



The Newsletter for Exmoor Associates CIC

Issue 39 June 2023

**2023 AGM Report : Bruce Oakley : Peter James : Caroline Speller
Newly Acquired Trackbed : Bratton Fleming Topographical Survey
Trackbed Walk : Snapper Halt three ways**

Exmoor Associates Annual General Meeting 2023

The EA AGM was held in Goodleigh village hall on Saturday 13th May. Mike Buse was in the chair and approximately 75 shareholders were in attendance.

Change in Officers Due to ill-health, Tony Brown had resigned his duties as Treasurer and Secretary of Exmoor Associates two roles he had undertaken tirelessly for 21 years. Mike Buse advised that he had recently spoken to Tony Brown and Tony had sent his best wishes to everyone. The role of Treasurer has been taken over by Peter James and Secretary by Caroline Speller (contact details on back page). Peter and Caroline gave a short outline of the experience they brought to their respective roles (see page 2).

Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 Peter James presented a summary of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023. The year had seen the purchase of two sections of track bed and a small amount of expenditure adjacent to the Bratton Fleming property. Total assets were £669k and share capital amounted to £616k. EA owed £20k to the Yeo Valley Trust (YVT). Cash at bank was £2.5k

Activity updates David Cameron gave an update on the new appeal by Yeo Valley Trust to purchase Chelfham Mill School. EA is fully supportive of the appeal. The site and buildings, while in a state of serious disrepair, provided a significant opportunity for EA and YVT including parking, space for a tea room and other income generating activities. (The school car park was the start of the afternoon walk). Donations can be made to YVT via their new website and as YVT is now registered with the Charity Commission, gift aid could be reclaimed.

Andy Hearn advised that volunteers had been busy weatherproofing the garage at Snapper and working on trackbed, including the latest purchases.

Andy Merrett set out early plans for a small museum to be located at Bratton Fleming or Chelfham Mill School if the purchase succeeded; more details will follow.

Governance Mike Buse advised that EA is looking at modifying its 'Articles' to facilitate a better working relationship with Yeo Valley Trust. While the detail was yet to be finalised, a proposal would be put to shareholders later in the year. Shareholders at the meeting were broadly supportive of change.

Bruce Oakley



It is with sadness that we have to report the death of Bruce Oakley. Until his untimely and unexpected death Bruce Oakley had been providing valuable assistance with the accounts for Exmoor Associates and, in particular, the Yeo Valley Trust.

Bruce was born in Bradford, Yorkshire in 1952. He came to Combe Martin as a child and had a happy childhood there. Despite moving to London to pursue his career he maintained strong ties with Combe Martin. Amongst other things he had a keen interest in the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and the drive to re-open the railway. In later life he had moved back west and set up home in Dunster.

He will be much missed by EA and the YVT and our sympathy goes to his partner Sue.

Peter James, EA's New Treasurer

A time served engineer, I have always been fascinated in all aspects of industrial archaeology (IA); be it Cornish mines, windmills, or railways. Given the IA angle, I especially find narrow gauge railways interesting. I've been a member of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, and Exmoor Associates for over twenty years.

I led the volunteers and project managed the restoration of Lowfield Heath Windmill, an eighteenth century post mill, in Surrey. I continue to be Chairman of this charity led project.

Using my engineering knowledge and experience from Lowfield Heath, I've constructed my own house in Surrey; a windmill rebuilt from a derelict base upwards. This has involved me producing over two hundred CAD drawings to drive the project through all aspects of planning in my capacity as self-build project manager/architect, together with tackling much of the work myself.

I work part time as a Manufacturing Engineer in Surrey, and am married with three children and four grandchildren.

Caroline Speller, EA's New Company Secretary

Caroline is a Chartered Governance Professional currently working for a charity that operates care homes providing governance and legal support to the trustees and executive team. Since qualifying as a CGP I have provided company secretarial and board support for businesses in defence services, the NHS and education and for the last decade I've been working for charities and not for profits. My connection with railways goes back to my grandfather, who was the stationmaster at Manchester Piccadilly and who took me to see the last steam train through Crewe, although I admit I don't remember it. I'm not an EA member, although my husband is, and he has plans to upgrade the model railway in our garden to include a scale model Chelfham Viaduct. In my spare time I enjoy gardening; I also play the piano badly and keep promising myself I'll get better.

Another New Team Member Needed

EA NEEDS a Graphic Designer for posters and leaflets.
Can you help?

If so, please contact Richard Haste – details on back page

Bratton Fleming News

Topographical Survey To progress proposed developments at the site of Bratton Fleming station a topographical survey will be an essential part of any planning application. Exmoor Associates is extremely fortunate to have a shareholder – Aubrey Turner – who is a professional land surveyor and able to undertake such a survey.



LEVEL INFORMATION				
Heights in Metres				
Datum Derived From: ARBITRARY VSA 05 BENCHMARK				
OSBM Location: RAILWAY BRIDGE 34				
Value: 367.575m				
Active Station Location: N/A				
Conversion Used:				
COORDINATE INFORMATION				
Values in Metres: ARBITRARY LOCAL GRID				
AD Coordinates are: ARBITRARY TO APPROXIMATE NORTH				
Scale Factor: 1.000000				
SURVEY STATION SCHEDULE				
STN	TYPE	EASTINGS	NORTHINGS	LEVEL
0701	LEV	430.520	570.500	150.084
0702	PIV	434.453	570.889	150.042
0704	PIV	434.528	572.238	149.632
0705	PIV	512.452	553.222	149.602
ABBREVIATIONS				
General				
141	Abutment	37	Embankment	
142	Arch	38	Level	
143	Arch Bridge	39	Level	
144	Archway	40	Level	
145	Archway	41	Level	
146	Archway	42	Level	
147	Archway	43	Level	
148	Archway	44	Level	
149	Archway	45	Level	
150	Archway	46	Level	
151	Archway	47	Level	
152	Archway	48	Level	
153	Archway	49	Level	
154	Archway	50	Level	
155	Archway	51	Level	
156	Archway	52	Level	
157	Archway	53	Level	
158	Archway	54	Level	
159	Archway	55	Level	
160	Archway	56	Level	
161	Archway	57	Level	
162	Archway	58	Level	
163	Archway	59	Level	
164	Archway	60	Level	
165	Archway	61	Level	
166	Archway	62	Level	
167	Archway	63	Level	
168	Archway	64	Level	
169	Archway	65	Level	
170	Archway	66	Level	
171	Archway	67	Level	
172	Archway	68	Level	
173	Archway	69	Level	
174	Archway	70	Level	
175	Archway	71	Level	
176	Archway	72	Level	
177	Archway	73	Level	
178	Archway	74	Level	
179	Archway	75	Level	
180	Archway	76	Level	
181	Archway	77	Level	
182	Archway	78	Level	
183	Archway	79	Level	
184	Archway	80	Level	
185	Archway	81	Level	
186	Archway	82	Level	
187	Archway	83	Level	
188	Archway	84	Level	
189	Archway	85	Level	
190	Archway	86	Level	
191	Archway	87	Level	
192	Archway	88	Level	
193	Archway	89	Level	
194	Archway	90	Level	
195	Archway	91	Level	
196	Archway	92	Level	
197	Archway	93	Level	
198	Archway	94	Level	
199	Archway	95	Level	
200	Archway	96	Level	
201	Archway	97	Level	
202	Archway	98	Level	
203	Archway	99	Level	
204	Archway	100	Level	

As a result, we now have a topographical survey of the Station House site. If EA had had to pay for this survey the cost would have been in the range of £3k - £5.k and we are very grateful for Aubrey's generous contribution to the planned developments at Bratton Fleming.

A small extract of the detailed survey is shown on the left.

House for Sale

Quarry House in Bratton Fleming is for sale. It stands above the railway on the hillside to the south of the station and its land includes 178 metres of trackbed, part of which is the southern end of the platforms. There is no doubt that it would be a important land acquisition for the recreation of Bratton Fleming station.

The vendors were approached regarding selling the trackbed to EA but did not wish proceed with doing so while trying to sell the house.



Just one thing – the price being asked for the property is £1.2m and it is unlikely that any EA shareholder or supporter has that amount of spare cash in their pocket.

However, an innovative, possible solution has been suggested which would enable acquisition of the 178 metres of trackbed without being saddled with a large house in the long term Please see the flier at the very end of this edition of Tracked Trails.

Newly Acquired Trackbed

Since the last Trackbed Trails, two new sections of trackbed – 19 and 21 - have been purchased and are now part of the EA property portfolio (see highlighted sections below).

	Location	Length	Ownership
1	Barnstaple	950	
2	Raleigh Weir	418	EA
3	Pitt Farm	170	
4	Frankmarsh Farm	640	
5	Stoneyard Farm	687	
6	Yeotown	765	
7	Snapper Halt	573	EA
8	Snapper to Bridge 16	152	EA
9	Scout Camp	718	
10	Collard Bridge	160	EA
11	Collard Bridge to Skew Bridge	386	EA
12	Northleigh Plantation	450	EA
13	Budd's Wood	489	EA
14	Chelfham Viaduct+	272	HA
15	Chelfham Station	321	L&B
16	Valley Cottage	23	
17	Chelfham Wood	160	L&B
18	Loxhore Bank	745	EA
19	Quarry New	55	EA
20	Quarry to Bridge 24	246	EA
21	Bridge 24 to Chumhill New	559	EA
22	Chumhill	506	
23	Barton Grounds	301	
24	Mill Lane	424	
25	Lancey Brook	5	
26	Lancey Brook / Mill Lane	247	
27	Bratton Mills	366	
28	Bratton Mill Lane Bridge	6	
29	Holywell	614	
30	Quarry House – see article page x	178	
31	Bratton Fleming Station	23	EA
32	David Moore	502	L&B
33	Southacott Farm	277	
34	East of Button Lane	192	
35		6	
36		198	
37	Rye Park	174	
38	East of Rye Park	277	
39	Twitchen Lane	970	
40	Hunnacott	622	EA
41	South Thorne	168	
42	South Thorne to Wistlandpound	440	

The trackbed distance between Barnstaple and Wistlandpound is 9.6 miles. Currently, 'pro rail' ownership is as follows :

EA : 4878metres/3.0 miles
L&B Trust : 983 metres /0.6 miles
Highways Agency :
 272 metres/ 0.2 miles

Thus, 3.8 miles (40%) of the trackbed needed to reinstate the railway from Barnstaple to Wistlandpound is now in ownership of bodies supportive of reinstating the railway. A suggested first logical, and potentially viable, section of revived railway would be between Raleigh Weir and Chelfham. This is a distance of 3.9 miles of which 2.0 miles (51%) are in 'pro rail' ownership.

Yes, there are some challenges ahead in terms of land ownership but the tenacity of EA – and especially Mike Buse – must never be underestimated.

Help us to go even further

EA's trackbed funds are low. if you are *not* a taxpayer please consider buying shares in EA. If you are a UK tax payer and have £100 or more to contribute, donations via the Yeo Valley Trust is the best way forward because they can take advantage of the 25% Gift Aid available..

We *are* on the way

We *can* get there

We *will* get there

Snapper Halt Three Ways

For this issue we have been sent three items of interest all relating to Snapper Halt. There

is more on the ticket shown in TT37 which described the halt as '**Snapper Platform**', there are **Snapper Halt fridge magnets** for sale (the perfect gift for anyone you know who has a fridge) and, to finish, a tale of the unexpected – **Snapper Halt down under**.

SNAPPER HALT

Snapper Platform



EA shareholder, Michael Bishop, writes "this a rare ticket - I haven't seen this one before.

The title 'halt' didn't come into general railway usage until about 1905 or so. On the L & B the first mention I have come across (with Snapper) is in 1907, although it was probably earlier - timetables giving the name are rare. A timetable for 1907 survived because the LSWR copied all leaflets etc that year.

MIKE MORANT COLLECTION



I believe the origin of the title came from the side 'cavities' (for want of a better word) on the very narrow roads in those days (13 ft wide between Barnstaple and Lynton) when horse drawn wagons had to pull into 'sidings' to let wagons going the other way pass. So the word sidings didn't imply that there was necessarily a set of rails branching off. There was

briefly a Parracombe siding in 1898 (see page 203 of *L&B Measured & Drawn*) but only a set of padlocked points was provided - the actual siding was never built, and it is doubtful if it was ever operated. When the 'station' at Parracombe Churchtown was opened in 1899 it was called a platform. (see opening notice L&B M&D p199) New Mill Siding was called that at Caffyns in 1908; in 1910 it was called a halt.

Finally, by the time the ticket shown was issued in 1925 by the Southern Railway the fare would have gone up by 50% - to 2/1d" (£7.55 at today's prices).

Snapper Halt Fridge Magnets

The Snapper Halt fridge magnet is a perfect small gift or memento and very affordable. They cost just £2.50. They are available at Chelfham station when it is open.

All proceeds are used to support the upkeep of the halt.

Postal sales are not available.



Snapper Halt – Down Under

SNAPPER HALT



EA shareholder and L&BRT member Robin Brand, and his wife, visited relatives in Australia in January, staying near Phillip Island in the south of the state of Victoria. On Sunday 22nd they visited a 'Model Train Show' in a local hall at Cowes on the island where they were most surprised to see a layout representing Snapper Halt - a long way from home indeed!

Robin spoke briefly to those manning the stand, who were rather busy trying to get their model to run, but when he asked "why Snapper Halt?" they just said it seemed an interesting project to tackle. That led Trackbed Trails to contact the *Phillip Island & District Modellers* and to obtain more information from Simon Brain - the builder/owner/operator of the layout 'Snapper Halt' which Robin saw in January.

Simon writes "I chose Snapper Halt as a modelling subject because the club - Phillip Island and District Railway Modellers - were looking at building a new exhibition layout in 009 scale (4mm to the foot on 9mm gauge track). I decided to build a small test layout to investigate the concept. The choice of prototype then arose. Having modelled the Southern Railway in both OO and N gauges it was only natural for me to model the Southern's narrow gauge railway. Snapper Halt was the final choice of location due to it being a halt called for little track work, but still allowed for good scenic detailing. There have been some compromises, but hopefully it captures the spirit."

Simon finished his email with "also, while I have the opportunity, I would like to recognise the efforts of all involved in the current Lynton and Barnstable Railway. I enjoy seeing the railway's developments albeit from afar and hope to have the opportunity to visit in the future."

If you are wanting to go and see the layout, the 2024 exhibition will be in Cowes, Phillip Island on January 20th and 21st 2024. It is only 10,537 miles away!



Trackbed Walk

Following a successful shareholders' meeting at Goodleigh on May 13th, EA supporters and L&BR Trust members walked part of the newly-acquired L&B trackbed near Chumhill. Despite the recent poor weather, the afternoon turned out bright and sunny, and the views were spectacular, as the two pictures, below, show.



GET IN TOUCH

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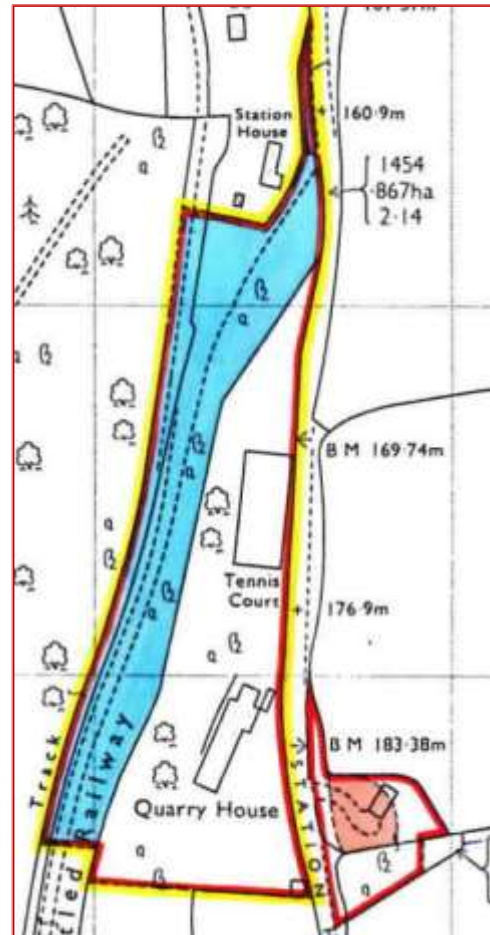
Exmoor
Associates

HERITAGE
RAILWAY
ASSOCIATION

Operation ThRoB!



With less-than-ideal timing, (what with Chelfham Mill School and the Bratton Goods Shed on the go), *Quarry House* in Station Hill has just come on the market, at a cool £1.2m! This sale also includes the southern half of the station, hence the title of this project '*The Rest of Bratton*', shown shaded blue in the plan. Appeals to the vendors to sell us just the trackbed, platforms and the narrow grass strip (alongside the station and road) have sadly been declined - and they inform us that they will sell it only as one lot.



Obviously the asking price is well out of range of one which either EA or the YVT could raise quickly.

But it has been suggested that, were **200** supporters each to lend **£6,000** – this would get us there; once purchased, with railway land separated off and secured for reinstatement, the property would immediately be put back on the market; and once re-sold, the loans would be repaid.

Points to note: -

- If fewer than **200** supporters are found, this project is a probable non-starter;
- There is a risk that the re-selling price that we manage to obtain, could possibly be less than the price we have to pay, and so loan repayments could be commensurately less than any sum originally given;
- There could be a considerable delay in finding a new buyer for Quarry House;
- Gift-Aid may not be claimed on loans;
- It has been suggested that any future buyer (if not us) might be happy to sell us the railway land at some future date? – but equally, they could turn out to be strongly 'anti' ...
- However, if any supporter is able to lend an amount greater than £6k, that would mean that fewer than 200 lenders might need to be found!

Please do not send any money yet; this is purely to gauge support. Please contact: -

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