

On behalf of the whole WSR board, may I thank you and your teams for an excellent gala. I know that a lot of people have put in a huge amount of time and effort to make sure that the event was a success and their efforts have paid off. The work they have put in, the early morning starts, the late finishings, is all very much appreciated.

Everywhere I went, I felt a real buzz and a feeling of excitement. Our railway looked fantastic and the staff were friendly and helpful. I happened to be on a train with a blind man and the train crew went out of their way to make sure he was properly looked after and that he managed to get on and off the trains ok. The planning throughout was very good, I admire those who can draw up the timetable and then make sure it all works, which it did. Special thanks should go to the staff who sorted out the problem with the S160 on Thursday night and those who dealt with the sad event at Stogumber.

I spent the whole four days riding the railway and talking to passengers and staff. Without exception, everybody was very enthusiastic about the event, clearly enjoying it and having a great time. I spoke to one couple who had come from Warwick for the weekend and who said it was easily the best organised and most interesting railway gala they had been to. Another family were here from Mansfield and were equally complimentary.

I had lunch on the QB three days running and very much enjoyed it. The new caterers did a good job and I am optimistic about the QB this season. We had our lunch on Sunday outside the Turntable Cafe sat in the sun listening to the lady singer, watching engines being turned and soaking up the atmosphere. We didn't want to leave! The military train looked perfect and the army reenactors took their time to explain the train and what they were doing. There was a lot of talk about the 1940s weekend in September and this is shaping up to be a very popular event for the railway too. We should capitalise on that and make sure that the entire railway is in 1940s mode for the weekend.

Please pass on my thanks to all concerned. Well done, it is much appreciated. You should be very proud of the railway and the work that your teams put in. I am looking forward to the next galas and the 1940s weekend very much.

Ian Coleby
WSR Chairman