

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF PEAK RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

Who would have thought at the start of the New Year that life, as we've known it, would change so dramatically in such a short period of time? Interesting too how new terminology has quickly entered everyday vocabulary, such as 'Social Distancing'. How are you coping? I hope that you are well and have avoided Covid-19. For my part, the garden has never had so much concentrated attention. Personally, the hardest part is not being able to socially interact in the usual ways with our grandchildren. Yet one constantly is all too aware that other families have been truly devastated by this cruel disease. Very sadly, as I write this message, I've just been informed that one of our volunteers has died in hospital with Covid-19

Covid-19 will be an unwanted part of our lives, one way or another, for some time. In the meantime Peak Railway Association Ltd, like so many other organisations will have to contend with its ongoing impacts. As it became apparent that a Lockdown would be announced the PRA Branches were already cancelling scheduled meetings, provisionally until June/July. The Lockdown restrictions had an immediate impact on fundraising. Model Railway exhibitions usually attended by Dave Sharp, Sheffield Branch, were cancelled meaning a substantial loss of revenue. Likewise, events attended by the Derby Branch will not take place. Also there will be no monies raised at the monthly Branch meetings until they can resume.

As you will be aware the Association funds a wide range of projects on Peak Rail. The reduction in income from fund raising will significantly reduce the ability to do this. Another key source of revenue is through membership subscriptions. The income from subscriptions allows the Association to produce and post Peak Express leaving some funds for other projects. A big thank you to all who have continued to support the Association by renewing your membership during the past year. The extra donations that many of you make when renewing are also greatly appreciated. By now you would have received the latest edition of Peak Express. Unfortunately before it could be sent to the printers they too became a casualty of the Lockdown restrictions. Posted with this edition of Peak Express would have been notification of membership renewals for March onwards. These will now be sent out by a separate mailing.

Peak Express will not now be published until the printers reopen for business. Even then it will be delayed whilst articles are updated. Further editions of the magazine may prove difficult to produce given its primary function is to provide members with news of activities on Peak Rail. It might be that a newsletter is used to communicate what news there is from the railway. This obviously depends on when, how and even if the current restrictions are lifted for Heritage Railways.

The current crisis has highlighted the need for the PRA to develop its methods of communicating with members. In the coming months the Association hopes to launch its own website and develop its use of Social Media. In the meantime further articles will appear on this website.

At the moment the PRA Directors are not launching a separate appeal for Peak Rail having been assured that an Emergency Appeal is due from Peak Rail Plc. The PRA Directors will ask you, the members, to support this. However this will be kept under review by the PRA Directors. Your continuing financial support for Peak Rail at this difficult time will be greatly appreciated. As a separately incorporated body PRA Ltd exists to support the ongoing Peak Rail Project, that of reopening the former Midland Railway main line through the Peak from Matlock to Buxton.

Please stay safe and well during these strange and challenging times.

Roger Hallatt.