

Annual Review 2019-2020

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust



Welcome to the 2019/2020 Annual Review of the work of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust

The Trust was formed as 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 2019 to 30th April 2020

Major Works: Restoration of the Rail and Quarry Walk

The first station to station public train service operated on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway was launched on the 2nd of September 2005 between Wirksworth and Ravenstor, the culmination of a tremendous amount of effort by many of our volunteers. It proved hugely popular and it integrated a number of historic features illustrating the use of our line in the transportation of stone.

Ravenstor Station was built on the site of Shaw's Quarry Loading Dock at the foot of the former Ravenstor Incline, which had connected the Midland Railway's Wirksworth line to the Cromford and High Peak Railway, the incline was completed and track laid but the two companies disliked each other and the connection was, to the best of our knowledge, never used. However, the Wirksworth line stimulated the development of local limestone quarrying and by the 1950s a multitude of quarry railways, both standard and narrow gauge, converged at the site of Ravenstor Station.



Ravenstor Station in September 2005

When the station was being constructed a number of fascinating remains of these lines were discovered and were later marked by interpretation boards provided by EVRA. There are 11 of these boards in total, all illustrating different facets of the rail and quarry industries here. At Ravenstor itself a display was constructed of the loading of stone from the dock to a main line wagon and features along the station path running up to the Old Lane Lime Kilns and the National Stone Centre, including inside keyed track from 1867 and narrow gauge track from the 1930s were exposed for visitors to see. A leaflet guide was published and the line and its interesting features was one of our greatest historic assets and successes.

However by 2019 the whole of these features, the line, the station and our links with the National Stone Centre had become so badly neglected that it was impossible to even walk the path to the station.



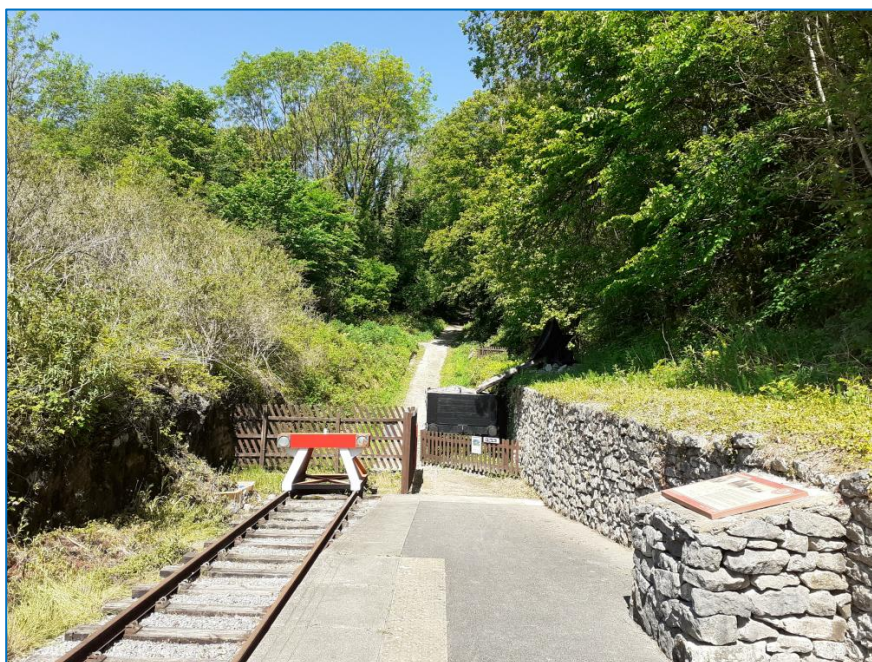
Ravenstor Station in October 2019

A co-operative project was begun by ourselves to restore and make Ravenstor safe, this project included the Trust, EVRA volunteers, Network Rail, the National Stone Centre and the EVR Vegetation Clearance Team. Work began on the 27th October 2019 with some 25 community volunteers from N.R. clearing around the National Stone Centre grounds and re-establishing the waymarks and paths which lead from the High Peak Trail to Ravenstor Station. On the 6th January this year Mick Kingsley and the VCT cleared a large fallen tree and the whole of the path out of the station. The Trust paid for the replacement of two benches, one on the platform and one in the seating area next to Old Lane, as well as the restoration of the station running-in board. Our own volunteers tidied up the station itself, cleared around the display and fitted new signs.



Old Lane seating area today: part of the restored Rail and Quarry Walk

The restored station received its first train on the 23rd of March this year, over the Multiple Memories weekend. We have received several commendations for the work done and this also appears to have stimulated the National Stone Centre to progress their plans to develop the Centre into a much larger attraction (their Project Pheonix), doubling the size of their Discovery Building and expanding on the plans to create a learning campus using the facilities of the Eco Centre and Mount Cook Adventure Centre. Some of our work was interrupted by the virus epidemic and lockdown, in particular restoration work on the display wagon at Ravenstor Station, but EVRA hopes to finish this soon. Ravenstor remains one of our most interesting locations where the history of our line can best be understood, indeed the expansion of the National Stone Centre and Mount Cook represent considerable medium-term commercial opportunities for our Railway.



Ravenstor Station, the interpretation board, display wagon and station path in May 2020

Duffield Station

In 2019 and 2020, the Trust's officers have been engaged in discussion with the planning authority to provide the new gated entrance to Duffield Station, from the end of Chapel Street. This process has been considerably slowed by the Coronavirus epidemic and whilst we had hoped the gates would have been completed in this financial year, this will not be the case. However, it was important to begin the process, which is not without costs, in order to make the entrance to the EVR Duffield Station more presentable and safer to use.

The Trust continues to support the Duffield Community Association 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 each year, held in Eye's Meadow and this brings considerable attention and income to the village, its shops, pubs and cafes, helping to support the community and its businesses in general, although this year the Carnival will not be held and is now planned to run on the 26th June 2021, all other things being equal.



Duffield arrival

The general appearance of Duffield Station is important to us both as a gateway to the railway from the main line and as a stopping point on return journeys from Wirksworth. For this reason we have paid for a number of planters for the platform this year.

Sources and uses of funds

At the start of the Trust's year (which runs from the 1st May), the Trust held £2971.97 and primary expenditure was related to the Amber Valley council planning application (Duffield Gates); for membership of the Duffield Community Association; for work undertaken at Ravenstor Station and for planters for the Duffield Station platform.

Income was mainly generated from talks given by the Trust's Officers to a large range of organisations ranging from the Derbyshire Masons to the Wirksworth Probus Club. In addition, Trust income is generated from the sale of "A History of Wirksworth" by Anton Shone, other book sales and collection type items, amounting to approx £900 during the year. At the end of the year the Trust held £3,534.92

Looking forward

Our plans for the forthcoming year will continue to focus on the development of Duffield Station and particular work needs to be done on the entrance gates and in due course on the car park. In addition to this the Trust intends once again to support one or two small worthy projects and is happy to receive applications for grant-in-aid amounts of up to £200 which fall within our purposes. The necessary application forms for grants-in-aid can be found on our website and this year we would look most favourably on community needs which have some bearing on the railway or are of mutual benefit for both the community and the railway. Our principal concern for the coming year, however, is the impact of the Coronavirus epidemic on our sources of income. We take the view that income will be extremely badly affected and that this will also impact our colleagues in Wyvernrail and EVRA. The epidemic will have serious impacts on the operation of the Railway and on visitor numbers for some time to come.

A word of thanks

The Trust wishes to thank the following people and organisations for their hard work and engagement this year. Peter Holden and the Trustees of the National Stone Centre; Mike Gather and the staff of the Capital Delivery Department of Network Rail in Derby; Ian Bowley and EVRA volunteers working at Ravenstor Station; Mick Kingsley and the Vegetation Clearance Team of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway for their kind assistance and support.

Anton Shone, Secretary, EVR Trust.

Location of the Trust

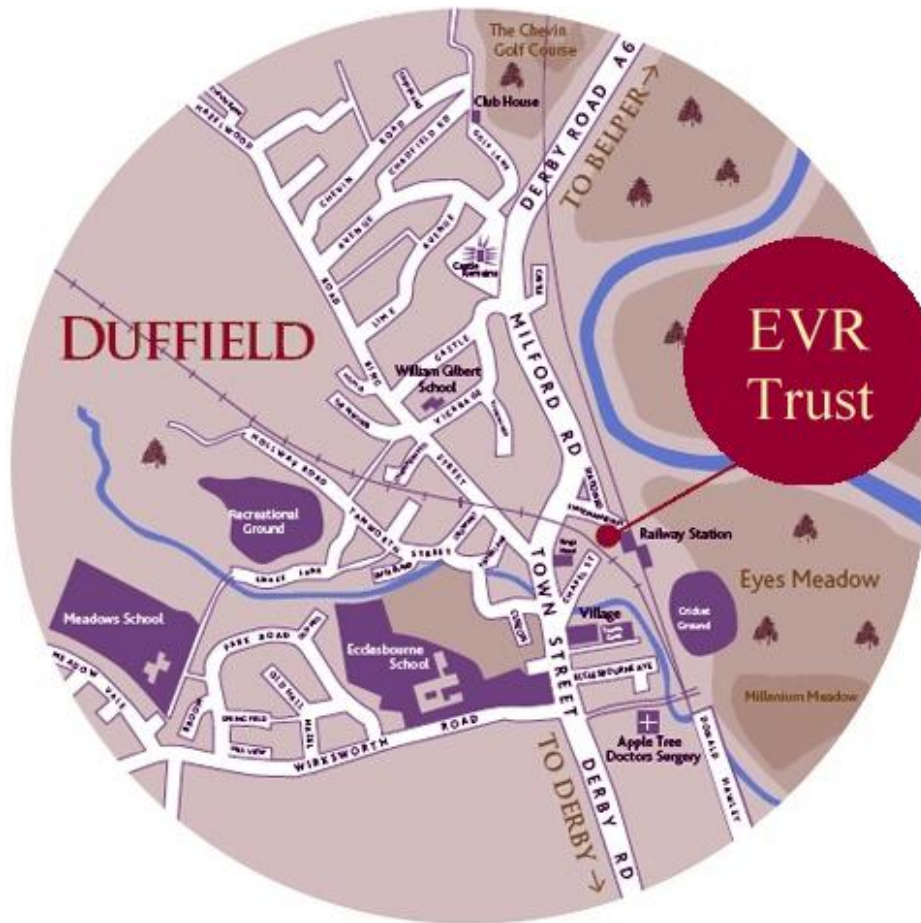


Photo credits: John Hastings-Thomson; Anton Shone

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The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Trust

Supporting the work of the EVR in the community

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