

THE DARTMOOR PONY

DARTMOOR RAILWAY
DRSA
Supporters Association

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Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association

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Annual Report
Okehampton Railwayman
Part II
Saving the Sleeper

THE DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 2

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

This magazine will be published four times a year in the following months: March, June, September and December. Copy should be sent to the editor by 10th of the month prior to publication date.

FRONT COVER: On 07 June 153 361 and 153 382 stand in Okehampton Station with the 16:02 to Exeter, alongside the Dartmoor Railway's superbly restored "Thumper" 1132 with the 16:10 to Meldon Quarry *Photo: B Mills*

BACK COVER:

Top: Thumper at Meldon 7th June

Photo: B Mills

Bottom: Thumper leaving Okehampton for Meldon

Photo: P.Wagstaff

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Editorial:

By Peter Ritchie

This issue has been held over so that news of the AGM could be included. The Annual Report and the Statement of Accounts follow the Operations Manager's "pearls of wisdom". I am delighted to report that the creation of the new Association has been well accepted by the membership. It bodes well for the future. There were some 21 members present at the meeting and, as well as the formal meeting, we were treated to a very interesting presentation by Andy Griffiths and an update on progress by Graham Isom. In this issue I have omitted the Book Review and added more pages to accommodate the DRSA/Friends reports etc. The second part of the Arthur Westlake story makes for some very interesting reading as does the final article about the saving and restoration of the Mark 3 sleeper coach which provides accommodation for volunteers up at Meldon. The latter is certainly full of its ups and downs. I have included a number of photos of volunteers at work which brings me to the point – **more volunteers are needed in all areas**, especially as activities increase. **Can you help?** If so, go to the DR website – www.dartmoor-railway.co.uk – and follow the instructions for volunteering. Alternatively, contact the Membership Secretary, Peter Flick, and he will pass on your details to the Volunteer Coordinators.



From the Operations Manager:

By Graham Isom

Well here we are at another edition of the DRSA magazine. While I am on that subject, I must pass on all the compliments that have been passed to me, on the excellent production by Peter (Shanty Singer) Ritchie.
Ed: I blush!



On to the railway, the passenger numbers since our 'Good Friday' opening are improving and are heading towards the 2500 figure, and they are coming in from far and wide. Again, good compliments on the restoration of 'Thumper' are in abundance. Well done to everyone involved (and there are a lot of you to thank.)

The 'Okehampton Station' floral display is looking excellent and again receiving compliments, well done to the 'Station Team' and extra praise to

our own 'Flower Fairies' in Sue Baxter and Wendy Ware. Sampford Courtenay has had an excellent tidy up and to Geoff Horner and the other helpers (Garden Gnomes), all part of the aforementioned team, a big well done.

There are arrangements in hand to have a 'Station Bench' repaired for Sampford Courtenay and this will allow passengers to rest while awaiting a service train. They will need it after taking part in one of Jeremy Wills' newly printed suggested walks around Sampford Courtenay, of which there are two. These have been produced and made available to passengers at the 'Booking Office' at Okehampton station.

The DRSA team of refurbishers, have again also been busy both on the 'Buffet Car' at Meldon and on a Mark 2 BSK, which they have completed in readiness for the filming of an episode of 'Doc Martin'. Again, my grateful thanks to them and what an excellent job they have done in both cases.

The 'Atlantic Coast Express' run of the MG Car Club took place on Sunday 21st June 2009. With over 80 vehicles on display before the start from the car park at Okehampton Station, it was extremely delightful to see the enthusiasm of the MG members. We must not forget our very own 'Buffet Team' both inside the buffet and on the platform serving over 180 MG members and more with 'Bacon Baps' and drinks, so much so that by the time the 'ACE' had started, we had nearly run out of bacon. Once again well done to everyone, and with Kay Mills doing an excellent trade on the 'Tombola' stall, the station was buzzing with delight. A collection in aid of the 'Chestnut Appeal' was also arranged by the MG Club and this raised a sum of £250.

Well, the 'Summer Season' has arrived and, as I complete this latest entry for the magazine, we are doing very well in respect of visitors to the station and this will improve further as the 'Summer' goes on. Meetings continue with Network Rail over the re-instatement of Yeoford station and the extension of our boundary, and hopefully these will be completed by 4th September 2009. As announced at the AGM of the DRSA, the membership has risen well above the 300 figure and is heading towards 400, a milestone achievement.

As I approach my first anniversary year at the Dartmoor Railway may I take this opportunity through the DRSA magazine to say a very big 'THANK YOU' for all the support given to me from all quarters and especially the DRSA members, and let's go forward to the magical figure of 400 as a team with the same outlook for the future of Dartmoor Railway.

The Annual General Meeting:

This took place at the appointed time on Saturday 20th June in the Cosdon Room of the Ockment Centre in Okehampton. There were 21 members of the DRSA present plus the committee. After the formal meeting ended Mr. Andy Griffiths gave a very interesting presentation about his work with community railways with particular emphasis on the St. Ives branch line. Graham Isom then gave a talk about current developments on the Dartmoor Railway.

Ed: It's worth noting here that the subsequent Committee meeting held on Monday 22nd June agreed the date of the next AGM as 5th June 2010. The name(s) of guest speaker(s) will be promulgated as soon as known. Don't forget 5th June 2010!

Annual Report 2008-2009:

When concluding the committee's report at last year's AGM, our then Chairman apologised for the depressing contents. This was not surprising as Dartmoor Railway as we all knew it had effectively ceased to exist. No passenger services were running, and even Okehampton Station was closed, including the buffet, model shop and cycle hire. The committee had lost its venue for our regular meetings. The then owner – ECT – had retained a few members of staff to deal with the stone trains to and from Meldon Quarry, and also the remaining Sunday Rover services.

At our meeting on 5 June last year we anticipated that it was likely to be some time before the railway had a new owner, and we could not be certain that any buyer would wish to retain the heritage operations.

We considered that our first priority was to keep all our members informed of any developments by way of the Newsletter, with additional interim letters if needed. The second priority was to maintain the goodwill of the volunteers and to minimise any risk of losing them for the hoped-for reopening of the railway. However, to keep the rolling stock volunteers in place your committee agreed to provide donations as requested from time to time for paint and other materials so that work at Meldon could continue. It was assumed that the stock would be acquired by any new owner of the railway.

During August, volunteers were allowed to use the station buffet on Sundays to provide hot drinks and biscuits to visitors, albeit only at tables on Platform 3. Then at the beginning of September came the news that the sale of the railway had been completed and with it a new air of optimism. Largely due to the generosity of Councillor Christine Marsh a Health and Hygiene course

was held at the station allowing Mary Trant and qualified volunteers to reopen the buffet properly from December. This provided a real boost to morale and also, until the railway took over responsibility for the operation, all profits were donated to the Friends.

At this period we also learned from Ed Ellis that he would prefer to see one supporters' organisation rather than having to deal with disparate groups in the future. As a result, a steering committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dennis Le Worthy to investigate the formation of such a body, effectively to merge the existing Friends and volunteers groups. This successfully concluded with a proposal to form the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association, which received universal acceptance.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Friends of Dartmoor Railway was held on 23 March, with an encouragingly high attendance, and that meeting formalised the demise of the Friends and the creation of the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association. A new constitution was also unanimously adopted, designed to streamline operations and to reflect the relationship with the railway's new owners. This provided a new start for everyone, coming into effect on 1 April 2009. Strictly speaking this report should only cover the year to 31 March, and hence would extend little further but much has happened since then.

Passenger services resumed between Okehampton and Meldon at Easter and the buffet has been formally reopened by the railway. The model shop has also been resuscitated, under new ownership, and it is now only cycle hire which has not been revived. Subsequently, the Dartmoor Rover service to and from Exeter on Sundays has also restarted. There has been much praise for the smart appearance of the refurbished Thumper unit and visitor numbers have been encouraging. Of course, there is and always will be much to do, with the DRSA still holding funds from the water tower appeal and for the Yeoford project. Volunteers are busy running the heritage passenger services while others are hard at work on restoration projects.

We can all be pleased and relieved with developments and progress over the past year. Your association has emerged as a stronger organisation and we should now work hard to attract new members and extend our support for the railway. The future is full of promise.

Dick Henrywood
DRSA Chairman

FRIENDS OF DARTMOOR RAILWAY: ACCOUNTS Y/E 31 MARCH 2009

	2008/2009 £	2007/2008 £
INCOME		
Membership subs	3192.00	3061.75
General donations	515.57	691.02
Yeoford Appeal	300.00	1217.00
Buffet sales/tombola	2304.00	-
Other	666.61	240.00
Totals	6978.18	5209.77
EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	1023.70	1137.50
Stationery, printing, post etc.	778.15	388.78
For Dartmoor Railway	1509.11	1048.58
Other	179.63	143.03
Totals	3490.59	2717.89
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for year	3487.59	2491.88

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2009

ASSETS	£
Cheque account	7778.88
Business instant access account	5003.11
Cash (Treasurer's imprest), stamps etc	20.63
NET WORTH of Friends of Dartmoor Railway	12802.62 (including designated reserves of £1517 for Yeoford re-opening, and £2,000 for Water Tower).

NOTES. The closure of DR in April 2008 limited the help the Friends could give to DR. However, funds were provided to volunteers to refurbish the 'Thumper' diesel unit. The society benefited greatly from proceeds from sales of refreshments in the Okehampton buffet while it was under volunteer operation, and from the tombola stall on Okehampton station platform. This income together with the continued support of the membership has ensured that the finances of the society remain in good shape. The Friends of Dartmoor Railway was reformed as the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association (DRSA) as from 1st April 2009.

D P Clegg, Treasurer
5 May 2009

I have examined, without carrying out an audit, the Income and Expenditure Summary and Balance Sheet of the Friends of Dartmoor Railway for the year ended 31 March 2009 and find them correct and in accordance with the accounting records.

Michael White FCA
Chartered Accountant
May, 2009

Volunteer News:

Okehampton Station: Anyone who has been up to the station recently will have appreciated the beautiful floral displays in our hanging baskets and flower tubs, and great thanks are due to Wendy Ware and Sue Baxter who attended a course provided by Bow Garden Centre on how to prepare them. Apparently you don't just stick them in and add water. We are extremely grateful to Bow Garden Centre for providing the course, plants, compost, equipment and advice all free of charge - thanks to an approach by Wendy Ware. Wendy's account of the help received from Bow follows this article.



It's amazing what you can get just by asking: but don't try it on me! Tom Baxter and George Ware took on the 'heavy-engineering' side of the task by renovating/replacing the watering systems, hoses etc and actually hanging them up (the flower baskets, that is). So if one falls on your head

you know who to blame. Others have also been busy. New members Jamie Theobald (who kindly donated valuable gardening equipment), Richard and Patrick Shelley, and Terry Funnell are tidying up the vegetation at the front of Okehampton station, and Geoff Horner is keeping nature at bay at Sampford Courtenay with help from the rest of the gang. Well done to all. It does make a great difference and the improvements are clearly noticed by our customers.

Carriage and Wagon Group: The C&W Group is almost there now with the Meldon buffet coach. This is having a change scheme to Storm Grey. There was a lot more bodyside corrosion of colour on this vehicle to deal with than I'd expected, and parts of the floor had rotted. A major task was cleaning up the galley which over several years of cooking bacon baps



etc. needed a thorough degrease and oil change! Geoff Horner has tackled this with his steam cleaner – several weeks work– and will shortly be reassembling all the bits he’s taken off, I hope. Mike Ireland has done a great job on the filling (bodyside, not the baps) and new member Mike Morse does all the bits that no-one else wants to. Well, you’ve someone like that you can trust! As for Sue Baxter, she does everything, and the gardening, and the Welsh Highland Railway and Dartmoor Rescue. I’m pleased to say the team has grown over the last few months and all are very enthusiastic. I can’t mention them all – well I suppose I can try. There’s Chris ‘do it my way’ Baber, Tony ‘I’ll do it his way’ Bradbury, John ‘we did it this way in farming’ Coxon, Alexis ‘I bought a lousy car off eBay’ Hulme, John ‘I need to call the AA to get me started’ Scotney; and myself who’s getting too old to do much at all. But a cheerful bunch, nevertheless. The only downer is that we have recently had a spate of thefts of materials and equipment from the



buffet coach, and vandalism in general. Sad. One diversion for the C&W gang has been the need to give a quick repaint and interior clean to the FGW brake coach ready for filming sequences for Doc Martin, the popular TV series. There is a lot more going on with guards, drivers,

catering, ticket sellers, tombolas etc. and hopefully someone from those expertises will write in a forthcoming magazine. Mention of the tombola reminds me that Kay Mills needs you all to bring in items she can use on the tombola and book stall to raise funds for us.

3rd Thursday of the Month Gathering: Can I give a quick reminder that many of the volunteers and supporters in general meet from 6.30pm for a meal and a chat at the Fox and Hounds pub on the third Thursday in the month (on the A386 near Bridestowe). Do come if you can, and buy me a drink.

Dave Clegg (Volunteer Co-ordinator)
(Par Excellence – Ed)

Dartmoor Railway is really set to blossom:

By the time you read this the platform flowers should be blooming.

As we still have the Bow Aquatics and Garden Centre advertisement boards up, I contacted them and asked if they would be willing to supply some plants for the station. They responded magnificently by donating plants for the tubs and also supplied all that was needed for the 10 hanging baskets. As I



didn’t have much knowledge on how to arrange the baskets I was invited to the garden centre for a hands-on practical demonstration. One rainy Tuesday morning Sue Baxter and I went along for our tuition (a bit like being back at school). We were also given lots and lots of plants, fortunately Sue’s car has a big boot, and we just managed to fit them all in.



Sue dutifully looked after them until we were able to find time to make up the remaining 8 baskets. With the help of George we were able to put them up in position. Sue and Tom have been a great help in organising this, and Tom has managed to fit a new timer for the irrigation system for the tubs and hanging baskets.

Wendy Ware

Trip of a Lifetime:



Richard and Judy Proctor at Exeter St. David's station with Tangmere at the head of their train.

Photo: A Turner

Two of our volunteer members went for the trip of a lifetime just recently. Richard and Judy Proctor went on the *Great Britain II* rail tour and Andrew Turner managed to catch them when the train stopped at Exeter St. David's for water. I am most envious of them. Richard has written a day-by-day account of the tour and I am planning to publish it in the next issue of the magazine together with a selection of the super photos he took. Thanks Richard.

Letters:

Dear Editor,

Any mention you can give in your railway magazine will be of great help. The Remembrance Line Association is pushing hard to get more support in our final push to save the line and station, whilst the proposals to turn the area into a modern marina have stalled due to the current economic climate. We are going from strength to strength, but we still need a lot more support to reach our goal.

Any of your railway's supporters that wish to show their support for this historic line can write to or email their MP, or alternatively write to the Folkestone MP, Michael Howard QC, at The Conservative Association, 4 Westcliff Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1SP. A letter or email to Network Rail and Shepway District Council could also help. (Network Rail-www.networkrail.co.uk & Shepway District Council-www.shepway.gov.uk)

Finally there are more details on www.theremembranceline.org.uk

Many thanks for your support, please see attached photos and copy of recent Kentish Newspaper Article.

Mr D. Wiffen
Remembrance Line Supporter & Campaigner
68 Cold Blow Crescent,
Bexley, Kent, DA5 2DS

Thanks, Dana, for keeping us up to date on the Folkestone Branch. I'm sorry that we don't have any room in this issue for your photos. .Ed

Hi Peter,

I am a DR member (0054) currently living in New Zealand. Thanks for the newsletter and for all the work you are doing. I wonder if it might save you some postage if you want to email me the newsletter in future. Is this possible?

I am currently producing the newsletter for a local railway preservation society here in NZ, and we email our newsletter to all members who have email. I have put the DR on our email list for future newsletters, you may find it interesting. It was certainly interesting to see the snow up at the station (I haven't seen any here in 2 years), and it's great news to see that the shop is open again. I will definitely call in and buy something when we pop back to the UK in May.

Best regards, and keep up the good work

Adam Jenkins

Super to get an email from the Antipodes. If anyone is interested I can email a sample copy of the Newsletter that Adam edits. The "Team" will certainly email our Magazine to anyone who would prefer to receive it in that format. Just let me know. Ed

Arthur Westlake, Okehampton Railwayman (Part 2):

The article below was written by Mike Hedges and Tony Hill and first appeared in the Dartmoor Society magazine during 2008. It is reproduced with kind permission. ©The Dartmoor Society 2008, the authors and Mr A Westlake himself

One memorable event of that period was the big freeze of 1962/63, when deep snow blanketed much of the country for many weeks from Christmas 1962. Arthur remembers that fires were lit underneath locomotives not in use to prevent them freezing up. Several locomotives became stuck in deep snow and staff were able to earn extra wages digging them out. However, Arthur noticed that this unforeseen extra overtime was becoming too much of a good thing – and set out to stop it! He arranged for three Okehampton locomotives to be fired up and hitched together, then drove to each stranded locomotive in turn. With permanent way staff and soldiers clearing the line ahead of the wheels, the three linked locomotives were hitched to each stranded engine and, with their massive combined power, it was pulled clear.

Arthur says that during the 1947 winter, rail services had also been badly disrupted by snow, as they were, to a lesser extent, many years later in 1978.



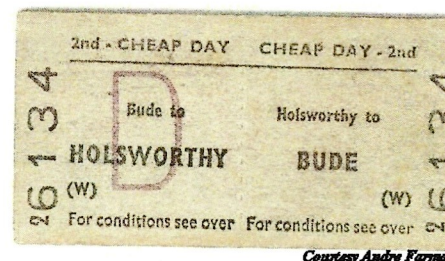
'N' class locomotive being dug out of the snow in Sourton Cutting, 9th January 1963

(Photo © Western Morning News, courtesy Arthur Westlake)

This was also a time when railway freight was declining dramatically, particularly on branch lines. Arthur says that local freight traffic was at one time very varied: wagons of fertiliser, animal feeds and farm implements destined for local merchants were received at local stations and wagons of livestock, meat, milk, pit props and Ambrosia rice puddings were dispatched.

For a few years after the North Cornwall lines had closed in 1966, with Okehampton the alternative railhead, sometimes a couple of hundred wagons of Fison's fertiliser were delivered in a single week to Okehampton. Wool and coal were the main commodities at North Tawton station and animal feeds, such as sugar beet nuts and pulp from Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, were delivered to Okehampton. Petrol and coal were also brought in routinely by rail to local stations. Freight operations declined from the 1950s onwards, being replaced by local road hauliers such as Gregory's of North Tawton, Thompson's of Moretonhampstead and Passmore's of Okehampton. Arthur says that the 1955 rail strike accelerated the decline of rail freight traffic as customers switched their goods to road hauliers and never returned to the railway.

While he was locomotive shed foreman at Okehampton, the management requested suggestions for improvements from staff. Arthur submitted the idea of a car train to transport people and their cars over much of the long distance to the west on their holidays. He worked out a plan for using the wagons efficiently and this was adopted, the service operating between Surbiton in Surrey and Okehampton from 1958 to 1964. Arthur was paid two guineas (£2.10) for his idea!



Many local lines were closed in the 1960s, implementing plans pushed through by Dr Richard Beeching, the Chairman of the British Railways Board. This led to 28 local stationmasters being made redundant. Arthur himself was made redundant simply as a result of the demise of steam locomotives in 1965; the replacement diesel engines required fewer staff and less preparation for daily service and this in turn meant that a number of locomotive sheds, including Okehampton, could be closed.

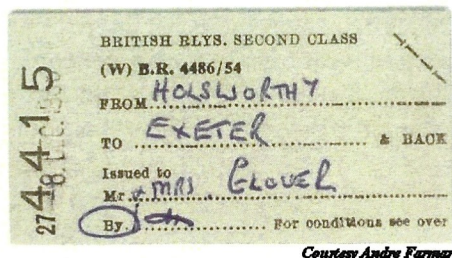
Arthur therefore applied for a post under an Area Manager Scheme being put in place by British Railways. He went for an interview in Bristol for the job of an Assistant Area Manager, covering the patch between Okehampton and Kings Nympton. He was competing against redundant stationmasters, but of course they were not as knowledgeable as Arthur on locomotive operation, and he was given the job on the spot. Apparently the new Area Manager was inexperienced and needed someone like Arthur to guide him.

During its heyday, Okehampton had been an important station and locomotive shed on the main Southern Railway main line from Waterloo to Plymouth via Salisbury, Honiton and Exeter. Its great rival on services to the west was of course the Great Western Railway, which Brunel had brought to Devon and Cornwall via Bristol, the route being later shortened to reach Exeter via Westbury and Castle Cary. Ultimately, the rationalisation of services by British Railways in the 1960s led to the demise of the former Southern Railway route west of Exeter in favour of the old GWR route.

Thus it was that the lines west of Meldon quarry closed in 1966 (North Cornwall line) and 1968 (Plymouth line, as far as Bere Alston – arguably the biggest error of the ‘Beeching’ closures in the South West) and passenger services from Exeter to Okehampton ended in 1972. Despite the loss of freight services from smaller stations, principal stations like Okehampton retained much freight traffic between 1972 and 1979. At one point it appeared that the Government wished to run down these services to allow the mooted Okehampton bypass to be built along the favourable alignment of the railway. However, this idea was quietly dropped when it was realised that this would make some 200 workers at Meldon Quarry redundant and would also cut off rail access to a valuable source of railway ballast. Meldon Quarry currently dispatches up to 10 trains of railway ballast each week.

Arthur had always been a dedicated railwayman and now, in a more senior position, he was able to use his wider skills to the benefit of his employers. On one occasion, a 12-ton consignment of animal feed became wet when the bags were left outside in an open wagon. Arthur and his men opened the bags and dried the feed with large blowlamps before re-bagging it.

At this time, there was also a spate of dubious claims over lost or damaged bags of animal feed. Arthur arranged for each wagon to be labelled with the number of bags and then sealed at the points of origin in Bury St Edmunds and Avonmouth. When the consignment had arrived at Okehampton, every lorry driver who came to collect bags had to sign for the correct number before each wagon was opened.



Other ‘scams’ were common. It was not unknown for one or two farmers to put the bodies of dead sheep on to the railway and then claim that they had been run over by a train, whereas they had in fact died elsewhere. On one such instance, Arthur, knowing that certain stretches of railway fence in the vicinity had been recently renewed, pointed out to the farmer the great athletic capabilities of his sheep in being able to jump over a new railway fence – and the claim was quickly dropped!

One day, 850 troops bound for Okehampton Camp alighted at the station, but had no tickets. Arthur investigated and found that only around half were covered by paid-up travel warrants and made sure that the Commanding Officer at Okehampton Camp arranged for the outstanding sum to be paid!

Another claim that was soon abandoned was for a cast iron stove that had allegedly been damaged in transit to Okehampton Station. Unfortunately for the claimant, Arthur himself had been walking along an Okehampton street and had witnessed the stove, which had been delivered and collected from the station in one piece, being dropped from the lorry and smashing to pieces on the ground!

Arthur’s astuteness led to a substantial reduction in claims and he was commended for his diligence by the railway management.

One curious example of freight traffic was the periodic dispatch of 20,000 racing pigeons to Okehampton. These would be brought down in hampers early on a Sunday morning and the freight vans (the same type that had previously been used for the car trains in the 1960s) would be opened, the birds fed and watered and then released by railway staff. With so many pigeons, the hampers inevitably contained quite a few eggs which were taken away by local people, but Arthur made sure the yard gates were locked to keep them out of the way until the birds had been released!

Arthur’s quick thinking ultimately helped to preserve Okehampton goods shed. Learning of a plan to demolish it, he promptly arranged for it to be filled with fertiliser bags and set up a 12-month storage rental agreement with the owner. His bosses at Bristol were not best pleased, but the demolition plans were dropped and the shed was saved. It is now used as a Youth Hostel.

Arthur eventually retired in 1983 but his son Richard, now aged 60, continues the family tradition of working for the railway. Richard joined the

railway at Okehampton in 1964, just in time to gain a couple years experience on steam engines. He is now based at Exeter St Davids and drives express trains on the Paddington to Penzance main line. Richard is also a



80037 Runs in to Okehampton Summer 1964

Photo: B Mills

prominent local politician, having been a Devon county councillor since 1985; he was chairman of the county council in 1994/95 and has also been the chairman of Exeter and Devon Airport Ltd.

Arthur Westlake started his career with

the arduous duties of firing and driving a steam locomotive, worked through the demise of steam traction and retired in the era of diesel-hauled trains. To people like Arthur, working on the railway was far more than just a career – it was a way of life and a lifetime's commitment. Arthur is blessed with a fine memory and, even as he approaches the age of 90, the dedication he showed in his working days shines through as he talks animatedly about events of years ago.

Our oldest volunteer? Geoff Gill celebrates his 94th birthday



in the Buffet at Oke and he joins Kay and Hayden to man the Tombola stall on the station.

The Mk3 Sleeping Car No. 10811 (SLEP):

Article and photographs by Clive Warnford

Visitors to Meldon Viaduct may well have noticed a large green coach with Sleeping Car written on the side. For many years there was a similar vehicle in the same position and this earlier vehicle was owned by Dartmoor Railway and used as a stores coach for the Meldon Buffet. The events surrounding the relocation of the earlier coach are documented elsewhere and are not relevant to the subject of this article.

Mk3 Sleeping Car 10611 is a privately owned vehicle and I wish to tell the story of how it came to be occupying its position adjacent to the Buffet Car, (now undergoing a refurbishment programme by volunteers).



Our coach was built between 1981-83 at BR Derby under Lot No.30960 to Diagram No. AU 401, the coach was originally air-conditioned, one of a large batch classed as Mk3A, at a cost of £1million each. It consists of 12 compartments with a fixed lower berth and

a hinged upper berth, plus an attendant's pantry. There are two controlled emission toilets fitted at one end. The term SLEP denotes that the vehicle is (SL) Sleeper, (E) Either Class and (P) Pantry. The original vehicles were fitted with BT10 Bogies, were air-braked and had electric heating with an ETH rating of 7X.

Recorded as being based at Edinburgh Craigenlinny in Cross-Country InterCity services, 10611 was still in use in early 1988, however, due to the lack of demand for sleeper trains she was withdrawn from service shortly after this and became a source of spare parts for other sleeping cars until finally placed into store at MOD Bicester together with a number of other sleepers etc. for safe keeping pending a decision as to their future. Still at Bicester in 1992 but now in withdrawn status many parts were by now removed to service existing coaches, including outer doors, berth doors, wash-basins, air-conditioning unit, M.A.Set, batteries etc.

By 1993 a decision was made to scrap 10611 along with 5 others also stored at Bicester and they were offered for sale on a Tender list as available to preservation societies and/or scrap merchants. At this time the BT10 bogies were removed for re-use. 10611 acquired a set of experimental bogies from Wolverton Works whilst the other five vehicles were given modified Commonwealth bogies so that the coaches could still be moved about the MOD site.

Bob Austin & I & one other person purchased 10611 in late 1993 and formed the Mk3 Sleeping Car Association with 3 original owners. On the 6th June 1994 the coach was moved by road from Bicester to Carrog Station on the Llangollen Railway. At the time there was no track between the existing station at Glyndyfrdwy and Carrog so the coach was worked on somewhat in isolation, with no facilities such as water or power. This precluded any restoration work taking place and only the basic security could be done, making the coach both weather and vandal proof. During the period we were waiting for the track to reach Carrog we undertook the location of the missing parts required to make the coach habitable in the future and through various contacts we were able to obtain spares from withdrawn vehicles at T&RS Depots. External doors were obtained and fitted together with all the berth doors. Sinks and internal fittings were also obtained and stored pending re-fitting once we had better facilities.

Once the coach could be moved by rail it was transferred to some sidings near to Llangollen but this did not enable an immediate use of the vehicle as we still had no power or water, although we were able to fit the wash-basins and interior fittings including berth mirrors. The coach was then moved again to a storage area, where it sustained some graffiti damage. Having painted this out we had all the windows and mirrors smashed by vandals. All previous restoration was ruined. We had no chance of getting any assistance from the Llangollen Railway, so after a considerable time we sought another location for the coach.



The coach was eventually moved to Meldon Quarry(2002) where we were able once again to make good all the repairs and get on with the job of making the coach habitable. At this time one of the original owners left the group and we were pleased to welcome a new member, Jim Lawrence, to take his place. During the first year Jim & I fitted 15 new windows, got the plumbing repaired and the electrics working so that we had lighting. We painted the coach green on both sides. We were still working in our own occupations at this time and could only make weekends and holidays to work on the coach but once I retired I was able to visit more frequently and during the early days I did do some work on other Dartmoor Railway Rolling Stock. Obviously there was more of a need to get the Mk3 working so that we had somewhere to sleep instead of paying for hotel accommodation so it became



a priority to get the sleeping car finished.

Further funds were required so we decided to offer another share in the association and this was taken up by Martin Ligo. With the added funds we were able to purchase the CCT which you will notice coupled to the sleeping car - another vehicle to work on and

repaint. Having got both vehicles restored and habitable we were able to start letting rooms for a nominal sum to volunteers working at the Railway. Soon after this we had to relocate the coach & van from their position alongside Meldon messroom to the position in which they now reside. We found that it was necessary to put the CCT at the other end of the sleeping car and this involved loading the van on to a low loader and turning round in the quarry road and then unloading the van again prior to shunting it up to the sleeper in the siding. The track is slightly curved at this point and we therefore found that we had to fabricate a connection between the two vehicles and make this watertight, the two vehicles not being compatible or designed to be, this proved to be quite a work of art.

The coach and van are once again available for volunteer accommodation and all we ask is **£3.00 per person per night** which goes towards the costs of repairs and cleaning etc. All in all a small price to pay for clean, dry,

comfortable accommodation with heated cabins and T.V. lounge and a small kitchen with microwave cooking, a fridge and tea & coffee making equipment.

It was always our intention to make the coach available for volunteers and we hope that **you volunteers** will make use of the facility. (At the moment the Toilets cannot be used for solid waste but full facilities including a shower are available in the Mess Room and adjacent toilets). There is hot water available in the Sleeper Pantry & cold water to wash-basins in each cabin. Please contact a member of the Owning group for information & arrangements for using the sleeper. There are a few rules and these are posted in the CCT Kitchen above the signing in log.



The Members of the Mk3 Sleeping Car Association are;- Clive Warneford. (the author of this article), Robert Austin, Jim Lawrence and Martin Ligo.

There are times when Mary wishes she had never heard of an "All Day Breakfast"!



Trainee Drivers at Sampford Courtenay

Robert Joint hands over the Chairmanship of the DRSA to Dick Henrywood. Thanks to Robert for guiding the Committee since its inception.



Committee of the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association

Chairman:- Dick Henrywood

Secretary:- Phillip Wagstaff

Treasurer:- Richard Proctor

Membership Secretary:- Peter Flick

Joint Volunteer Coordinators:- David Clegg, Dennis Barnes

Dartmoor Railway Representative:- Graham Isom

Committee Members:- Robert Joint
Andre Farmar
Peter Ritchie
(Magazine Editor)