

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust

Annual Review 2022-23



Welcome to the 2022-2023 Annual Review of the work of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust

The Trust is a body whose purpose is to assist the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway by supporting the railway's activities along the line and at its stations, as well as supporting local economic and social initiatives in Wirksworth, Duffield and the valley's constituent communities.

Secretary's Report from 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023

Martin S Miller, late Chair of the Trust

During the year Martin Miller, upon whose initiative our Trust had been created, passed away. Martin, in his former role as General Manager of the Railway, had held to an overarching strategy that the EVR should be operated as "An affordable branch line railway", the backbone of which was a lightweight railcar service with 7 trains a day to Duffield and Ravenstor, with heavier locomotives and stock used on high days and holidays; an approach that also provided interesting activity around Wirksworth Station, rather than long dull gaps between infrequent trains. This carefully balanced strategy kept the railway's costs in check and even resulted in periodic happy profits. The Trust is deeply grateful for Martin's work and his contribution to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. Martin's replacement as Chair of the Trust, Mr John Stokes, was duly elected on the 14th of March 2023.

Progress during the year

Much progress has been achieved by the Trust during the past year and it is the strategy of the Trust to take on modest works that contribute to one or more of the following strategic aims:

1. The development or support for passenger facing projects which may improve passenger ticket income, passenger related revenue or passenger growth.
2. The improvement or re-establishment of passenger facing features and facilities including access, stations and the environment, as well as the understanding of the railway for our visitors and communities.
3. An interest in projects or activities which will have an effect of operational improvements or a reduction of operating costs.

The Trust has limited resources and this being the case, it is normally the policy of the Trust to only take on any new project once an existing project has been finished, it is not our policy to operate with an encumbrance of unfinished activities.

Duffield Station

For some time the Trust's officers have been occupied, at the request of the Wyvernrail Board, to provide the new entrance to Duffield Station from Chapel Street. In the meantime emergency remedial work involving the provision of a new water main at the railway's boundary at Chapel Street, to connect the station to a much-needed reliable water supply, was completed in late March 2023 by Millwards towards which the Trust contributed £2,000. Work including the improvement of the entrance, gate and associated walling will take place shortly, which the Wyvernrail Board agreed in the summer of 2019, but has been delayed both by the Covid epidemic and by amendments to the gate design in consultation with the Amber Valley Council's Heritage Officer. Millwards have been again approached to undertake the work and the Treasurer is looking to progress the next tranche of expenditure towards it.



The Chapel Street entrance to the EVR station at Duffield

The Trust continues to support the Duffield Community Association (DCA) who undertake good works around the village and who are responsible both for the village's annual carnival and for its Christmas lights and decorations. The carnival attracts several thousand people to the village in a normal year. It is held in Eye's Meadow and this brings attention and income to the village, its

shops, pubs and cafes, helping to support the community: a key policy role of our Railway. The Carnival took place last year between the 19th and 26th June 2022, with a transport theme including the “Carnival Express”. Looking forward, this special train will again be put on by the EVR in the evening of the 25th June 2023 running from Duffield to Wirksworth and back.

Ravenstor Station

Work took place during 2021 and also in 2022 to make repairs to some of the unique display features around the station and at the top of the incline including repainting of the standard gauge display wagon; restoration of the Shaw’s Quarry limekilns track display; repair of the boundary fences and reconstruction of the access path from Old Lane. In co-operation and with the support of then Secretary of EVRA, Mr I Bowley, repairs and restoration of the series of interpretation boards for the former Rail and Quarry Walk were agreed and funded by the Trust and took place during the summer and autumn of 2022. This activity completed the restoration of the historic and interpretative features at Ravenstor by the Trust, which were constructed when Ravenstor Station first opened in 2005.



Ravenstor Station in 2022 after restoration by the Trust



Intake Lane Interpretation Board before restoration



Intake Lane Interpretation Board after restoration by the Trust

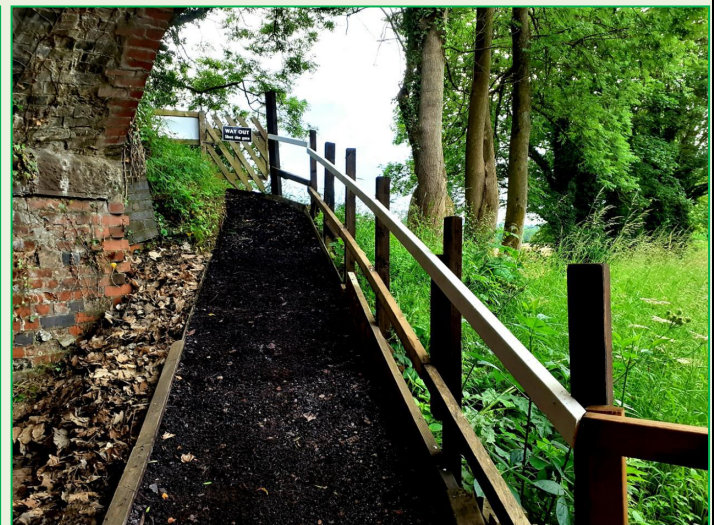
Shottle Station

Platform 2 at Shottle had been built in late 2016 by Mike Evans with a large donation from Terry Pool in memory of his late wife, Hazel, to whom the platform is dedicated. However, bizarrely it was not provided with any public access. In consequence it was used only once in six years, on the 19th March 2017 and then remained out of service until September 2022 when the Trust submitted plans to Neil Ferguson-Lee to provide a short path to it. The Trust felt that although

platform 2 did not represent a revenue generating opportunity of itself, it did fall into the category of improvement of passenger facilities, because bringing it into use would enable a change of trains at Shottle at galas; for photography and for use in service perturbations. In addition, the Trust felt that developing Shottle, where there is a useful area of company-owned land suited to potential events behind platform 2, would be a valuable step towards making Shottle a modest passenger contributing station, lying as it does next to one of the only two A Roads (the A517) in the district to cross our line, the other being the A6 at Duffield.



Shottle rear of platform 2 before work commenced



Shottle platform 2 path, fence and new entrance gate



Shottle Platform 2, five years after construction



Shottle Platform 2 on completion by the Trust, Spring 2023

Sources and uses of funds

At the start of the Trust's year, which runs from the 1st May, the Trust held £5,462.67 and expenditure has been related to payments for the new water supply at Duffield; work on the Shottle access path; publicity (website); keys for Duffield Station and membership of the DCA.

The Trust is not a charity, but a support organisation. Historically, income is mainly generated from talks given by the Trust's officers to a range of organisations from the Derbyshire Masons to the Wirksworth Probus. In addition, Trust income is generated from the sale of "A History of Wirksworth" by Anton Shone, other book sales and collection type items. At the end of the year the Trust's funds stood at £4,041.96.

Looking forward

Our work for the forthcoming year will focus on the Wyvernrail Board's request to improve the Chapel Street entrance to the EVR station car park. This will enable the station car park at Duffield to be easier to access not only for passengers but will also improve the approach for vehicles using the road-rail access point at the south end of Duffield Station, as well as providing at least a part-time parking facility for the Duffield community in a village which otherwise has very constrained parking.

In addition to this the Trust intends once again to support one or two small worthy projects within our aims. At the end of the Trust's year a grant of £275 had been allocated to the Wyvernrail Plant Department for work on weed-killing equipment for the line and this will be reported in the next review as its payment fell into May (the upcoming Trust year).

Two further projects are being considered. The first is linked to the development of Shottle Station. For those with long memories, Shottle Station was re-opened twice. It was first re-opened on Midsummer Day 2012, for which a temporary access was built by the railway's Cadets from the foot crossing at the north end of the station to the platform. This was to fulfil a promise by Martin Miller to the local community that the station would be opened to serve them in 2012. The station was then rebuilt during 2014 and re-opened for a second time on the 9th August 2014 with an access by steps from the south side of the A517 bridge, this became the official access and the crossing path was closed at the time. Since then, however, work has taken place to open the Ecclesbourne Way long-distance footpath and this now runs in a field adjacent to and on the west side of the station but had no access to it.



Head of Passenger Services, Anton Shone, now Secretary of the Trust, with locomotive 33035 at the opening of Shottle Station on Midsummer Day 2012 (C. Kilroy)

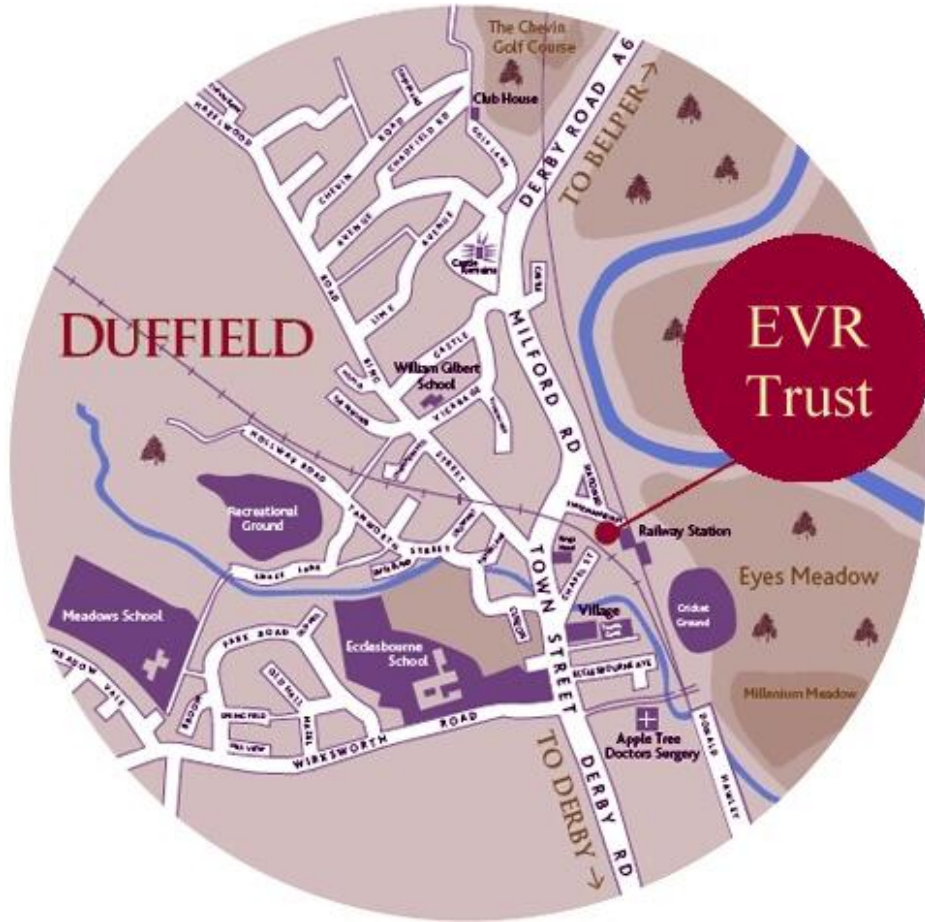
The Trust gave a grant in 2014 to the the Friends of the Ecclesbourne Way to assist with creating the long-distance path and consequently is of the opinion that the station should be connected to it. This can be achieved by clearing vegetation adjacent to the 2012 path and re-opening it to give access both to the Ecclesbourne Way and to Shottle Hall. Secondly, the railway tends to lack flexible event space, yet owns land at the rear of platform 2 which would provide useful space if levelled. The Trust will consider the potential for this in due course.

Finally, the Trust has been approached by Neil Ferguson-Lee, Chair of Wyvernrail, for assistance with the cosmetic restoration of the Wirksworth Car Park Signal Box and has agreed to help seek funding for such a restoration, in order that the box does not deteriorate past the point of no return before its indicated long term use. The Trust will look for possible sources of grant funding.

A word of thanks

The Trust wishes to thank the following people for their work and engagement this year: Wyvernrail for water supply works at Duffield. EVRA for locomotive ash for Shottle and co-operation at Ravenstor. Volunteers notably David Hayes and the VCT, Hylton Holt and Tony Watt for their contributions to Shottle, as well as the mystery donor of the replica heritage signs there.

Location of the Trust



All photographs are by kind permission of members of the Trust unless otherwise credited.

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The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust

Supporting the work of the EVR in the community

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