

DARTMOOR RAILWAY
ASSOCIATION

The Dartmoor Pony

**The Magazine of the
Dartmoor Railway Association**

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One year on...

The Dartmoor Pony

Issue No. 44

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The views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Dartmoor Railway Association.

FRONT COVER: On 18th May 2022, Class 66 66790 (with 66752 on the rear) on a weedkiller train at Okehampton with the 3Q98 2215 from Exeter Riverside N.Y. to Exeter Riverside N.Y. 3. *Photo:* © *Dave Hunt*.

BACK COVER: Top: The beautifully restored booking office on 23rd November 2022. *Photo:* © *Richard Burningham*.

Bottom: Coleford Curve on 26th March 2022 with Class 50007 (as 50034) with the 1Z52 1412 Paignton to Okehampton. *Photo:* © *Bernard Mills*.

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Chairman's Report: for the DRA Annual General Meeting on September 29th 2022

Sue Baxter

What a momentous year this has turned out to be in the annals of all the Dartmoor Railway volunteers. A year ago 24,000 sleepers had just been laid beneath 11 miles of new track and driver/guard training had only just begun. DRA were keeping the station alive with refreshments, shop and museum open 3 days a week, which gave plenty of opportunity to talk to the general public and hand out railway leaflets for the upcoming service. Now we are 10 months into the regular service. There are 15 trains a day (13 on Sundays) and passenger journeys are averaging between 4 and 6 thousand a week.

For DRA this has meant that the immediate focus has been on the station itself. Not least because as stakeholders we have had monthly, and sometimes weekly meetings with GWR. From the first time that rail officials came to the station during March 2020, DRA has consistently been praised for the tidiness of the station. The Association has been rewarded for this by being appointed the contracted cleaners, paid 6 monthly in advance with all the materials provided. So now we have a regular commitment to empty bins and wipe surfaces on the platform, and litter pick around the whole site. We have kept up our reputation, so when members of GWR Advisory Board paid a low key visit there was a comment to the effect that it was the cleanest on the network!

We are grateful for grants which will see the ticket office, booking hall and waiting room refurbished in c1959 Southern Region style, along with appropriate signage. The supplier, Parc Signs, also provided the original signage for the station reopening in 1997. The DRA Shop received a grant for a high quality shop fit. All the grant funding was arranged by Richard Burningham, manager of Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership. In addition he has been carrying out research and commissioning some items, such as a bench and a table for the waiting room, in order to achieve the correct period ambience.



The new DRA shop (photo Geoff Horner)

Meldon is now hopefully in the last phase of being sorted out following the sale and removal of all the stock by RMS Locotec during and after the administration of the former Dartmoor Railway CIC.

The Carriage and Wagon (C&W) Team have moved as much as possible of our equipment to safe, secure and sole use storage in the former permanent way shed. Inside the main C&W shed is our Southern brake van. As reported in our last Dartmoor Pony Express our stock outside has had to be boarded up.

Finalising matters in Meldon Yard is still in the hands of Aggregate Industries (AI). The large C&W shed, of temporary construction, is still on site, contrary to previous expectations. Also inside is the Class 08 shunter 'Bluebell Mel' who gave great service until Autumn 2019 propelling 2 carriages and our LMS Brakevan. AI continue to indicate that she will stay there and be made available to us.

For those of you who do not know her history, she has never left Devon and has stayed at Meldon Quarry since being 'misaid' by British Rail

(BR). A year after BR sold the quarry and line from Coleford Junction to Bardon Aggregates in the early 1990s, depot managers were planning to do regular maintenance but could not locate her. Eventually it was found that she had been sent up to Meldon. Bardon Aggregates refused to return her, claiming she was theirs under the sale which was in effect “lock, stock and barrel” of the quarry and its contents, fixed or otherwise!

On a very positive note, DRA have been consulted during the redesign of road 2 in Meldon Quarry. This will be done to reduce ongoing maintenance costs. Network Rail’s (NR) design will leave us with rails right up to the former compressor shed, which will enable us to shunt our stock around the yard.

The surveys for doing the work in Meldon yard, relaying the 2 miles of track from Okehampton, signalling and renewing fencing all appear to be in hand. It indicates a readiness for Meldon Quarry to come out of its mothballed state in the near future. NR have an agreement with AI to provide suitable infrastructure to facilitate running heavy stone trains. At that point there will be an excellent standard of track up to Meldon and the potential opportunity to run a heritage shuttle service to Meldon Viaduct station.

We are continuing to get our ducks in a row. This includes all necessary leases from Devon County Council, AI, NR and GWR for the areas we occupy, look after and use. The war in Ukraine is even impacting us, as the heating for Platform 3 station building is gas. The supply was disconnected on the day of that Dartmoor Railway CIC went into administration, so the station is now classified as a new customer. With future supplies being so uncertain no new customers are being accepted by any of the gas suppliers, so an alternative has to be sought and funded.

As a committee we feel our members should feel very proud of the achievements at Okehampton Station this year. It is a shame I have not recorded all the frankly amazing compliments that the station has received, not least by visitors from the Rail Industry Institute of Civil

Engineers, Department for Transport and the GWR Advisory Board. I hope the Dartmoor Line project will help inform and speed on other reopenings under the Restoring Your Railways programme. However we may have been incredibly lucky with the timing, given the increasing financial stresses appearing now.

Our immediate aims are to have all areas of the station building on Platform 3, which are visible and under our care, in an excellent display condition by the upcoming anniversary celebration of the line reopening on 20th November, possibly on Monday 21st November. Also on Platform 2 to have the second museum room cleared of maintenance equipment and materials, restored to visitor use and displaying more of our presently hidden artefacts.

Ongoing aims include the aspiration to run a heritage service again to Meldon Viaduct station. A week ago this was publicly supported, without prompting, by Christian Irwin, now OBE, during a conducted tour of the station for graduate Network Rail managers. He has moved up to the post of Director of the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence.

Also engaging more volunteers in regular support of the shop, developing and extending the Arthur Westlake Museum, and building a lasting, supportive and dare I say fun relationship with the buffet team. Leanne is already thinking about Christmas!

A large team helped move books, magazines, cards, puzzles and children's toys across to our shop, or 'Bookstall' as the 1950's sign says under the canopy! Christine is now setting up in a bright, airy, bespoke fitted retail area. In our lease it is described as a "high quality retail outlet" for Dartmoor Railway Association.

A recent 4 week period saw more than 23,000 passenger journeys, nearly 6,000 a week!

A very big thank you to all who have volunteered this year, including the committee. A special thanks goes to my long suffering husband Tom who was press ganged into being Secretary despite knowing what

he would have to put up with! Finally a big thankyou to all our members who have kept us “on track” by their support, cards, letters, visits, purchases and just being with us through these momentous times.

Chairman’s Update

Sue Baxter

On 24th September we had an official opening of the Dartmoor National Park Information Centre as chair of the authority Pamela Woods cut a green ribbon. You can see this beforehand being fitted out as an unstaffed display area (by Tom’s nephew Callum on the ladder!). Our role is to keep it



looking tidy and in particular to manage the flow of leaflets for the National Park, the rail and bus services, and general promotion of Okehampton Town. The Devon and Cornwall Railcard leaflets are going out fastest. The card, along with many other schemes, delivers a third off, off peak tickets.



The Booking Hall and Ticket Office are getting their final displays. You can see the incredible quality of the replica bench and cupboard fitted beneath. The curves in the top are to facilitate the Booking Clerk leaning forward to listen to customers through the hatch windows. The detailed Southern Railway network map has gone

back up in the Booking Hall along with 1950’s timetabling for trains from Waterloo to Padstow (we hope that passengers will not be confused!).

The 1950's Southern Waiting Room has received its splendid new replica bench and table. Our bench was forwarded as a pattern for a second, slightly shorter copy. The table is in striking 1950's style, reminiscent of the clean lines promoted by the Bauhaus movement in Germany. All three have a superb gloss varnish finish over the elm wood. There are also two memorable photos of the official opening on the 17th and of the public opening in the early hours of 21st November 2021.



On the same day the Bulleid Buffet opened and the new logo was revealed on the window behind the green bars of the original Parcels Office. Leanne's team had first started in a barista catering van outside the front of the station and then moved into the Booking Hall. From there they had a stall opening onto Platform 3. So they

opened with a mixture of relief and trepidation as various factors had conspired to delay their kitchen fit out. The historical photos that she has chosen set a lovely atmosphere. Her new layout manages to feel more spacious, while incorporating a long bench seat against the Ticket Office windows. DRA had temporarily stored the tables and these were reassembled the day before. We can personally recommend the coffee, cakes, soup, breakfasts.....(and more!).

Destination Dartmoor was a community project originally planned to reach a wider public for the Dartmoor Line, at the commencement of the hourly service in May. However this artistic endeavour did not get funding until later. So on the 24th September there was a photo booth for black and white portraits. A screening of interviews carried out by

Okehampton College students of people involved with the railway campaign, including Richard Westlake, was showing in the Waiting Room. Tom was prevailed upon to give a tour of the station (timed for an hour but with no dropouts even though it lasted more than two!). Most recently a group of art students were brought to draw what caught their eye on the station, using chalks.

Visits we have hosted at the station include the (very young) NR graduate managers who you can see by the refreshment stall, the GWR Advisory Board who commented on the cleanliness, and project managers of the various Restoring Your Railways schemes across the country. The Dartmoor Line at present is the only completed scheme under the programme. David Crome, Head of On Board Management at Exeter, brought his team including revenue protection officers up for lunch.



Our shop is now open and we are very pleased to welcome Liz Westlake, a keen new volunteer for Fridays. Christine covers Saturdays and Andrew Sundays. The range of stock is increasing and we hope our Bookstall will attract a wide variety of people to buy books (new and old), railway and fiction, local greeting cards, local jewellery, children's toys and books.



Museum Room 2, relieved of the crush of tools and cleaning cabinet, is now freshly painted. Mike Ellis's Fatherford Viaduct model is on display again. Our model for Arthur Westlake's uniform has been moved, but embarrassingly this had to be done without his trousers on, something to do with his leg falling off!

One evening we were still at the station during exceptional rainfall. A waiting passenger shouted across to us on Platform 2 and said the Waiting Room was flooding! Along with Paul Bryant who had been putting up signs, we rushed over with brooms. We were there in a minute but the water had already reached the back of the room and was threatening our shop. Outside the drain grill was blocked by fresh large sycamore leaves. Although this was quickly cleared we discovered the literally uphill task of pushing the water up the platform to the long platform drain. There is a NR plan to sort this problem, and the same with the defunct gas heating system replacement.

Car parking is not one of our responsibilities thank heaven. However I do believe that the payment teething problems are being sorted by the carpark manager APCOA. Heating and regularly changed silica gel are being used to help reduce damp which has been affecting the machine. The camera is also better sited now. There is also a new system for payment called ScanPay as well as the app, phone and late pay schemes.

The planters and the cared for ambience of the station continues to be admired and appreciated. Big thanks are due to the regular bins and litter team...Geoff Brooks, Pat, Ron, Tom and Andy.

Finally I include a picture of two lads Noah and Jesse with Mum Maddie. They are Christian Irwin's family come to understand the railway that Daddy built. He was being filmed for the TV series on Railway Architecture. Another lad we hope to see one day is Theo. He was born on 17th November 2022, the anniversary of the official opening. Our congratulations to Emily and Matt Barnes. He has been a key GWR visionary for reopening the Dartmoor Line.



Station Facilities Update

Okehampton Train & Bus Information

With the GWR rail service reaching it's first anniversary, and bus connections available from the station, please visit our Service Information web page which can give you pointers towards information to help plan your journeys.



<https://www.dartmoor-railway-association.org/services>

Car Parking

Parking at Okehampton station costs £2 per day. For dropping off and picking up, 20 minutes is free. Numberplate recognition is used. The carpark is managed by APCOA. Further details at: <https://dartmoorline.com/2022/04/car-park-charges-at-okehampton-start-from-1-may/>

Okehampton Station Buffet – The Bulleid Buffet



Named after Oliver Bulleid, the Southern Railway's innovative engineer, the station cafe is run by Leanne Knight and her team from *The Amazing Brownie Bakers* of Lifton. From 1st November 2022 the cafe will move to winter hours which will be:

Monday to Saturday 0800 to 1600 (food served 0900 to 1500)

Sunday 1000 to 1600 (food served 1000 to 1500).

They buffet can be contacted on 07410 609160 or thebulleidbuffet@gmail.com

Membership & Volunteer Matters

Geoff Horner, Membership Secretary/Volunteer Coordinator

As the end of the year approaches membership stands at a total of 188.

As always it is a pleasure to welcome new members:

- Graham & Alison Peacock of Bridestowe
- Andrew & Mel Knowles of Pontypridd
- Paul Foster of Rochester
- Robin Townshend of Okehampton
- Stephen England of Okehampton
- Richard Childs of Ewhurst
- Jon & Julie Tuckett of Crediton
- David Naylor of Okehampton.

The time is now drawing near for the renewal of your membership, details of which are included with this magazine or separately in the post. We do hope that you will continue with your support.

At this time of the year volunteer activity is reduced. However the Station Maintenance Team continue to find regular maintenance tasks around our platform 2 side of the station. A major 'hit' was the recent move of the shop stock across to the new shop on the other side of the station but as always many hands made light work. The shop also keeps a regular team of volunteers busy.

Although Aggregate Industries continue to talk positively regarding a licence agreement for us to be able to operate at the Meldon quarry site, the Carriage & Wagon group at Meldon is, apart from essential repairs to our rolling stock, still in limbo.

New Shop on Platform 3

Christine Horner

The DRA shop, which makes an important contribution to the Association's funds has now (October 2022) been relocated into larger premises in the main station building on Platform 3. The shop has been refurbished by GWR under their programme for the



refurbishment of the station building and the professional shop fit out was fully funded by a grant from Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership.

With more space available we are now able to expand the range of merchandise offered for sale. These now include new railway books, locally hand crafted jewellery, glassware, cards and postcards and railway scene cards in addition to the railway themed souvenirs we have always stocked plus the extensive range of second hand railway books, magazines, DVD's, jigsaws and anything else with a railway connection.

Winter opening hours are:

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10.30 to 16.00

We offer an online ordering facility for merchandise from the selection below. All prices include postage and packing. Orders by telephone to Christine Horner, 01363 82383 or by email to christine.horner@talk21.com

Please make payments by cheque payable to Dartmoor Railway Association or by bank transfer to Lloyds Bank, Dartmoor Railway Association, Sort code 30-96-23, Account No. 01073660

‘Dartmoor Railway’ bookmark £1.50

‘DRSA’ pen (assorted colours) £3.50

‘DRSA’ notebook (assorted colours) £3.00

Magnetic fridge totem sign (Okehampton, Meldon Viaduct or Dartmoor Railway) 3.50

‘DRSA’ fabric wallet (assorted colours) £4.00

‘Dartmoor Railway’ teddy bear £5.00

We hope very soon to expand our online service by including the new railway books that we are now stocking. News of this will be posted on the website.

Donations of suitable items are always very welcome particularly books on the former Southern Railway and its pre-grouping constituents and those with a diesel/electric theme. We regret that at present we cannot accept any further railway magazines.

DRA Financial Summary 2021-22

Christine Horner, Treasurer

Total income for the year April 2021 to March 2022:	£13715.06
Total expenditure for the same period:	£8689.20
Excess of receipts overpayments:	£5025.86

Springtime Hoovering in Devon

Bernard Mills

The UK Railtours' '*Springtime Hoovering in Devon*' railtour visited Okehampton on March 26th 2022, pausing only for a few minutes, to get in and out in between Exeter service trains. This tour was one day short of 57 years since the magnificent Exmoor Ranger Tour on the 27th March 1965.



Photo: © Bernard Mills.

Pictured above is 50007 on the rear at Yeoford on the way home. Nice to see the Okehampton line platform here cleared of vegetation.

DRA Shop

Now on Platform 3!

We welcome donations of railway books, railway miscellanea, model railway items, paperbacks and hardback books, and railway DVDs.

Contact Christine Horner for further details:

christine.horner@talk21.com

Okehampton ‘Dartmoor’ line usage

Tony Hill

Dartmoor Line journey figures, for the first two full four week periods of the hourly service, which was introduced on 15th May 2022, were excellent at 18,441 and 18,305 respectively – an average of more than 4,500 a week or about 650 a day. A return trip counts as two journeys. Just as found on other reopened stations and lines, usage is generally greater than expected.

In the longer term, with continuing increase in population, mobility and desire for more environmentally friendly transport, it is envisaged that under the ongoing ‘Devon Metro’ rail scheme a half hour frequency will be desirable, arguably essential, on both the Okehampton ‘Dartmoor’ and North Devon ‘Tarka’ lines. This will require redoubling from Newton St Cyres through to Coleford Junction, and a loop in the North Tawton and Portsmouth Arms/Umberleigh areas with appropriate signalling.

Award winners star at Railfuture 2022 AGM held near Bristol Parkway in July

Tony Hill

Michael Ireland of OkeRail who accepted the Judges Special Award said the successful re-introduction of a regular train service from Exeter to Okehampton followed a 14-year campaign by OkeRail which took over from its forerunner Destination Okehampton. “Everything we said was underpinned by solid research,” he said.

“We worked the (Exeter-Okehampton Summer Sunday) trains and undertook surveys. We organised special trains to London for 500 people and trips to other destinations. We met rail ministers in London and we proved there was plenty of demand. We were forceful but you must have the relevant MPs to support you.”

A brief reminiscence of a visit to Meldon Junction

Signal Box

Paul Voaden

It was sometime around 1960 when at home from my studies in Liverpool that my friend John and I paid a visit to Meldon Junction signal box. He didn't like walking so we drove up in his Vauxhall Victor and parked by the underbridge at Meldon village. Then it was a short walk along the cess to the signal box which was between the main line and the branch line going to Bude. My uncle worked at Meldon Quarry and cycled out there by the track. He had impressed on us that we should listen and be very careful. We had a clear view up the line and could see the upside sidings, empty as usual. It was also a clear view to the North where the Bude line crossed the Launceston road on a redbrick bridge. We walked up the wooden steps and saw inside. The stove was in the far left corner with the kettle and teapot on top. The levers were in the window, the opposite way round to the Okehampton Signal Box.

We had spent many hours in our student holidays, travelling over much of the 'withered arm' and getting to know some of the staff who worked on it. However, like many of us, we thought that it would always be there and now regret not taking more or better photographs of the system.

The box at Meldon was the highest on the Southern system ca 900 feet above sea level. It was very isolated and if I recall correctly, there was no mains water supply. Water was delivered in a milk churn. I remember drinking mugs of tea which had been stewing on the coal stove – extremely strong and dark, forever afterwards referred to as 'signal box tea'! Because of the very simple telephone system the boxes on the Bude branch line were linked in a kind of linear fashion and so dialling one box caused the bells to ring in all. It was explained to us that to get the Ashbury ticket the signaller had to go via Okehampton.

The busy and clangorous atmosphere in the signal box is captured wonderfully on an ARGO label LP record called Echoes of Engines, in

which on a wild March morning in 1961 the approach of the Bude train is heard and the handover of the ticket and staff on the little wooden platform to the fireman on the T9 heading the train.

I can remember that when we travelled home from North Rd Station on the 7.18 pm train for Eastleigh (sometimes behind an “N” class locomotive known as a “Woolworth”). Progress was very slow as the train stopped at each station. Then an eerie sight came into view, an engine steaming away in the darkness of the branch line waiting for us to pass, the fire glowing. The Woolworths were so called because 60 of these were built from kits of parts at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich-hence the nickname. Plymouth North Rd became Plymouth Central.

Another track on the same LP records the ‘Brighton’ train leaving Okehampton and also many other train movements around the station. When you recall all the traffic that used our line it is very clear what a pivotal role Meldon Junction signal box played in the life of the railway. Standing in the same place today it is difficult to imagine that the signal box was there at all.

Online Fundraising

Please remember to use easyfundraising every time you shop online! Over 7,000 brands will donate, so you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you’re buying. These donations really help us out, so please sign up if you haven’t yet.

You can get started at

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa

Please contact our Treasurer, Christine Horner, if you would like more information: christine.horner@talk21.com

Weedkiller Train Visit

Dave Hunt

A selection of photos kindly supplied by Dave Hunt showing the visit of a weedkiller train to Okehampton on 18th May 2022. Top and tailed by GBRf Class 66s, 66790 and 66752, this is the 3Q98 22.15 from Exeter Riverside N.Y. to Exeter Riverside N.Y.,



Generator wagon (Photo:© Dave Hunt)



Spray control wagon (Photo:© Dave Hunt)



Water tanks (Photo:© Dave Hunt)

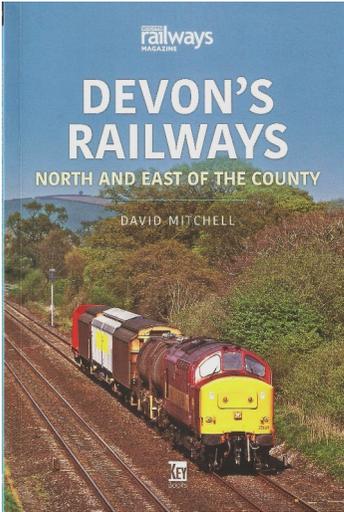


Cab of 66790 (Photo:© Dave Hunt)

Book Reviews

Dana Wiffen

Devons's Railways - North & East of the County



Author: David Mitchell

Published by: Key Books

Price: £15.99 (Available from Pen & Sword Books)

As with other Modern Railway Magazine paperback style books this one again offers a full photographic experience and insight into Devon's railways.

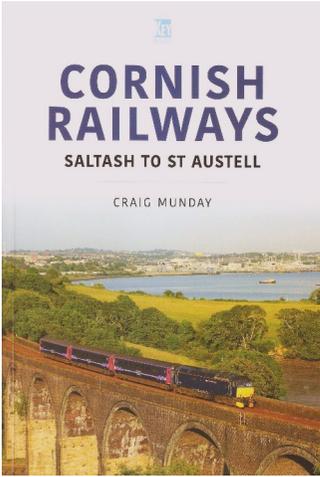
The book has 4 chapters that cover Whitehall to Exeter, Axminster to Exeter, The Exmouth branch (Avocet Line) & The Barnstaple (Tarka Line) & Okehampton (recently restored to the network) branches.

With around 182 photos taken between 1985 and 2019 often from unusual vantage points offering the reader some superb shots of diesel locos pulling goods trains, various Pacers, numerous DMU's and even a DEMU at Meldon Station on the Okehampton Line.

Also there are photos of long distance trains travelling to and from London and Scotland hauled by a wide range of diesel locos from numerous operators via Exeter including Class 47's and a Class 52-D1015 pulling the English Riviera Express.

This is another enjoyable journey this time along some of Devon's picturesque lines offering scenes that would not normally be easily available to enthusiasts and is therefore a good addition to a collection.

Cornish Railways - Saltash to St Austell



By: Craig Munday
Published by Key Books
Price: £15.99

Craig Munday started taking railway photos in 1979 - 10 years later to his joy, he joined British Rail as a signaller in East Cornwall expanding on his love of Cornish Railways and offering him some unique opportunities and view points for some superb photographs.

Photos included in this book were taken between 1980 and 2020, and cover the following lines: Saltash to Bodmin Parkway, Bodmin Parkway to St. Austell, Liskeard to Looe, Lostwithiel to Fowey Carne Point & Par to Newquay.

While the book could just be photos of the abundance of wonderful viaducts, it covers much more than that. Here are some of the numerous varieties of photos included to whet your appetite: clay trains at Liskeard Yard, Locomotives crossing St. Pinnock Viaduct, a 2015 shot of a once busy Lostwithiel Yard, the large 1875 built signal box at Par, the Looe Branch line, Coombe Junction, a cement train passing under Moorswater Viaduct, the branch line from Lostwithiel to Carne Point, Luxulyan Station Halt. There is also a 1983 photo of Bugle Station and a contrasting view of the same station taken in 2018.

With over 170 photos of both passenger and freight trains that reflect the wonders of scenic Cornish Railways and the intricate network of the once very busy branch lines that were supported by an eclectic variety of diesel trains, this book does not disappoint.

Miah's Diary - New barker on the station (occasionally!)

Sue Baxter

Hello, I really would like to get to know you all. I have been around for a year now. My 2 legs tell me that I must calm down. Apparently it is not the done thing to chase or bark at trains. But they always do go away so I am achieving something. Drivers who stick their heads out of the windows (Wes) I particularly reprimand for being so rash.



I have travelled just once on the line, in a Class 150 and it had this shaking thing under the floor called the engine. Well, I just couldn't find how to tackle it. So I hid under the seat in the corner and knocked over somebody's half full left over coffee. Then the guard came along and set about collecting the liquid with newspaper. I shouted at her because she was coming too near my corner. Then I shouted at everybody as my 2 legs escorted me off the train at Crediton. The journey had shaken me up so much that I wouldn't eat even the tastiest titbit. Returning to Okehampton I alighted on Platform 3 on my hindlegs as my 2 legs didn't seem to appreciate me pulling and barking in every direction. But all the other two legs showed respect and made way for me!

I hear people say that I came from Wales. It might be that there I lived on a farm but I cannot tell any 2 legs about that now. My "down and stay" position is one of my stronger good points, as long as there are no trucks, tractors, trains, dogs or people nearby. At the moment so much still seems new and puzzling that I am anxious and quiver a great deal, or simply carry my tail under my tummy.

2 legs Tom found me on the internet looking beautiful and appealing from the Staffordshire Border Collie Trust. When I saw Tom and Sue sitting on a seat at reception I just knew they had come to see me. I welcomed and surprised them by running straight up and licking each one's face and then lying at their feet upside down for my tummy tickle. Then I took them for a brisk walk. They were a bit slow so when Sue fell over I just powered on and dragged her behind me. I am a small blue merle but was unkindly nicknamed a "bruiser" when I arrived because I weighed over 20 kilos and had no waist. Then a dog behaviourist described me as a "foodie" and (slippery as) a buttered otter!!!!



Apparently my Auntie Rosie was very elegant and poised. But she too was very scared when she first came to the station and was described as a timid dominant bitch. She was one year old, however it is more difficult for me as I am more set in my ways at 6 and a half years old. I have been slimmed down so that instead of trying to find my waistline, you can now just admire my ears. They are very large and powerful receptors of sound from far away to which 2 legs, poor things, are oblivious.

However we all seem to hear the rails singing when the train is still probably a mile away, because sound travels along the long welded rail.

Every day I do obedience training. Also I have occasionally had the odd day out, and can proudly boast of dining on sausage all the way from Minehead to Bishop's Lydeard on the West Somerset Railway.

Okay, I know that was a ruse to keep me quiet, which it did, to mutual satisfaction. Surprisingly my training has also included travelling on the top deck at the front of a double decker bus to Crediton, and that I really enjoyed.

So you can see I do hope to become a regular traveller and Station Customer Host, if only to take up the role of platform crumb hoover. Apparently the station is like a “bark free zone”, which is going to be oh so challenging for me/my 2 legs to achieve.



My friend Matthew (former Network Rail communications officer and one time dog trainer) describes me as a “sweetie” and has been kind enough to take me out for a stroll. Once I can live up to the name I will be able to be on the Platforms more and look forward to all dropped sausages, cucumber, broccoli and apples.

Committee of the Dartmoor Railway Association

Chairman: Sue Baxter

Vice-Chairman: Paul Vodden

Secretary: Tom Baxter

Treasurer: Christine Horner

Membership Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator:

Geoff Horner

Committee Members:

Ron Kirby, John Caesar

Dartmoor Railway Association Contacts

General Enquiries: info@dartmoor-railway-association.org

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Okehampton EX20 3AD

Treasurer: christine.horner@talk21.com

**Membership &
Volunteering:** g.horner936@btinternet.com
Geoff Horner, 11 Collatons Walk, Bow,
Devon, EX17 6LS

Arthur Westlake

Museum: museum@dartmoor-railway-association.org

Website: www.dartmoor-railway-association.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dartmoorrailwayassociation

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