared to have been prescient since an "incident" (details not given) occurred on the 28th March 1940, involving a lorry and a train at Dowlow. This caused a letter to be sent (from Derby) to the DLSCo suggesting a telephone be installed. They replied that, after careful consideration, they had come to the conclusion that the 'phone would contribute "practically nothing to safety." This appeared to have so shocked Derby that they sent it to the LMS (Wartime) Headquarters at Watford. The Chief Commercial Manager replied that they did not accept the DLSCo's view, and suggested that safety was compromised by the lack of time available to the weighman to attend to the gates when he had other things (like weighing?) to do. The presence of a 'phone would make his work easier, or the lorry drivers could use the 'phone themselves. He was insistent that the firm be approached again, with, if all else failed, a suggestion that the LMS share the cost of installing the telephone, and to point out that the longer the delay the higher the cost, currently assessed at £36.

Watford wrote to Derby then, of course, Derby passed it to Hindlow: go and "have the firm seen to". Edgar wrote back to say that he had "had this matter over with the firm", but they would not be moved. Their objection was that the 'phone would have to be in the weighman's cabin (to prevent vandalism), so would not be available to a driver arriving out of hours. They also claimed that since the signalman would be at Parsley if he reported that a train was in section it might take up to 15 minutes to reach the crossing and the lorry driver would not wait that long! Backing this up they also said that, should he decide to wait, they would not wish him to be delayed by an "unnecessary" 15 minutes. Laying it on thick, the firm also asked what would happen if the lorry was not one of theirs, so the driver would not know the procedure. Edgar's last, rather desperate, sentence, read "I consider a bell worked by treadles is the only solution". This suggestion went back to Derby who forwarded it to Watford and back came the reply, dated 13th December 1940: "the installation of a bell operated by treadles was investigated three years ago and the firm definitely declined to entertain the proposal owing to the high cost involved".

What next in this en-pass? Note the date of this correspondence and then read the last sentence of the reply from Watford: "It has been decided that the case be laid aside for the duration of the War" Does anyone know whether a 'phone or treadle operated bell was ever installed?

THE FUTURE OF THE ECCLESBOURNE EXPRESS - John H-T.

At the last EVRA AGM there was a discussion about the size, frequency and content of the Ecclesbourne Express. At the next AGM it is proposed to discuss this further. This is a brief outline of the current situation as a basis for discussion. Your ideas on how to develop the Express would be welcome.

Currently the Ecclesbourne Express Contains 16 pages, 4 pages in colour: Front cover, back cover and center spread, 1 ½ pages of adverts, 1 page contacts list, 1 page events list and 8½ pages of articles and B/W photos. It is published 4 times a year and is also being offered by email as a PDF File.

Content.

Currently there are a small group of people who contribute regularly to the EE: Pat and Mike Craft, Martin Miller, Vince Morris, Bob Gibbens, Graham Walker, Leigh Gratton and Tim Oaks. From time to time contributions are received from other departments and occasionally articles of general interest are received. In general the editors have to remind and cajole to produce the current range of articles. Photos are normally provided by Richard Buckby and myself, with occasional contributions from Martin Miller and Neil Ferguson-Lee. Contributions from other people would be very welcome!

Cost.

The production and distribution of the EE currently absorbs about 50% of EVRA subscriptions. The trustees do not feel that this proportion should increase. Three suggestions to increase editorial space: more pages funded by advertising, cut out advertising freeing one and a half more pages of editorial for less cost than increasing the number of pages. Produce 3 rather than 4 copies per year with more pages.



Henry Ellison's Boiler Steams - Safety Valves lift at 160psi. Martin Miller.

Henry Ellison boiler back in the frames.





Progress on the interior of the LMS Porthole Brake third.

Bubble Car nearly ready.



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DMU Update - Leigh Gration

It has been a couple of months since I last wrote so I thought I would pen another insight into the goings-on in the world of our DMU's as we approach the high summer season. Whilst most of the fleet is out earning revenue for the railway, there are still a few vehicles nestled away in the nerve centre receiving attention.

As hinted at in my previous update, the refurbishment of E51505 has been completed with the installation of reupholstered seats. By the time you read this it should be running down the valley for all to see as, at the time of writing, it is receiving attention to the paintwork at the front and on the roof. It is now pleasing to see three restored Metro-Cammell Class 101 vehicles together, in what would be an original formation (DMBS-TSL-DMCL for the technical people out there), for our passengers to enjoy.

The main push is now to get the rare Class 119 W51073 into an operational condition. There is much work to be done but since the completion of E51505 the team have really pressed on. New Formica laminate has been installed in the passenger entry vestibule and a new ceiling has also been installed. Attention then turned back to the front compartment which was originally First Class Smoking (now just First Class). At the start of the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend this area was a metal frame with just the ceiling installed but just five working days later the area had brand new side panels to create 'walls' along with a fully trimmed and painted ceiling and the first luggage rack in position! Not one member of the team had ever panelled a vehicle before so it was very much a form of trial and error but with very pleasing results in the end. Each panel would have to be cut to the correct size using a jigsaw, receive Formica cut to the correct size and then glued and finally screwed into the framework. The joins between the panels would then be trimmed with varnished wood.

An area of Formica was created on the bottom of the ceiling which forms a 'bump area' for luggage being put on the racks. This was fully trimmed with the same varnished wood and the original aluminium trim was returned to the correct position joining the side panels to the ceiling panels. Wooden trim was put up going across the ceiling panels to join the edges together, along with the rings which will eventually hold the light shades. The whole lot was then given a coat of gloss paint.

Finally the first luggage rack to be returned to the vehicle was given a good scrub and then bolted into the framework through the new panels. This is not an easy task as the racks go the full length of the compartment and they have to be located in the original holes tapped into the frame. Whilst there is still a very long way to go with this vehicle I am sure you will agree that quite a transformation has taken place.

This work was then repeated in the next compartment, which is half the size. At the time of writing, the second luggage rack is being put up in this area. New window surrounds are away for manufacture and should be back shortly. Hopefully work will continue to progress quickly so the vehicle can be launched in to traffic for all to enjoy!

Work is also progressing on the 'bubble car' with all of the welding repairs being completed and work beginning on preparing the roof for a repaint. At the time of writing special filler paint is being used to fill out the old paintwork and make it smooth again. Once this has been completed the painting can begin.

I have to say that I am most grateful to everybody who is helping out with the work on the vehicles. We have recently developed quite a youthful group of volunteers who are very keen to help out; their help is invaluable so thank you to those people. Without them there wouldn't be enough of us to progress with the restoration and refurbishment work that is taking place! Whilst I am at it, I would also like to thank a couple of individuals (you know who you are) for financing the purchase of the necessary materials to make the projects happen – I know refurbishments and complete rebuilds are not cheap!

THE OAKS REPORT – Tim Oaks.

TUNSTEAD GROUND FRAME SALVAGE.

Some time ago I received information from a source at Tarmac (Buxton Lime Industries) to the effect that there was a quantity of railway equipment at Tunstead looking for a home. One of the items was a 3 lever ground frame, which is the foundation of any simple signalling scheme, so I made official contact and eventually arranged to pick it up one Saturday morning towards the end of April.

This involved arranging clearance to be inside Tunstead Quarry, Mick Thomas and his van, and a sufficient number of bodies to pick the frame up and stuff it inside. We were met at the gate and escorted through the Quarry in convoy. I had never been in the quarry before and the place is huge. The internal road network reminds me of the Port of Dover and there are normally 50 ton dumper trucks rumbling about. We got onto the rough quarry tracks and dived down into a rock tunnel which came out at the railway sidings.

There we found the ground frame loaded on a pallet, and a bobcat with loading forks to load it as well. The frame was lifted into the van in minutes, after which we had a guided tour of the BLI internal railway system in the cab of their 6WD works shunter.

The frame was probably used to control the internal sidings at the approach to the loading bunkers to save the points man from running across the busy tracks. It had been out of use for many years and the building which housed it was demolished. Fortunately the quarry railway staff thought it was too historic to scrap and rescued it for preservation.

The frame is a relatively rare specimen, built by the Railway Signalling Co., complete with locking tray and rodding connectors. It can control a siding access to the main line or the end of a passenger loop.

I would like to thank Tarmac and their Tunstead staff, especially Mark Barton and John Fotherby. On our side, those involved were Mick Thomas, Rob Davies, Craig Hibbert and Ken Hibbert.

LMS Brake Van

The side duckets have returned from welding and have been bolted back on with plenty of sealant between them and the van body. Hopefully that is the last of the really big jobs, but for the moment there are plenty of little ones; we are working steadily through the body cleaning and painting, and that will continue for some time to come; apart from the usual crew we have a new recruit, Tim Druett who spent a day grinding paint and rust off the inside and seems keen to come back for more. A minor setback was the discovery of serious rot in one of the windowsills at the south end. I have managed to make a replacement, which is my first serious piece of carpentry in more than forty years.

Bagnall 2746 “The Duke”

Tony Joyce has made a start on cleaning and painting the boiler ready for the boiler lift: the aim is to get it down to ground level with all its plates exposed, clean it out thoroughly and then call in the boiler inspector. A preliminary visit suggests that a lot of side stays will need to be changed around the bottom of the box.

We had a stall at the Fab 4 gala at Barrow Hill run jointly with the Vulcan Trust. We intended to sell but ended up buying, as we were offered first a Stanier whistle, and then an original Hunslet ex-austerity whistle.

Our latest wagon is now available, Beswick Lime Works Ltd of Brierlow (which is on the Ashbourne line and operated by Lhoist to this day). This is a 4 plank wagon in cream, and Dapol have made an excellent job of the fine lettering, “Empty to Brierlow Quarry, Harpur LMS”. See advert on p 15.

THE MODEL RAILWAY - Martin Beresford.

The Model Railway continues to be a popular attraction but staffing it is now becoming a real problem. **There is a real danger that we will not be able to open it on a regular basis if more volunteers do not come forward to help**, so please, please, please contact me if you are able to spare time on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday to come and help. It involves operating the two layouts and talking to visitors. The more people we can involve, the less onerous it becomes!

if you have 2 or 3 hours to spare during Saturday or Sunday and are interested in joining a happy band of three trying to complete a very interesting N gauge layout and operating it on days when it is open to the public, **please contact me on 01629 822807 or down at the railway on Saturdays.** You will be made very welcome and your help will be much appreciated.

ECCLESBOURNE VALLEY RAILWAY EVENTS: August-October 2012.

The 2012 Timetable runs on Saturdays and Sundays until 28th October, supplemented by Special Event Weekends (See below.)

Day Rover Fares are: Adults £10, Concessions £9; Children £5; Families (2+3) £25, unless otherwise indicated.

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 Ravenstor Service will also be in operation.

These services will also run on Tuesdays from 5th June to 25th September. Tuesday is Market Day in Wirksworth.

The normal services are operated using Heritage Diesel Railcars.

August 11th-12th Diesel Locomotive Weekend at Wirksworth. A weekend of loco hauled passenger services on the Duffield Service. The Ravenstor line will also be operating with more frequent trains. A Fish and Chip Special will run on the Saturday evening, see www.e-v-r.com for details. Rover fares will be: Adults £12.00; Concessions £10.00; Children £6.00; Families (2+3) £29.00.

Summer Bank Holiday Open Days Sat 25th, Sun 26th and Mon 27th August. Both the Ravenstor and Duffield lines will be in operation, with steam trains on the Ravenstor line and our heritage railcars on the Duffield line.

Wirksworth Festival Open Days: 8th-9th September. Services on both Duffield and Ravenstor lines. Steam on the Ravenstor Service. A special Skiffle and Chips excursion train will run at 18:20 on Sat 8th, details at www.e-v-r.com

September 29th-30th Diesel Locomotive Weekend at Wirksworth. A weekend of loco hauled passenger services on the Duffield Service. The Ravenstor line will also be operating with more frequent trains. Rover fares will be: Adults £12.00; Concessions £10.00; Children £6.00; Families (2+3) £29.00.

October 27th and Sun 28th Wirksworth Model Railway Exhibition. The annual model railway exhibition at Wirksworth Town Hall and two other venues around the town. The full sized trains will be playing their part on both the Ravenstor (steam) and Duffield lines. A Fish and Chip Special train will run on the Saturday evening, see www.e-v-r.com for details.

Tuesday 30th October and Thursday 1st November: Half-term operating days.
Normal time table and fares.

The Narrow Gauge and Miniature Railway will run on the following dates: August Sun 5th, Sat 11th, Sun 12th, Sun 19th, Sun 26th, Mon 27th, September Sat 1st. It is also hoped to run the miniature railway on these dates.

Santa is due to visit the railway Sat 8th, Sun 9th, Sat 15th, Sun 16th, Sat 22nd and Sun 23rd December 2012. Watch www.e-v-r.com for details.

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.

See www.e-v-r.com for further details.

ECCLESBOURNE EXPRESS BY E MAIL.

The Ecclesbourne Express is available electronically. If you would like to receive your copy in this form please will you inform John Hastings-Thomson. We are continuing to produce printed copies of the magazine to those who prefer to receive it in that form.

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

