Trackbed Trails

The newsletter for Exmoor Associates Ltd Issue 22, Spring 2019

Shareholders' Meeting 11 May 2019

The next shareholders meeting will be held at Goodleigh Village Hall, Goodleigh, North Devon, EX32 7LU on the Saturday morning of the L&BR Spring Gala at Woody Bay.

All interested non-shareholders and volunteers are welcome to attend the meeting.

The Hall doors will open at 9.30 am when there will be tea and coffee available, the meeting commences at 10.00 am.

We are pleased to announce that Andrew Hearn has joined the board of directors.

Andy will be well known to those of you who attend our meetings, giving updates on the work of the local volunteers.

Andy introduces himself….

I originate from Exford in the heart of Exmoor, growing up there and also at West Ilkerton Farm above Barbrook, a neighbouring farm to Outovercott riding stables which happens to have part of the L&B trackbed on its ground and this is how I became aware of the railway. As a child I can remember playing around Caffyns Halt. I then spent time in Minehead before moving to the outskirts of Barnstaple and eventually to my present location near Umberleigh.

Growing up I attended Lynton Primary School, Minehead Middle and Upper schools and Park school in Barnstaple, so all told, I'm pretty local. I come from a farming background, having worked on beef and sheep farms before moving into the meat industry, both in large, high throughput red meat and poultry plants, working from the shop floor to online training and assessing staff to NVQ level 2 awards up to department management covering bird welfare, health and safety, food hygiene and lean management.

Approximately 10 years ago I accepted the opportunity to work alongside my father in landscaping and gardening, a job which I still do to this day, I also haven't quite turned my back on the meat industry, working one day a week in a small plant in North Cornwall.

Saturdays are my EA volunteer days, currently being spent between Snapper and Collard Bridge, clearing overgrowth or finding small projects to do with the other volunteers, my main interests being heritage, infrastructure and restoration rather than the running of trains. I would much rather sit on a train and enjoy the journey than drive it.

Director David Cameron Introduces Himself

Having been a co-director of Exmoor Associates for just over a year now, I thought that perhaps it was time I introduced myself to other shareholders.

Born in Isleworth in 1956 and yes, sharing the same name as the former Prime Minister (I have actually had it for 10 years more than *that other one*!), I have held an interest in railways for as long as I can remember; this was probably instigated by my grandfather who, during family holidays in the West Country, took me along to the sea-wall at Teignmouth in the late 50's/early 60's to watch the trains go past – which was much more fun than the beach!

Leaving school at the end of 1975, I joined the Metropolitan Police where I spent 30 happy years swanning around London on a motorcycle, before retiring in 2006. Married to Margaret, and with a son Stuart (now aged 20 and studying at Brunel University), they too are both also Life Members of the L&B Trust, as well as being EA shareholders.

So where's the connection with North Devon, I hear you ask? This came from my (late) father-in-law who, upon retiring from Fleet Street, left the smoke of London for the fresh air of Braunton. During our numerous trips down to see the old chap, I took myself off exploring, seeking out what remained of the L&B - which I knew was not too far away.

I well remember my first visit to Chelfham, where I met one Nigel Thompson who was happy to talk to a curious casual visitor - and spent time explaining future plans. I joined the Trust soon after; I was hooked. Early L&B fundraising events such as the Fish & Chip drive-a-train evenings at the local Mangapps Railway Museum introduced me to Tony, Mike (Buse) and Nik, among others.

What of 'retirement' and all the free-time pensioners are all supposed to have? Well, two border-collies see to it that there's not much of that! I am still involved in the Rotary Owners' Club – catering for riders of motorcycles with Wankel engines – (another passion of mine) which I founded in 1983; and I am chairman of my local parish council - which is a bit like the Vicar of Dibley, only without the vicar - or many of the laughs! And the local Neighbourhood watch co-ordinator … as well as a bee-keeper …

I am also a Life member of the Southwold Railway Trust, and a member of the Halesworth Narrow Gauge Railway Society, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, and am a 'Friend of the West Highland Line'.

Plus various canal societies, motorcycle clubs, and … and … and … etc …

We currently split our time between Essex and Fort William – oh, and occasional trips to North Devon.

Cosmetic Track at Snapper

Andy Hearn writes…

Many of you may be aware that suggestions have been made at our meetings to lay a cosmetic stretch of track at Snapper Halt in front of the shelter.

Plans have now been proposed that a 90' section be laid this Spring.

Materials for this have been estimated and are as follows:

Photo: Lens of Sutton

32 tonnes of 40mm ballast £780

Geotextile Membrane £90

50 Jarrah hardwood sleepers @ £21 each

Hire of excavator,dumper and operative for 1 day £250

We already have the rail and fixings for this project kindly donated by Mike Selby and we have had a fund running for several years towards this which has accumulated about £700.

As you can see this project will be quite expensive and is separate from Exmoor Associates' main purpose of purchasing trackbed, therefore I am just asking if any members might be interested in helping to fund this project by making a separate ring-fenced donation.

Online donations can be made via internet banking to Exmoor Associates 30-93-08 01550790 quoting "Track" as the reference. Cheques of course are always welcome.

Hedge Trimming

Over the winter period we engaged a local contractor to trim all the hedges that form the boundary between our land and public roads.

We have always considered this fairly important particularly adjacent to the Collard Bridge and Snapper sections which are on a fast road where visibility is limited.

Collard Bridge Land

As you may know, the trackbed at Collard Bridge (Bridge 18) was the first parcel of land bought by EA back in 2002; along with this, we were also obliged to buy the two fields either side as part of the package. In total, this land came to around 10 acres.

In essence, this plot is roughly square, with the railway describing a diagonal line across it from the south-west corner to the north-east corner dividing it (again, roughly) in half. The westernmost half of the plot enjoys a river frontage with fishing rights onto the River Yeo, and a gated entrance from the little lane leading to the Scout Camp, while the easternmost half enjoys road frontage on the road from Barnstaple to Chelfham. Both would offer great train viewing opportunities when the line re-opens.

We have recently received an approach from a third-party interested in buying these two fields. Before we enter into discussions with them about a sale, we thought it only right that we make you, the shareholders, aware - in case any of you held a long-term dream of buying either of these pieces or if you feel that EA should retain ownership for possible future use.
The trackbed itself would not be included in any sale and would be retained for railway use. Rights to access the railway (e.g. for construction / maintenance etc) would be included in any sale conditions.
Should any EA shareholder be interested in buying these two fields or have any other comments on this issue, please contact David Cameron.

Fleeces and Polo Shirts

Mike Selby is still able to supply fleeces and polo shirts with the EA logo.

Prices from about £10 - £12.

To order or for further details contact Mike on 01737 358120

Or email mjselby14@gmail.com

WANT TO GET IN TOUCH?
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