

Etches Park Depot Tour: Behind the Scenes

Hosted by CIRO Midlands Area Council Tuesday 13th January

By Bill Mahoney



This event was attended by fifteen members. We were hosted by East Midlands Railway (EMR), which owns this and two other depots. The visit began with a comprehensive safety briefing, as safety is a top priority at this depot. This was followed by a presentation on the site and its development.

Etches Park is the strategic servicing location for their intercity fleet serving the Midland Main Line between London and Sheffield, as well as other major routes. The depot has undergone major redevelopment with a £35 million upgrade to depot facilities, which includes provision for servicing their new fleet of Class 810 Aurora trains, which are to replace the ageing fleet of Meridian class 222's.



They have taken delivery of six of their order of thirty-three Auroras, of which two are currently in service. They also have a number of class 170's and 158's going through refurbishments. Over the three years between 2022 and 2025, improvements to site included installation of jacks, gantries and new fuelling modules.

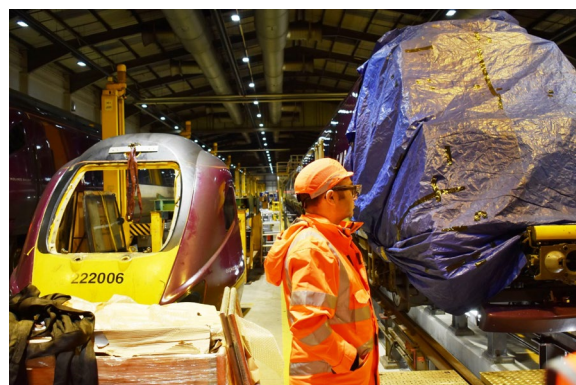
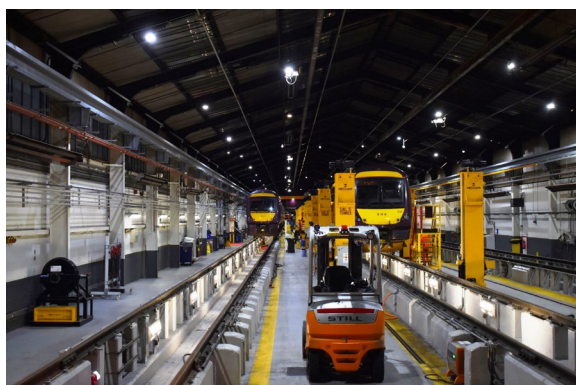
The name Etches Park comes from a family in Derby who were renowned cheesemakers and had a large house in a park on this site about where one of the sheds now stands. There are many fascinating stories of the Etches family, several of whom still live in the area.

The site is shared by EMR, Hitachi, who now have the servicing of all the fleets, Alstom, who run the North Shed to maintain the current Meridian fleet, and Churchill, who are contract specialist cleaners. There are many challenges in operating this site, partly because of the constraints and limitations of entering and exiting the site, resulting in reverse shunting, road lengths, etc. New stop markers and new walkways were installed as part of a £400,000 project after consultation with the many users, including drivers, shunters and other staff members.



The walking tour started with us visiting the operations management team, who were preparing for that night's shift. We were then shown class 170's and class 222's in for routine servicing and a new engine in a 170, which used the recently installed equipment to improve the efficiency of engine changing. We were also shown the Zonegreen interlocking system on one of the shed roads that prevents train movements if it is locked out.

We saw both a Meridian and an Aurora separately undergoing tests with all their engines running. The ventilation system removed exhaust gases very effectively. Outside the M shed, we were shown the OLE facility that is only 200 metres long and allows not only testing of the Aurora pantograph systems but, in future, may allow short run, low speed electric operation and driver training of these units.

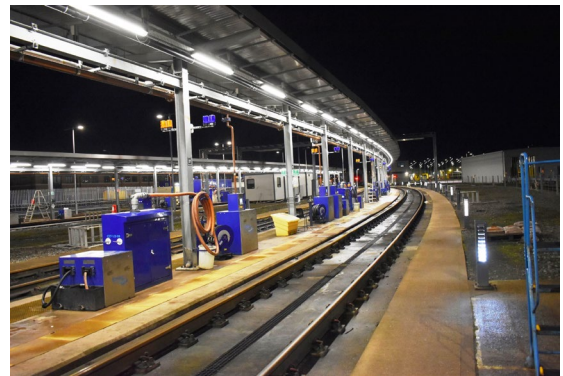




We also witnessed a train movement from inside one shed and the safety system klaxon, blue flashing lights and signalling together with the installed derailleurs withdrawing to allow the movement to take place. This was followed by a visit to the wheel-turning facility. This is used not only by EMR but also by other operators for a variety of vehicles and can profile wheels from P1 to P10.

Finally, we were shown the Fuelling and Inspection lines where units entering the site are fuelled, CETs emptied, sanders are replenished, and water tanks are topped up.

We are extremely grateful to outgoing Depot Manager Aidan Moreland, Jacob Lane and Ash Metcalfe from EMR and Emma Wilson-Yates of Hitachi for conducting us on a comprehensive, detailed and interesting visit to a depot brimming with good practice.



POD Sections covered during this visit:

03: Delivering Passenger & Freight Services
04: Managing Safety
05: Delivering Customer Services

06: Operational Planning & Timetabling
07: Train Movement Control Systems
08: Rolling Stock & Fleet Management