

Trackbed Trails

The newsletter for Exmoor Associates Ltd

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Report of Meeting Held at Bratton Fleming on Saturday 29th September

After our customary informal greetings over tea or coffee and biscuits Mike Buse opened the meeting with an apology from director Mike Selby who unfortunately was still in hospital and unable to make the meeting. Tony Brown then read out a letter from Nik Barrie apologising for absence and resigning as a director. Nik's letter is reproduced on page 2. Apologies were received from a number of other shareholders including Ian Cowling who is usually able to give the meeting on progress at Woody Bay from the L&B trustees' and directors' perspective.

Tony then asked if there were any queries or questions on the 2017-18 accounts which had been sent to members since the last meeting. He explained that the transfer of the two sections of trackbed in the northern section had taken place after the end of the company's financial year and therefore the accounts do not now reflect the current position as the issued share capital had reduced. Next years accounts will of course correct this.

Mike then invited some of our regular volunteers to step forward to update the meeting on the summer's activities. Chris Lane and Andy Hearn explained that other than routine weed control not a lot had happened, particularly as the extreme heat in early summer made outside work debilitating. A special mention was made of member and local resident Chris Jones who had used his own machinery to keep the trackbed clear. Chris Dadson (who updates our online presence on our website and Facebook pages reported that a group of local volunteers had attended the Barnstaple District Model Railway Club Exhibition in July and the Combe Rail Model Railway in September. The latter was a joint display with the L&B organised by Anne Belsey has recently moved from Kent to North Devon and had borrowed from Woody Bay the Railway's display boards depicting the Planning Application.

As a few of the early L&B Association pioneers have now sadly passed away, Clarence de la Cour was then invited to address the meeting with some tales from the early days.

No written summary can do justice to Clarence's stories of hair-raising escapades to salvage rail and other items for the embryonic railway. Highly entertaining, it was one of those occasions when you really had to be there to appreciate it.

(See page 2 for a brief obituary for two of the early supporters).

A visitor to our meeting, Nigel Dorrington, talked about the possibility of laying some 7¼ gauge track at Snapper as a garden railway for private use with limited access for members. Nigel is living and running a business in Germany so this was very much floating an idea about what could be done in the future. This led to some wide ranging discussions around the meeting hall with David Stockwell insisting that getting some cosmetic track laid through the Platform at Snapper was a much more worthy enterprise.

John Edmonds gave the meeting an update on the work L&B volunteers had been doing at Chelfham and invited all to go down to Chelfham after the meeting for tea, biscuits and a chat *[this turned out to be most fortuitous as the site has since been closed by the L&B board to all volunteers and visitors]*.

Mike closed the meeting by apologising for the fact that there was not a lot of news on trackbed acquisition but it was not through lack of trying. It was suggested that it would be more sensible to only hold one meeting a year during quiet periods, which was generally accepted.

Lastly the directors appealed for members to come forward to join them on the board to assist with the running of the company and some of the paperwork. If anyone is interested please let us know.



(LEFT TO RIGHT) KEITH LAMPREY, BARRY, ANNE AND CHRIS IN FRONT OF THE COMBINED RAILWAY STAND

Nik Barrie writes.....

It is now sixteen years this September since we set up Exmoor Associates and managed to secure the first of many stretches of trackbed at Collard Bridge in the Yeo Valley. Since then we have stayed true to our original aim of securing land for the longer term future of the wider L&B project, and to date we've managed to secure three miles of trackbed.

Over this time there have been challenges and some fantastic achievements. In the most recent years, my main concerns as a director has been to see relations with the rest of the L&B maintained, and importantly to see the matter of the future of the trackbed we owned for phase two resolved satisfactorily. I am pleased that this year we have finally reached agreement and completed on the phase two trackbed at Parracombe and Blackmoor, which will enable the reinstatement project continue.

With this key objective now resolved, I am going to need to step down as a director. As with many people, a lot has changed in sixteen years, and at the moment I need to spend more time with family and professionally I also have a new job role to tend to from this autumn.

It is extremely encouraging to see the progress being made across the whole project. With Lyn, the new coaches, the planning application, and the various land acquisitions. Not to forget the restoration of Snapper, and Chelfham as well.

We are all here for the same ultimate reason, because we want to see the L&B restored – something that can occasionally be forgotten when passions run high. I hope everyone across the project will be able to continue working together and support each other to achieve this. When I joined the association in the early nineties, few believed that what we have today was even feasible, but this project inspires the kind of drive and passion that makes anything possible!

Mike Buse writes on the passing of two pioneering L&B stalwarts

I have only just learned from another L & B member that Bill Thrush passed away on 9th January.

Bill took on the Membership Secretary's job for the Association on 4 May 1986 and stood down from that post in October 1996. Subsequently Bill was a director of the L&B Light Railway Company. He was a big character always looking for new opportunities to raise funds, beautiful neat handwriting and a really good guy to have on your side.

His love of snuff was for all to see, I could never see the pleasure in this but Bill certainly could.

I am sure he will be looking down now still with his drivers cap on.



We were saddened to learn that Leslie King died on Thursday 6th September.

Les joined the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Association in the early years of the 1980's and soon became its Secretary remaining in that role in to the early 1990's. During that same period he played a major role in fundraising and organising the opening of the L&B Museum inside the abandoned Barnstaple Town signal box, and would then often be found manning the display with his wife Cathy on some occasions several days each week.

He was a life member of the L&BR Trust and will be remembered as one of the pioneer L&B enthusiasts whose enthusiasm for the L&B did much to encourage future members to pursue the reopening of the railway.

Les, may you rest in peace.

WANT TO GET IN TOUCH?

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