

Sunday 26 March

RAILWAY 62

Rowsley South	1100
Matlock	1130 1140
Rowsley South	1230

Peak Rail at Matlock is a line I have not visited for years. You enter it down a side road by the tip and wonder if it will just be one of those lines which really has no future. Back in the 1980s they had plans to reopen Matlock to Buxton - and as someone regularly travelling Derby to Manchester for hospital, I would love to see the line reopened - but it hasn't happened, and probably won't. Rowsley to Matlock is not the most beautiful bit of the old line, and who wants to go from Rowsley to Matlock? Rowsley South station is not original, but it has good parking and a wheelchair access ramp.

The guard assured us we could get Julie onto the train, so we had a coffee first (flat access to the café), and joined the train. Not only could they get the wheelchair into the guard's van, but they have also rebuilt the access into the seating area - which is more than many other preserved railways have managed.





It is not a fast line, but we had time to wave at the walkers, admire the lovely station at Darley Dale - remember Flanders and Swann

No churns, no porter,  
No cat on a seat,  
From Chorlton-cum-Hardy  
To Chester-le-Street

and the selection of signal boxes and proper white level crossing gates. They need quite a lot of volunteers to run this line.



Our little CEGB loco, which I can't find any details about on the website, did a sterling job. It runs into platform 2 at Matlock station (East Midlands use platform 1). Then the loco propels us back out through Matlock Riverside



and reverses back into the platform loop. Then it runs round. This means they don't need a second loco (with all the associated expense) to pull it out of the station. It doesn't matter that it takes a while - we're not in any hurry.





There is an interesting selection of locos stabled at Darley Dale, and I must come back on a day when some of the diesels are out.



The train was quite well filled on the way back, several families had joined us. Time for photos back at Rowsley. It is not an expensive day out - they decided I could go as an OAP (£10) and Julie was free. At least, it wasn't expensive until I got to the bookshop. I had brought four bags of books for them, and filled a bag to take away - very pleased with a big book about Brunel. A superb set of second-hand books. Then we went back to the café for a very nice lunch - bacon and egg butty plus bread and butter pudding. Lovely volunteers in every department, a real pleasure.





We came home the back road via Grangemill and Brassington - a great day. Even better when Cambridge won both Boat Races.