

DARTMOOR RAILWAY
ASSOCIATION

The Dartmoor Pony

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Dartmoor Railway Association**

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Roofless Footbridge

The Dartmoor Pony

Issue No. 48

Editor: John Caesar

E-mail: museum@dartmoor-railway-association.org

Dartmoor Railway Association

Address: Dartmoor Railway Association,
Okehampton Station, Station Road,
Okehampton, EX20 1EJ

E-mail: info@dartmoor-railway-association.org

Website: www.dartmoor-railway-association.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dartmoorrailwayassociation

Twitter: www.twitter.com/DartmoorRail

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

FRONT COVER: Two carriage Class 150 stops before the damaged footbridge (Photo: Sue Baxter).

BACK COVER: Top: Unusually Sunday 18th February 2024 saw five different types of DMU formations at Okehampton comprising either 2-car 158, 3-car 158, 3-car 166, 2-car 150 and 4-car 150 units; the most variety ever at Okehampton on one day, variously on Paignton and Exeter St Davids revised services due to line closure between St Davids and Central for planned engineering works (Photo: Dave Ellis). Bottom: Footbridge debris on Platform 2 (Photo: Dave Ellis).

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Chairman's Report

Sue Baxter

No quiet start for DRA to 2024, because on 2nd January at midday I got a call from Dave Ellis to say that the footbridge, or some of it, seemed to have disappeared from his view. My priority was to inform Crediton Signalbox.



However the train crew who were bringing in the 12.17 had already been in touch. The driver saw the debris and stopped short of the platform, then walked forward with his guard to inspect the track. It was clear and they drew forward to disembark their passengers from the front of the leading carriage. The 12.27 then departed with passengers for Exeter. Storm Henk was still blowing but without the severe gusts at the station. More of that day in a following article!



Fortunately the debris missed the downside platform canopy.

Your committee had been hoping for months that the Tripartite lease for the Platform 3 station building rooms would be completed. Just as we thought the 103 page document would be done and dusted by Christmas a new 56 page document arrived on 11th December from Network Rail. This contains the Heads of Terms covering all the stations leased by Great Western Railway (GWR). Our solicitors, Scott Richards, finally guided us through the labyrinth and the required final documents were signed on Monday 15th January 2024. We are grateful for the reasonable bill they presented. The work on the lease started in the summer of 2021! Your committee stuck with it! It was not easy or cheap and certainly not a process for the faint hearted.

Harriet Sergeant is our new Network Rail Support Manager for Community Rail. Now that sounds highfalutin but I am glad to say that she is very much a hands on lady having lineside experience managing the “estate”. She came for an introductory tour and made notes all around the station on ideas we have for the future. However the main item was to meet Graham and Ron in the Signal Box, see the beautiful uplift that DRA have given it, and the nascent Model Railway inside. Progressing the formal lease on the signalbox is one of her multitude of tasks (she still has her former job as well!). We hope that this can be attached to the licence which we already have for the bay beside Platform 1.

Some work has continued at Meldon. By early December we had fitted Lab 11 out with bespoke covers for every broken window. This will considerably reduce the ravages of wind and rain. The line of communication is open with Aggregate Industries, the quarry owner, and slowly ongoing developments are taking place.

The main Arthur Westlake Museum Room has had its uplift and is ready for visitors flooding over the footbridge when it opens! In the meantime, opening is a little limited as it is more difficult for shop staff to open and close and oversee it. Wednesday and Saturday are currently the days we open, and a very few people are finding their way round. On behalf of Devon County Council and Network Rail we retain the padlocks to each side of the footbridge.

The model of Okehampton Station which was very kindly given to us by Simon Arnold is the much appreciated and admired starting point for Ron, Graham and Geoff to create a model railway layout in the Signal Box. John Coxon is now also contributing by working on a representation of Meldon Viaduct, and one day Fatherford Viaduct will also come into view. Once a certain amount of necessary work is done, and when trains can be run, subject to enough volunteers being present, it will be possible to escort members of the public through the gate up into the Signal Box to see it.

As ever there are more jobs and days in the week than we can cover and new volunteers are always welcome. The chat (railway and other), friendship, camaraderie and sense of pride at being part of maintaining and developing such a successful station are all reasons for coming along.



Platform 2 with debris from the footbridge

The Footbridge Roof Blew Away

Sue Baxter

The start of this story is in the Chairman's Report. You might have your own memories of Storm Henk on 2nd January 2024. Fallen trees, flooding on the A30 and congested diverted traffic on narrow roads turned our 8 minute journey to the station into 55. We found Balfour Beatty personnel gathering to remove the debris so the service could start again. 15 men dragged the parts of the roof along the track to the west and Tom suggested the safest place for it then, while the storm continued, was in the Bay, on the track which DRA lease from NR. He was wearing full hi vis and safety helmet so the men reacted to him as the official supervisor. Accordingly Tom had the debris laid out in sequence for subsequent inspection, much appreciated by the engineers.

Passengers were turning up and finding the trains cancelled, as well as buses disrupted. However people around at that time fully appreciated the fact that no one was hit by the substantial flying debris.

It appears that there were two or three extreme gusts from the northwest in a very short space of time. The sound of the wind coming made people rush inside on Platform 3. The sections of roof from above the Platform 2 landing area, landed upright on Platform 2 smashing the gate post, damaging some slates on the roof and breaking the cast iron gutter, but missing the SR platform bench below. The central section turned upside down, missed the canopy and landed on the downside track.

We met bridge engineers from NR and Devon County Council (which owns the bridge) that day and subsequently attended an investigation meeting. The brickwork side walls and the metal latticework of the central span appear to be in good condition. Above that there were both timber and metal supports for the roof. It was designed and built in 1878 with full glazing which was complete until 1972.

Tom Baxter has put together a Timeline which helps us to understand the Footbridge's history (see page 10).

On 2nd January the wind may have got under the roof, or one theory was that the nature of the gust could have caused a vacuum above and lifted it upwards with the same aerofoil effect which lifts an aeroplane into the air.

It is closed for the time being until DCC are satisfied that it's surfaces are safe. It was decided to remove the remaining roof as it was compromised by the central section having wrenched away. The top of some brickwork needs protection, as does the metalwork and the deck needs to be anti-slip. DCC's intention is to reopen it and DRA has been consulted on the design work needed. As a railway overbridge, work carries extra costs in terms of working over a live railway, with its own safety procedures.

So....what of the 12.27 train which left Okehampton Station that day? The footbridge roof was cleared away before it reached Exeter. The unlucky passengers were safe but held up by fallen trees on the line. They disembarked just before 5pm.

Footbridge Eyewitness

Jon Tuckett

I will never forget Tuesday 2nd January 2024. I witnessed something I have never seen before and will hopefully never see again.

Christmas and New Year had passed as it does and I had been lucky enough to be given £10 cash from my youngest son to spend on a "trip of your choosing". I have been as good as retired since 2016 and, when not decorating, walking, cycling or jigsaw puzzling, have spent many happy hours travelling from my hometown of Crediton to various local places by public transport. Steve knows how much I enjoy these excursions and knew I would be delighted with his present.

2nd January was trip 3 of a probable, 4 or 5. I used my Devon and Cornwall railcard to buy a return from Crediton to Okehampton and planned to catch the connecting bus to Tavistock (free with my old

person's bus pass) via Lydford and Brentor. I had planned to wander around Tavistock for an hour before my return journey. Apparently there had been a weather warning that morning but I was blissfully unaware.



The Tavistock bus did not arrive which, with hindsight, is not surprising given the imminent change in the weather. As I had just watched the departure of the Exeter bound train, I had just under an hour to wait for the next one to take me back to Crediton. I decided to go for a wander and happened upon Station Wood which has an almost circular short walk above the station. I messaged my daughter who has lived in Okehampton for just over a year to see if she had discovered that woodland. She knew part but made a note to explore more fully.

I returned to the station and made myself comfortable on a big green bench and munched an apple. All seemed quite calm until – almost without warning – the driving horizontal rain and strong wind caught my attention as it was driving past Station Wood west to east. The wind continued to strengthen over what seemed like no more than 2 or 3 minutes. I was finishing a text to my daughter when the still fierce wind caught the roof of the footbridge and scattered about 2/3 of it on the

opposite platform and the inactive track. A small amount ended up on the active section of track. It was quite shocking.

My first thought was whether other fixtures and fittings or loose pots etc. might follow the same fate in what were still incredibly strong winds. As there was a train due in about 10 minutes I called 999 and asked the operator to alert Network Rail. They must have managed to get a message to the driver for the train stopped just before it reached the station. I believe the line was closed for the rest of the day while engineers checked the safety of remaining buildings. As co-incidence would have it, Stagecoach service 6A to Exeter was about to depart so I jumped on.

Apart from having to turn back due to a tree down near the Belstone turning before Sticklepath, I made my way home to Crediton safely via Exeter. It truly was a trip I will never forget.

Okehampton Station Footbridge – Timeline

Tom Baxter

October 1871 – Opening of the railway line as far as Okehampton and commencement of services from Exeter. The line was initially single track and presumably had no requirement for a footbridge. Shortly after opening the line's sponsor, the London & South Western Railway (LSWR), absorbed the line into their network.

1874 - Extension of line westwards from Okehampton to Lydford to make connection with the Launceston & South Devon Railway, providing onward services to Plymouth.

January 1879 - Doubling of the line to Lydford. Branch line to Holsworthy (later extended to Bude) opens with Okehampton becoming its junction station. Bay platform provided on down side and the Footbridge are constructed in time for this opening. We do not have a full description of the footbridge provided but we believe the fully

glazed and canopied version is as was constructed at this time. So the probable construction date was within the year of 1878.

1890 - The Plymouth Devonport and South Western Junction Railway (P&DSWR) opens a new double track line from Lydford to Devonport via Tavistock and Devonport. This completes the LSWR's main line route from Waterloo to Plymouth and provides it with a double track main line throughout.



1923 - At the railways grouping the LSWR becomes part of the new Southern Railway (SR).

1948 - On nationalisation this former SR route becomes part of British Railways Southern Region (BR(S)).

1965 - Lines west of Salisbury are transferred to BR (Western Region) and line closures and rationalisation begin.

1966 - The North Cornwall and Bude lines close. Okehampton loses its junction status.

1968 - The Exeter to Plymouth passenger service via Okehampton and Tavistock is withdrawn. Also all freight services west of Meldon Quarry. The line between Meldon and Bere Alston is lifted circa 1971.

1972 - The remaining passenger service between Exeter and Okehampton is withdrawn. Freight services continue with stone trains from Meldon Quarry and some residual freight to the by then much reduced goods yard at Okehampton. From this point onwards the footbridge becomes disused and neglected.

1972-1994 - The stone trains to Meldon Quarry continue to operate but the residual freight service to Okehampton withers and has finished by 1990. The station however occasionally receives special excursion trains and there are attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to run special Dartmoor services to encourage restoration of a regular passenger service.

1994 - The line from Coleford to Meldon and Meldon Quarry are sold off in the process of rail privatisation. Camas Aggregates (later to become part of Aggregate Industries (AI)) purchase the line which includes Okehampton Station and Good Yard. The station and Goods Yard are subsequently sold on to Devon County Council (DCC) as part of a regeneration and tourism initiative.

1997 - The station at Okehampton is refurbished and the former Goods Shed is leased to become a Youth Hostel. Dartmoor Railway Company (DR) is formed to operate the line under lease from AI and the station itself is leased by DCC to DR. The footbridge receives a refurbishment but this does not include restoration of the windows and glazing units. We believe work at that time was concentrated on the walkways and roof with only some limited work done to the timber framing.

Shortly afterwards a Summer Sundays only service commences between Exeter and Okehampton operated over the years by a variety of local train operating companies but latterly by GWR.

1997-2020 - During this period DR operate heritage and event train services. These ran usually between Okehampton and Meldon but also operated to Sampford Courtenay and occasionally as far as the Network Rail boundary at Coleford. The stone trains continue but are suspended in 2013 and Meldon Quarry is 'mothballed' by AI. DR continue through several different owners becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC) in the process and with, at one time, ambitions to operate community rail services on this line and elsewhere. Eventually becoming a UK subsidiary company of a US owned railroad group, Iowa Pacific Holdings (IPH).

2020 - IPH fails financially in February 2020 and its US operations and UK subsidiary companies including DR CIC are put into Administration. With the leases terminated following Administration both Okehampton Station and the Meldon to Coleford line revert to their respective owners, DCC and AI. During the year it also becomes apparent that there is a nationally supported scheme to reopen the line to regular passenger services from Exeter.

November 2021 – The Exeter to Okehampton passenger service is restored and reopens as the Dartmoor line to regular daily services from Exeter. DCC retain ownership of the down side platforms and building including the footbridge. The up side buildings, entrance drive, car park etc. are transferred to Network Rail with GWR holding a lease for the railway operational areas.

We hope the information above is useful in explaining the history and condition of the Okehampton footbridge. It has had a somewhat chequered history including an extended period out of use.

However, today it forms a vital part of the station's infrastructure providing an essential link between the up and down sides of the station, giving access to the Museum and heritage areas on platforms 1 & 2, the Youth Hostel and DCC owned car park on the down side. It also provides a link to various footpaths south of the station via a footbridge link over the A30. The Dartmoor National Park boundary being along the southern boundary of the A30 at this point.

We therefore hope that its usefulness leads to its re-opening in a short timescale and it gets a sympathetic restoration that respects its position within the heritage ambience of the whole station.

Dartmoor Railway Association
Okehampton Station
Jan 23rd 2024

Beautiful NRHA Plaque unveiled

Overnight, four inches of snow made reaching Okehampton Station a challenge for the National Railway Heritage Awards judges, or rather their adjudicator and Chair Andy Savage, judge Michael Senatore and Awards Manager Michael Wood. With their train cancelled because five trees had to be cleared from the line they made the few miles from Crediton in a VW Polo.



We were pleased to hear that Crediton had also won Railway Heritage Trust funding to improve the toilets at the cafe in the station (even though this was a London and South Western station and is painted pink and brown!)



Andy Savage and Sue Baxter shake hands at the unveiling

Okehampton has benefited from a grant of £25,000 for station signage, parquet floor restoration, posters, and more from the Railway Heritage Trust. Andy visited us as an RHA Railway Trustee in 2020, when the re-opening was already underway. Richard Burningham is the one who deserves DRA's very grateful thanks for spotting the opportunity to get funding to enhance the station heritage.



Richard Burningham explains how our station heritage was preserved.

There is a picture of our Community Award plaque and the London Awards ceremony in the last Pony Magazine (issue 47). Graham Peacock has made a beautiful wooden base to compliment the sign, now mounted as you can see beside the platform entrance to the Booking Hall.

Membership & Volunteer Matters

Geoff Horner, Membership Secretary/Volunteer Coordinator

As at 25th March our membership total stood at 145 members, a very credible number so thank you to all those who have renewed their membership for 2024. If you are reading this and have not yet renewed please do stay with us and renew your membership.

As always it is a pleasure to welcome as a new member

- Zsolt Goldman of Torquay

On the volunteer front the Station Maintenance and Gardening teams have continued to be busy around the station keeping it in the condition which continues to attract favourable comments from passengers and visitors.

The book/gift shop is attracting a steady stream of customers. Shop manageress Christine and her team of volunteers are always on the look-out for pre-read railway books or any other railway related items so if you have anything you would like to pass on please get in touch.

Regrettably the Carriage & Wagon group is, apart from essential repairs to our rolling stock, still in limbo although occasional snippets from Aggregate Industries keep hopes alive that something positive will come forth.

Arthur Westlake Museum

Following the damage caused by Storm Henk at the beginning of the year, we regret that the footbridge remains closed until Devon County Council can repair it. Consequently the museum cannot be overseen by shop staff, and will only be opened on days when Platform 2 volunteers are in attendance, i.e. Wednesdays and Saturdays between 1000 and 1600. These opening hours will apply from Easter 2024.

Dartmoor Railway Association

Agenda and Notification of 2024 Annual General Meeting

To be held at The Ockment Centre, North Street, Okehampton,
EX20 1AR, on **Thurs 30th May 2024 at 18.30**

Agenda

- 1 Chair's welcome
- 2 Notification of any other matters of business
- 3 Apologies for absence
- 4 Minutes of 2023 AGM
- 5 Matters arising from the minutes of the 2023 AGM
- 6 Chair's report
- 7 Treasurer's report
- 8 Membership Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator's report
- 9 Amendment to Constitution (see separate notice)
- 10 Questions, and Any Other Business
- 11 Election of officers. The nominees to date are:

The following officers who have agreed to stand for re-election:

Sue Baxter (existing Chair)
Chris Horner (existing Treasurer)
Geoff Horner (existing Membership Sec & Volunteer Coordinator)
Tom Baxter (existing Secretary)
John Caesar (existing Committee Member)
Ron Kirby (existing Committee Member)
Liz Westlake (existing Committee Member)

Further nominations for the Committee must be received by the Secretary on or before **23rd May 2024** (Please ensure that any proposed nominee agrees to accept election to the Committee before their nomination is made)

Nominations to be made in writing to the Secretary either by post to:
**DRA Secretary, Myrtle Cottage, Folly Gate, Okehampton EX20
3AD** or by email to: secretary@dartmoor-railway-association.org

After the meeting, there will be **Refreshments** available followed by a
Railway Film Show with a selection of vintage railway films

Notification of Amendment to DRA Constitution – Proposal to be considered at 2024 AGM

Background - A difficulty arose during the DRA/GWR/NR Tripartite
lease negotiation for the heritage area which DRA now leases within the
main Okehampton station building on platform 3. Specifically relating
to the wording of our current Constitution and its lack of definition as to
who would sign lease and other legal agreements. In the event a solution
was found acceptable to all parties but your Committee wishes to avoid
the situation arising again and therefore recommends an additional
paragraph now be inserted into the DRA Constitution.

Your Committee therefore propose a new paragraph **P.** (as below) to be
inserted into the Constitution.

P. Signatories.

There shall be a minimum of two signatories for any legal documents,
agreements, licences or bank mandates. These to be members of the
DRA Executive Committee and authorised by that Committee to sign
such documents on DRA's behalf.

Station Gardening

Sue Baxter

Greenery is now in place to act as a soft barrier at the Exeter end of Platform 2 in front of the 'Passengers must not cross the line' notice. Three large green painted planters (thank you Geoff Brooks and John Clarke) have evergreen shrubs underplanted with bulbs. They are not so big as to get in the way of photographers!



Unwelcome wildlife has taken up residence in some Platform 3 planters. The root nibbling grubs of the black vine weevil. They are 1cm long with creamy white bodies and ginger heads. The adult weevil is matt black with fused wing covers, and is unable to fly. It feeds at night on the outer edges of leaves such as camelia, causing the leaves to have a notched margin. I tracked them down after cyclamen, heuchera and primula suddenly keeled over or blew over because all the roots were eaten away. Plenty about apparently in gardens and planters, so keep an eye out! Nematodes, hand picking off, or renewing all the compost are the solutions!

The Bookstall on Platform 3

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

Contact Christine Horner for further details:

christine.horner@talk21.com

DRA Members' Socials

Dates for upcoming DRA social evenings at the Taw River Inn, Sticklepath, Okehampton, EX20 2FG. Held on the first Wednesday of each month starting from 18:30. All DRA members are welcome!

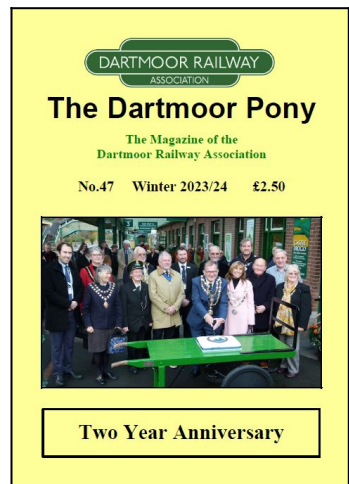
- Wednesday 1st May 2024
- Wednesday 5th June 2024
- Wednesday 3rd July 2024
- Wednesday 7th August 2024
- Wednesday 4th September 2024

Magazine Contributions Invited

We invite contributions for the magazine of items likely to be of interest to members – photos, memories, articles, history. Our deadline for material for the next magazine is 1st July 2024.

Any photo contributions preferably in jpeg format and less than 2MB, and text preferably in Word (.doc/.docx) or Open Office (.odt) format or similar. Please get in touch if you'd like to ask any questions or send in material for consideration:

museum@dartmoor-railway-association.org



The Bookstall

Our DRA shop, 'The Bookstall', on Platform 3 at Okehampton station opens on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holiday Mondays throughout the year thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers who make this possible.

As well as the varied selection of 'previously loved' railway books and DVD's available in the shop, new railway book titles are available to order online via the DRA website:

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

The shop also stocks a selection of local hand crafted candles, glassware, jewellery, cards etc which make ideal gifts. There is also a selection of DRA and Dartmoor Line souvenirs. Do visit the shop when/if you are in Okehampton.



View from Tors Road Bridge on 24th February 2024 looking west to Plymouth showing the currently overgrown track alongside the cycle way towards Meldon (Photo: Tony Hill).

34013's Scrapyard Journey

Bob Bunyar

Mention was made in issue 47 of 'The Dartmoor Pony' of West Country Class 34013 'Okehampton' being disposed of at Cashmore's scrapyard in Newport, South Wales. (Page 18 – Arthur Westlake Museum + Archive). Its journey was, however, quite interesting!



34013 at Weymouth, minus nameplates in 1967. Photo. Unknown R.C. Bunyar-Collection

34013 'Okehampton' had been allocated to Salisbury shed since September 1963, but could be seen on duties from London to Weymouth and Exeter. It was used on several rail tours including the 'Bridport Belle', but more famously, it worked the very last southbound train over the Somerset & Dorset line between Bath Green Park and Templecombe before closure. It had in fact worked light on March 6, 1966, from Salisbury shed to Highbridge (via Bristol T M) to haul the special to Mangotsfield North Junction, and then followed it to Bath where it joined and piloted 34057 'Biggin Hill' for that last journey over the S&D. This journey was an RCTS Special and described by many as 'volcanic' as both Bulleids stormed over the Mendips. I know 34057's

fireman, who was a young lad then, and he said that the WR traction inspector on the footplate just turned a blind eye to their speed!



34013 banks a freight out of Weymouth in 1966. Photo. R.C. Bunyar Collection

‘Okehampton’ worked its final train into London on July 7, 1967 and went onto Nine Elms shed, where it was officially withdrawn, along with all the remaining ‘southern’ steam on July 9. It languished at Nine Elms, along with other Bulleid Pacifics and various classes of BR Standards, where it was stripped of its connecting rods and driving motion, this being put into its tender.

On September 3 it left London, being hauled slowly in a convoy of locomotives bound for Salisbury shed. This was one of the locations used for the gathering and storage of withdrawn locomotives from the Southern Region. (It was not until March 1968 that the final locomotives left Salisbury for the breakers yards).

34013 did not remain at Salisbury for long. On September 30 it started its journey to South Wales, this however proving to be rather long in duration!

Reaching Westbury it was stabled overnight before resuming its journey on October 1, but it was only going to get as far as Bath's Westmoreland Yard. It was discovered during a check that it was running hot on one of its bearings, and needed attention. It was therefore shunted out of the formation, along with 34100 'Appledore' into a siding to await repairs. It was not uncommon at the time to see ex- SR locomotives in the siding as a number were 'dumped' there after running hot. Whilst there, both 34013 & 34100 became the centre of attention to enthusiasts and also school boys from two local secondary schools who delighted in climbing all over them! You could do that sort of thing in those days and nobody in authority would say anything, despite the WR main line being adjacent to the yard! I did get photographs of the locos there, but they are not of good quality having been taken on a Kodak box camera.



34013 nearest camera, 34100 behind at Westmoreland Yd, Bath. Oct. 1967.
Photo.R.C. Bunyar Collection.

At the time, the authorities at Bristol Bath Road diesel depot were about to hold an Open Day on Saturday October 21, 1967, and having sent fitters out to attend to 34013, it was decided that the two former Pacific's would make a suitable attraction for the day, so they remained

‘stored’ at Bath, before being taken forward to Bristol. Obviously, a few days delay going to the breakers yard wouldn’t matter at all.

34013 ‘Okehampton’ along with 34100 ‘Appledore’ were therefore duly displayed at the Open Day having their final bit of fame and viewed by many hundreds of people before facing the cutters torch. There is one possible final claim to fame for 34013. The locomotive was turned for the Open Day so both Bulleids were facing east. It is believed that this was done using the turntable at Bath Road shed, and that 34013 was probably the last steam locomotive, although dead, to be turned there? Although I attended the open day, I don’t have any photographs of the two Bulleids which were positioned side by side with 34013 still sporting white ringed buffers and smoke box door hinges from its rail tour duties, but there are photographs existing. One actually appeared in the January 1968 edition of *The Railway Magazine*.



*34013 & 34100 at Gloucester en route to S. Wales. 11th Nov. 1967. Photo. Unknown-
R. C. Bunyar Collection*

After the open day 34013 & 34100 were towed to Gloucester Horton Road shed, arriving on November 11, where they were stabled for a couple of days. At this time, condemned locomotives were not

permitted to travel through the Severn Tunnel, and had to be taken the longer way round via Gloucester and Lydney.

Before making the final part of their journey to Newport Docks and John Cashmore's breakers yard, the locos were held at Severn Tunnel Junction Yard, before finally entering the scrapyards holding sidings on November 22, 1967.

The actual dates of the cutting up of 34013 are not clear, but it was still recorded by one enthusiast, who visited the yard on December 24, as being intact then.

Although it is long gone, two of 34013's white head code discs do still survive, rescued from a tender locker when it was in the sidings at Bath! If anyone can add any further details about 34013's journey to the scrapyard, or even photographs, please do get in touch.

Steam by the Junction

John Caesar

On 7th April 2024, I attended one of the regular monthly open days for the **Exeter & District Model Engineering Society**, at the historic St Katherine's Priory, a stone's throw from the old Exmouth Junction site (now a Morrison's supermarket with the rest of the site currently being redeveloped for housing) and adjacent to the former London & South Western Railway mainline from Exeter to Salisbury.

The priory was a Benedictine Nunnery founded in 1159 and dissolved in 1539. The surviving two storey building (thought to date from the 13th Century) and the beautiful grounds are maintained by volunteers.

The Engineering Society have a fairly substantial run of multi-gauge track around the grounds of the Priory. There is a raised section on the far side that they are working towards completing to create a loop. Currently trains reverse from the station back to the end of the line, run forwards all the way around, past their loco shed alongside the

southwestern mainline on the embankment above, then reverse back to the starting point.



Motive power for the day was a wonderful model of the Lynton & Barnstaple Baldwin 2-4-2 locomotive 'Lyn'. If the weather is poor they even set up a short length of track inside the Priory on the ground floor!

Upstairs in the Priory is the **The Junction 72A Model Railway Club**, who are now opening to the public on the same Sundays as the Engineering Society. There are three main layouts, one being an N gauge representation of Exeter Central, a OO gauge layout, and another N gauge layout which is their main exhibition layout. New members appear to be very welcome and they meet a couple of nights each week (Mondays & Thursdays) for running/modelling sessions.



Refreshments are available and you can sit outside in the grounds and watch the miniature railway in action with ‘full size’ trains (mainly Southwestern Railway Class 159s) passing in the background with the distant sound of Great Western Railway units traversing the junction onto the Exmouth branch.

For further info and updates about running days (usually the first Sunday in the month, 11am-3pm) you can find the Engineering Society on Facebook, and The Junction 72A are also on Facebook and have a website here: <https://thejunction72amrc.weebly.com/>



Parking is free and it was only £2 for a train ride and £1 to view the model railway layouts. Amongst other events held at the Priory there is a Community Cafe open on Fridays from 10-2pm. St Katherine’s Priory can be found down the lane by St Katherine’s Road, EX4 7JY, and What3Words #chew.globe.atomic.

Miah's Diary

I am a very (head) strong dog, with powerful haunches and even more powerful shoulders. But this challenge is ridiculous.



Two legs took me out to Meldon to assist with clearing round the carriages because I relish a bit of excavation. I had a wild time of it and then I was attached to this big box.

Well, it was unreasonable. I know DRA need help moving the stock and that every paw counts.

But I also know my Auntie, Rosie May Bluebell, was only ever asked to pull the catering trolley from Meldon Viaduct Station to and from the Viaduct Buffet carriage.

So I barked very loudly, interspersed with squeaky “I am unhappy” notes, until they got fed up and took me to the Red a Ven Brook to chase bubbles and pick up wet black stones to give to anyone who might, or might not, want them!

Online Fundraising

Please consider using easyfundraising every time you shop online!


www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drса

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

The Bulleid Buffet

Named after Oliver Bulleid, the Southern Railway's innovative engineer, the excellent station cafe is run by Leanne Knight and her team.



Barista Coffee, homemade cakes, quiches, pies, pasties & treats.
All day breakfast, lunch & takeaway. Picnic pick up point for your Granite Way exploration. Open: Summer 7am-5pm, Winter 8am-4pm.
f Tel: 07410 609160 • thebulleidbuffet@gmail.com 
Okehampton Railway Station, Station Road, Okehampton EX20 1EJ

Okehampton Train & Bus Information

With 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>

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, Liz Westlake

Dartmoor Railway Association Contacts

Enquiries: info@dartmoor-railway-association.org

Dartmoor Railway Association,
Okehampton Station, Station Road,
Okehampton, EX20 1EJ

Treasurer: christine.horner@talk21.com

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

Museum: museum@dartmoor-railway-association.org

Website: www.dartmoor-railway-association.org

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