The newsletter for Exmoor Associates CIC Issue 29, September 2021

Reminder of next Meeting and L&B Gala

Our next meeting will be held at The Village Hall, Goodleigh, EX32 7LU on the morning of the Saturday 25 September.

The hall doors will open at 9.30 am when there will be tea, coffee and biscuits available, the meeting commences at 10.00 am.
All interested non-shareholders and volunteers are welcome to attend the meeting.

The L&B Trust is holding a gala over the weekend of 25-26 September including its AGM in the evening. Visits to newly acquired Bratton Station will be spread and duplicated over the two days to enable our members to participate in both our and the Trust events. These visits to Bratton station will be on Saturday 2pm until 5pm and Sunday 10am until 5pm.

Whilst we are happy to welcome non shareholders and volunteers to our meeting, visits to Bratton Fleming Station will be reserved for shareholders of EA only on the Saturday and Sunday.

A light lunch of rolls etc will be available after our meeting for the modest sum of £5.00, please confirm if you intend staying for lunch and socialising to give our caterers an idea of numbers.

The Future of Exmoor Associates as a Community Interest Company

When Exmoor Associates was established in 2002 its objective was to acquire L&B trackbed well in advance of the construction of the embryonic railway. This position has remained unaltered albeit expanded slightly over the years to include the purchase of Snapper Halt and the garage / workshop at Snapper for volunteer use. With our conversion to a Community Interest Company and adoption of the model CIC Articles of Association our declared objectives have of necessity changed.To quote:

“The objects of the Company are to carry out activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to acquire the trackbed of the former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and to buy or lease any land or buildings that were not part of the former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway.

To advance the education of the public in the subject of the former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and in the conservation of the physical and natural environment.
Furthermore to buy or lease any land or buildings which can provide permissive access to the local footpath network and that will enhance the railway, make it easier to access and which will add to the experience of travelling on the railway.”

The above obviously expands greatly from our original narrow objective but not to the detriment of the reinstatement project as a whole.

The directors propose two different options to put to our shareholders:

- That subscribed funds for shares are retained by EA in a ring fenced account solely for use in the purchase of additional trackbed and that other community based projects are funded via donations (which attract Gift Aid) to the Yeo Valley Trust.

- That EA expands its remit so that all funds held can be used for any purpose covered in our Articles.

The directors favour the first of these options but would like to canvass the opinions of our shareholders. There will be an ample opportunity to discuss this at our September meeting along with any other issues.

Your opportunity to ask a question at the Exmoor Associates meeting on the 25th Sep.

Exmoor Associates has always encouraged audience participation right from our first meeting, so as well as those attending our meeting on the 25th September who can ask questions, we would like to give all those unable to attend, for whatever reason, the chance to email or post a question to us, and we will endeavour time allowing to put it to the meeting for discussion.

We have always been very transparent in what we do, giving our time for free and nothing claimed for directors expenses over the past nearly twenty years. In this very fast changing world it is vitally important that we have you all behind us and most importantly that we all understand that for the railway to still be with us in the years to come we must look at the massive changes that are happening.
With a dwindling and ageing volunteer workforce and considering how expensive contractor's labour is, we need to radically adapt or we believe the future will be very bleak.

Exmoor Associates can evolve into whatever we want if we all work together, we are lucky to have a blank canvas to work with, what we have is the most fabulous railway with scenery that changes dramatically around every corner, and it is my wish that everyone that travels on it thoroughly enjoys it.
Now you have taken the time to read this please consider any question or offer of advice or help you can give us and let us know.

Mike Buse

Share Certificates and Annual Accounts

By now all shareholders should have received a copy of their new share certificate issued in the name of the CIC. These replace and supersede any previously issued certificates and have a new numbering sequence. With thanks to Nik (a director of EA from 2002 until 2018 for the design of the new certificates).

Accompanying this issue of Trackbed Trails is a copy of last financial year's accounts (up to March 31 2021). These relate to the last full year of EA as a private limited company.

Any queries regarding shares, certificates or the accounts please contact Tony Brown.

Bratton Fleming Report

Well, a year is almost up, *tempus* has certainly *fugit*-ted … this time of year, back in 2020, we were still on tenterhooks as to whether or not we could complete the successful purchase of the station.

It finally became ours on 3 November, and since then has been the home of L&B supporter, Andrew Naish. Andrew very kindly offered to pay his rent 12 months in advance, which helped us to reach the asking price.

The initial idea of having a stand-alone organisation to own, run and manage Bratton Fleming Station (to be called *Friends of Bratton*) had to be abandoned when, although support for the appeal was good, it was still insufficient in the little time we had available - with vendors eager to move - and other parties interested in purchasing ...

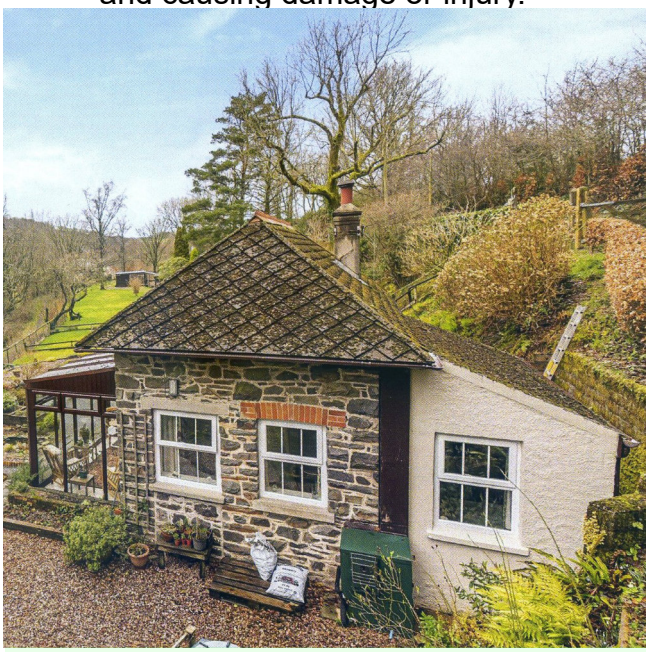
Fortunately, the Exmoor Associates directors were willing to pick up the reins, enabling the deal to be swiftly concluded.

In the time since purchase …

- The property has been rewired to a standard which has allowed a Certificate of Electrical Installation to be issued;
- The property has been formally renamed from *Long Acre,* back to its former title of *Station House*. (Thank you to Andrew Naish for arranging and funding this);
- The moss, which had built up thickly on the roof (and which used to rain down, courtesy of busy blackbirds, and block the gutters!) has largely been removed;

- The ornate roof-finials which had shattered and fallen off, after a particularly cold snap prior to our purchase, were discovered in the flower bed into which they had fallen; enough of them remained for use as a template - to enable exact replicas to be produced;

- A couple of mature trees, which were found to be diseased (Ash die-back?), were felled to prevent their falling - and causing damage or injury.



The dead Ash tree that has now been felled can be seen adjacent to the road to the left of Bratton's chimney pot

Timber from the felled trees will keep Bratton's log burner going for a while

Plans for the future ….

A plaque, recording the names of those who contributed to the appeal to purchase the station, will be produced and installed;

One member tells us that he has secured a V.R. postal wall box, which can be reinstated at the station in its original position;

Reinstatement of some track, signals, running-in board etc, while attractive ideas, fall outside the scope of EA's raison d'être (ie/ buying trackbed), but if anyone is willing to contribute to a fund for such schemes (such as happened at Snapper), these are things we should all like to see via grants from the Yeo Valley Trust.

It has been suggested that we keep a milk churn at Bratton for donations on open day events , so if you have one or know of the whereabouts of one please let us know.

David Cameron

Maps and Route Planning

I just thought this is a very opportune moment to say thanks to our shareholder Chris Duffell. Over the past few years he has been working on the very complex Transport and Works Act Order on behalf of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway, a very complicated and time consuming project which is getting very close to completion, not only that but he is also involved in many drainage issues on land owned by the Railway.

Chris has very kindly also been supporting us in the South for many years, so we now feel it is appropriate that the Directors of Exmoor Associates to take this opportunity to thank Chris for all his professional help.

Most of you will be aware a different route needs to be taken around the reservoir and onto the adjoining farm land until it meets up again with the original formation. We need to ensure that in the future we only buy trackbed that will be required to join up to Wistlandpound Reservoir and in other problematic sections such as the road section at Narracott.

Chris has supplied us with the detailed modern maps showing how the railway will get around the Reservoir and then down towards our Station at Bratton Fleming. These compare well with the survey done by Tony Brown and Nik Barrie many years ago which proposed a very similar route. We also rely on Chris for drainage issues we have on land owned by Exmoor Associates in the south.

Both the L&B Trust and Exmoor Associates recognise what an enormous amount of work Chris has done and how lucky we are to have him assisting the railway with his expert knowledge.
We have just heard that Chris has decided to put his name forward to become a Trustee of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway and are sure he will make a valuable future contribution should he be elected.

Mike Buse

An update on the Yeo Valley Trust

As you are all aware we are in the process of putting together a team of Trustees with the eventual aim of supporting Exmoor Associates CIC.
We are getting a new bank account set up with Lloyds so that we can use online banking, this is taking a long while to sort out but it is now well advanced.

I can now confirm that Charles Gardner has agreed to become Chairman of the YVT which is fabulous news. Charles is very well known to many of you and we are so very lucky to have him on board, many of you are aware Charles was a past Chairman of the railway and was instrumental in helping us all to get Woody Bay Station up and running all those years ago.

He will be very ably assisted by Tony Hobbs as Vice Chairman. John Buck will deal with all the finance, and I will be the Exmoor Associates CIC representative. David Davies has unfortunately had to resign for personal reasons.
We fully expect further additions to the Board of Trustees and we will inform you as soon as the appointments have been made.
Lewis Andrews who is a Chartered Town Planner has offered his services as a consultant, he along with Charles also helped to get Woody Bay up and running.

Hopefully many of you will be joining us for our Exmoor Associates meeting on Saturday morning of the 25th September, when you will have a chance to chat with the YVT Trustees and go on to Bratton Fleming Station after lunch or on Sunday. Hopefully we will be announcing some exciting news at this time which will lift your spirits from the dark days we have all been enduring.

Andrew Naish who leases Bratton Fleming Station from E A is very keen to see the station take on a much more railway feel so in the near future we will be carrying out a full survey of the station. Andrew will be a part of that team and once everything has been agreed you will have a chance to comment on the plans.
The YVT will be leading this as Exmoor Associates' remit is not spend money on anything other than trackbed and very closely related land purchase. (See the article on page 1)
The speed at which we can carry out work at Bratton Fleming Station will be totally controlled by the finance available that has been given to the Bratton Fleming fund, it goes without saying we will be looking for help from volunteers along with suitable period railway items.

As a Trust and if you are a UK tax payer, we can claim 25% back from every pound donated this will make a tremendous difference to us going forward. As an E A shareholder we would suggest that rather than increasing your shares you take advantage of this, you can ask for your donation to go into a restricted fund for trackbed purchase. Then when E A finds a section of trackbed it can ask the YVT for a grant to purchase it.

Lastly the trustees are looking for help with the running and administration of the trust. If you think you could help in any respect, particularly bookkeeping, gift aid and company secretary's duties, then please get in touch.

Mike Buse

WANT TO GET IN TOUCH?
Exmoor Associates CIC. Edgemoor, Moorland Close, Yelverton, PL20 6DD
email enquiries@exmoor-associates.co.uk Tony Brown (secretary) 01822 481572
Mike Buse 07776202105 Paul Stileman 01256 762848
David Cameron 01277 353272 Andy Hearn 01769 520492