



# THE DARTMOOR PONY



The Magazine of the  
Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association

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Yeoford -  
We're Almost There  
GB II  
Routemaster

## THE DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 3

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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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication date.

**FRONT COVER:** Unit 1132 - and the number is clearly visible - with 1108 on a down train for Southampton approaching Mount Pleasant Level Crossing ( near Southampton) on 05-08-69. *Photo: B Mills*

#### BACK COVER:

**Top:** Thumper at Meldon 7<sup>th</sup> June

*Photo: B Mills*

**Bottom:** Before the stone trains stopped – a long train of empties makes it's way up to the quarry headed by a Class 66

*Photo P. Ritchie*

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## **Editorial:**

*By Peter Ritchie*

I am afraid that this is getting to be a habit – I am late in closing this issue for publication. I've been waiting for confirmation that the Yeoford project was on course to swing into action. The date for confirmation was 4<sup>th</sup> September and the Dartmoor Railway was optimistic that this could be achieved. Regrettably there are still a few small items to be agreed before everything is in order. As time passed in September, the chance to include a report of the visit of UK Railtours' "Westcountryman" on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September was too good to pass up. I was unable to get to Oke on the day but I understand that all went very well with Thumper in push-pull mode with a Colas Class 47 providing the power. After providing a steady and reliable service all season, Thumper expired in the week before the special's visit. Our General Manager proved his worth by coercing a Class 47 loco out of Colas - for a fee, of course. It seems he was in his element once allowed near the loco!!

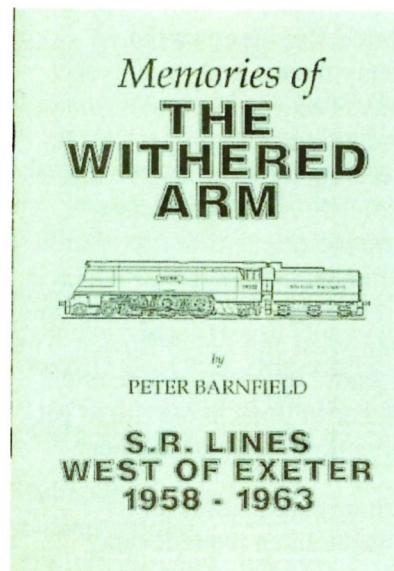


The season itself went well with mid-week running for several weeks and Saturdays and Sundays providing the core service. Poor Mary, her All Day Breakfasts are still the customers favourite. At times the Buffet staff were just about run off their feet. Well done to all concerned with running the service. I personally have not yet heard any complaints from the GBP and there continues to be a great air of friendliness between volunteers and staff. Long may it continue.

On to the magazine, you may have noticed that the cover price has increased to £2.00. This doesn't affect you as members of the Association since you will continue to get your usual copies. The Committee hopes to increase the revenue from casual sales in the buffet and shop. Talking about the shop, members are now offered a 10% discount on purchases. Thanks very much to Westcountry Models! I digress. This edition includes an article on a BUS. What have buses to do with the railway? Well, when not in competition, they feed passengers to the railway so perhaps they should be of interest. The author, Clive Warnford, also wrote the article about the sleeping car in the last issue. As well as being a member of the DRSA he is also an active life member of the Mid Hants Railway. I know certain other members also have an interest in buses so I believe that we should at least take an interest in other modes of transport.

Also in this issue is a tale from an excellent little publication called "Memories of the Withered Arm – some travels over the SR lines west of Exeter 1958-1963. These reminiscences of a by-gone era are a delight to read and each tale is illustrated by the author's hand. I have used the first chapter in this issue and fully intend to let you read further adventures in the future. It is a gem of a book and it is a shame that it is not widely available.

Now, where is that General Manager's report on the railway.....?

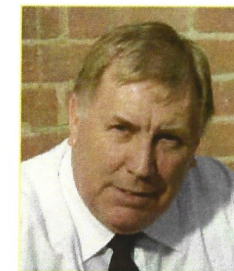


## **From the General Manager:**

*By Graham Isom*

The operating season has nearly reached its close and poor old faithful Thumper, who worked faultlessly throughout the rest of the season has now succumbed to a touch of old age. The problems are not insurmountable and I'm sure Thumper will be back soon. However, we had to hire in a Class 47 from Colas to cover our requirements for the visitors from The Westcountryman excursion on 27<sup>th</sup> September. When Thumper returns the week-end workings will continue until the beginning of November.

Considering the minimal publicity given to our operations – and then only locally – the season has been most successful. The FGW Sunday Rover trains achieved some 4,200 passenger journeys. In addition to our Saturday and Sunday workings we introduced Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday trains from the end of July. Although not heavily patronised they more than paid their way. With the experience of the season behind us we can now set up the required publicity and advertising to reach a much wider customer base.



To achieve such success required a lot of effort from our volunteers both at the DR/Public interface at the station and in the behind-the-scenes support in maintenance and repair. David Clegg has reported elsewhere on the volunteers' activities but I would like to make my thanks to them all very clear. Without them we wouldn't have a railway. Those in the buffet, the station staff, the carriage and wagon group who prepared Thumper for the season and continue to work on the stock at Meldon, they all deserve our thanks. The Buffet Car at Meldon is just about ready and effort is now focussed on readying three Mk 2 coaches for their Santa duties. I have to name names now since they haven't been mentioned before. 47701 which is owned by Alan and Tracey Lear (both DRSA members) has had major work done on it by Dave Trant, Ian McCulloch, Mike West and Leigh Bowen. The loco is now in the shop for painting ready for Santa. In the meantime and continuing to talk about locos, I do have a number of irons in the fire to get extra traction for the DR. I can say nothing more definite at the moment.

The station itself continues to flourish and with its colourful floral arrangements attracts lots of favourable comments. Even the fish van, currently in use as a store, is receiving Tom Baxter's attention. After considerable research he is painting it in its original colours.

On the Yeoford question I can reveal that the paperwork for the lease is complete and signed and we now await contractual agreements to be signed to enable us to start work.

Thank you all for the hard work you have all put in to the Dartmoor Railway. I really believe that the future is looking good.

### MONTHLY GATHERING

Staff, Volunteers and Association Members gather on the evening of  
the third  
Thursday of each month  
at the  
FOX AND HOUNDS  
On the A386 Okehampton to Tavistock Road.

If you can make it you will be more than welcome to come and chat.

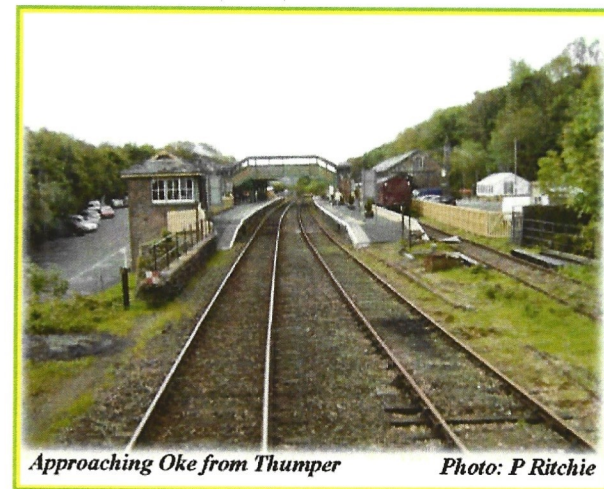
## THE RAILWAY

### News from the Line:

It can be reasonably said that the main operating season has been most successful. Over 4,000 visitors have ridden our trains with many more just visiting the station and buffet and a sizeable proportion used the facility of the Sunday Dartmoor Rover. All this has been achieved with minimal publicity and only in the local area.

Not counted amongst the passenger figures are the regular weekly walkers from the Manor House Hotel and visits by Lymptstone School, Barnado's, The MG Car Club, Exeter Motorcycle Club, Okehampton WI, Okehampton Women's Circle and two groups of French students. Our General Manager gave a presentation about the railway to the Probus Club.

Thumper provided sterling service throughout succumbing to niggling mechanical and electrical problems only on the Tuesday after the last Dartmoor Rover. This has resulted in the withdrawal of normal Dartmoor Pony Services for the time being. It had been planned to continue services until the beginning of November.



Services commenced on Good Friday with the Dartmoor Pony operating to both Meldon and Sampford Courtenay on Saturdays and Sundays. With the start up of the Dartmoor Rover (FGW) the Pony was reduced to a shuttle to Meldon on Sundays. At the end of July mid-week operation began with Meldon shuttles operating on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays in addition to Saturday and Sunday services.

The Buffet continues to provide locals, tourists, cycle riders, walkers and itinerant railwaymen/women with good sustenance both liquid and solid. At times the buffet has been extraordinarily busy and the staff has found it difficult to cope. It is always good to see how other volunteers muck in and

help clear tables and generally help out. The Meldon Buffet Car is mentioned elsewhere but, suffice it to say, the water problem requires urgent attention and must be ready for next season



66041 brings up the rear of *The Westcountryman* as it passes Yeoford island platform - soon to be part of Dartmoor Railway. Photo: C G Woodland

27<sup>th</sup> September saw the arrival of "The Westcountryman", a UK Railtours excursion. Advertising prior to the event indicated that an excursion to Castle Drogo would be available from Exeter for those that wished. In fact our good friends Carmel Coaches picked up 48 passengers from Sampford Courtenay

station to take them on to Drogo. They then rejoined the train at Okehampton. To deal with those who wished to visit Meldon and, bearing in mind that Thumper was sick, our General Manager organised the hire of a Colas Rail class 47 loco to propel Thumper to and from Meldon. The event was a great success.

We have also had our first taste of "The Roar of the Greasepaint – The Smell of the Crowd!!" (or the other way round if you really want it. Yes, the Dartmoor Railway was used for filming part of an episode of ITV's Doc Martin series. Dave Clegg has written more about the experience on page 21.

The Yeoford project is definitely on the move. The paperwork for the lease of the track bed from Coleford junction has been completed and we now await completion of contractual agreements to allow the start of work on the station.

Work continues on the Class 47 and three Mk 2 coaches in preparation for the Santa Specials during the Christmas season. No details of the proposed schedules for these services are yet available.

### Stop Press 1:

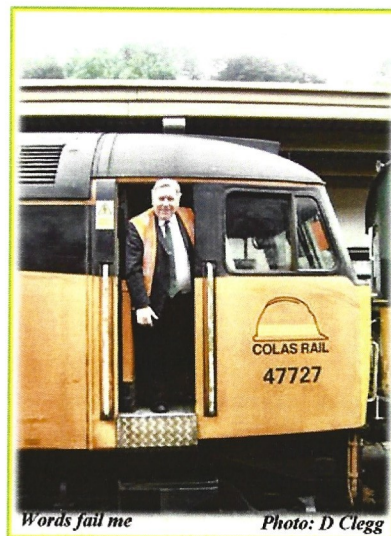
7<sup>th</sup> October. Thumper is back and raring to go. Services will continue until November.

### Stop Press 2:

Below are examples of the livery to be carried by locomotives of the Devon and Cornwall Railway which are due to be unveiled for the first time at Ruddington on the GCR(N) on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October. Featured are locos of classes 73 and 31.



The name of the new operating company, DCR, was announced in the news section of the final Friends' Newsletter dated Winter 2008. Prominent in the new livery is the lettering of the British American Railway Services, DR's parent company.



Words fail me

Photo: D Clegg

### Competition:

What about a caption competition for this shot taken by Dave Clegg on 27<sup>th</sup> September. This is just for fun with no prizes offered. See what you can come up with.

## Volunteer Report:

By Dave Clegg

Refurbishment of the Meldon Buffet coach was completed at the beginning



Applying transfers - Dave & John Photo: M Ireland

of August but unresolved issues over water supply and UHV treatment have unfortunately prevented it from being opened for the main season this year. The coach looks very smart in storm-grey livery with silver roof. The C&W Group's attention then turned to the Mk1 Driving Trailer coach that formed the initial Dartmoor Pony. The vehicle needed the

replacement of five broken or misted windows (nearly completed) and will require full repaint. Members are taking home several seat covers each week

to slip in the laundry at home and we shall soon be able to compare results of different washing powders (mine's TESCO's own brand, so I'm holding my breath). The coach will eventually be used as part of a heritage 3-car loco-hauled set. Julian Pope is making good progress with the second coach and is adding a bar conversion. The third coach will be the Mk1 courier coach, which will be made disabled-friendly. At the time of writing, we expect to have to stop work temporarily on these coaches and focus on getting three Mk2s (a BSO, RKB and an FO) repainted ready for Santa Specials and a dining train. The C&W Group have been given a donation of £800 by two of our members to purchase a compressor and associated equipment. We are most appreciative of this help.



To some, volunteering becomes a religion

Tom Baxter's team has started work repainting the grounded Fish Van at Okehampton station. This is currently being used as store. And anyone who has visited the station this year will appreciate the hanging baskets and tubs which have been tended by Wendy and George Ware and Sue Baxter among others. The main money earner for DRSA remains Kay and Andy's tombola and second-hand stall, so remember, if you have anything reasonable that



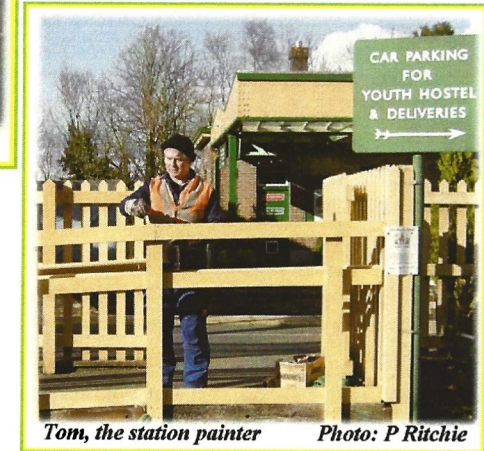
Sunday BBQ on Platform3 Photo: P Ritchie

up new active volunteers (particularly mainline drivers) which is very rewarding – and also essential if we are going to cope with increased commitments in future. If you haven't volunteered yet, but would like to try, do give me a ring (01626 867210) or Email at

[clegg.lethbridge@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:clegg.lethbridge@tiscali.co.uk)

you are clearing out (table-top items), including paper backs, CDs etc, do bring them along to the station.

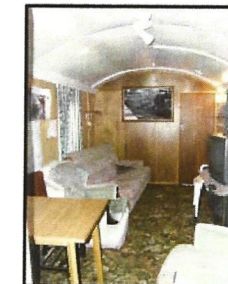
We are continuing to steadily pick



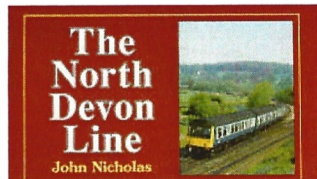
Tom, the station painter Photo: P Ritchie

### MK 3 SLEEPING CAR AND CCT

This privately owned stock, situated next to the Meldon buffet coach is for the use of volunteers working on the Dartmoor Railway. Occupancy is on trust and it is essential that users are prepared to properly respect the facilities. Rooms are £3.00 per person per night. Further information can be obtained from Clive Warneford on 01747-825810 or David Clegg on 01626 867210



## BOOK REVIEW:



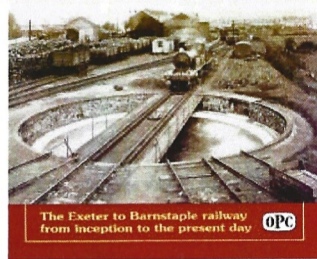
### *The North Devon Line*

*John Nicholas*

*Published by Oxford Publishing Co.*

*ISBN (10) 0-86093-461-6 or (13) 978-0-86093-461-5*

£25.00



Unlike a number of railway books, this volume is not simply a collection of photographs but a detailed history of the line from Exeter to

Barnstaple, known today as the Tarka Line. It is liberally illustrated with photographs, most with detailed captions, and also with track plans, timetables, leaflets, notices and other documents. Detailed chapters give the history of the line from the earliest beginnings through the Broad Gauge era, the LSWR and Southern days, and into the later British Rail period. Other chapters cover traffic on the line and the locomotives and rolling stock used.

Being published in 1992, it does not extend to the recent incarnation with the dreaded Pacers, and although it hardly mentions our own Dartmoor Railway branch, don't let that deter you. Anyone interested in railways in the West Country should have this volume on their shelves. It is absolutely fascinating and a valuable history of this popular line. The book is no longer in print but is readily available second-hand for around £15, possibly less, and is worth every single penny.

RKH

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Graham Isom, Operations Manager, is looking for a few extra fit volunteers during the closed season to help with cutting back lineside vegetation. If interested, please contact Graham on 01837-55164 for further details.

## PLYMOUTH FRIARY IN THE RAIN

*June 1958*

My father's 1936 Morris 8 had successfully negotiated the perils of a summer Saturday on the A38 and the dreaded Exeter Bypass. We had arrived at our holiday hotel in Torquay utterly exhausted and I immediately sought refuge at the railway station as an antidote to hours in the back of what was not the most comfortable of cars.

"Cheap day tickets to Plymouth" proclaimed the poster. Plymouth was beyond pocket money range from my home in Bristol so I was soon back at the station with a duffel bag, packed lunch and camera.

A double-headed express took me over the damp South Devon banks, through the edges of a Dartmoor mist and down over the Lee Moor Tramway track past the massed engines of Laira. Mid-week North Road was nowhere near as busy as Bristol Temple Meads but there were GW pannier tanks on Saltash autos and such rare sights (for me) as the *CORNISH RIVIERA EXPRESS* and *ROYAL DUCHY* both with chocolate and cream stock and immaculate locomotives.

Plymouth's real attraction? The presence of occasional Southern trains which passed through North Road on their way to Friary station and were so different from my staple diet of Swindon copper and brass. There was also something different about the name FRIARY that appealed to my romantic side. This was the beginning of my fascination with the Withered Arm even if I didn't realise it at the time.

An unknown force compelled me to march to the booking office and demand a return to Plymouth Friary. Apparently this was out of the question, only single tickets were available. So the mystery deepened; did no one return from Friary? Would I be whisked away by fat monks to a life in cells beneath the tracks? My youthful imagination worked overtime as, clutching my precious single, I misread the number on the departure board and waited in blissful ignorance on the wrong side of the station.

The bustling arrival from Bere Alston of an Adams 02 and two ancient examples of L&SWR gated carriages in the platform opposite roused me from my reverie, sent me diving down the subway and leaping up the stairs three at a time. 'Right away' had been given on the deserted platform, the little 0-4-4T jerked into motion as I topped the steps, the guard saw me

sprinting, swung open one of the gates, a leap....I landed safely in the vestibule beside him and yes I did have a ticket thank you.

And thanks to the man who invented this gated stock, for I would certainly have missed a conventional train. That this venerable combination was still pottering around selective parts of South Devon in 1958 was just one good reason to be interested in the Withered Arm.

So here we were rattling into Plymouth Friary in the rain, I was the only passenger and there was no-one to meet the train. It was damp, everything dripped, the 02, shrouded in steam, disappeared somewhere leaving me alone in the steady downpour. Waterloo seemed a very long way away.

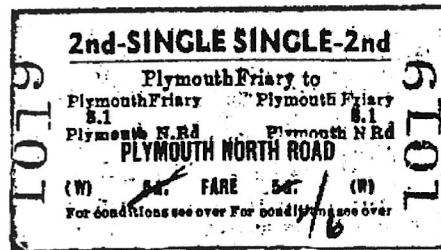
Stowing my camera in the driest possible place I roamed in the rain, discovered a clutch of 'Woolworths' moguls at the ashy little engine shed and three of the diminutive B4 0-4-0 tanks. Eventually the torrents sent me scuttling to seek shelter beneath leaking awnings where paint peeled and damp lined the cold greystone walls.

A train materialised in the departure platform – three coaches whose window stickers proclaimed 'Waterloo', and unrebuilt Bulleid pacific *Hawkinge* almost invisible, cloaked in leaking steam.

Now the business of finding someone to issue a ticket. Knocks on the shuttered ticket window produced no response, investigation of all doors, rooms and corners proved fruitless. I was beginning to assume that no-one *could* depart from Friary when I unearthed a booking clerk in a little room with a teapot; he seemed very surprised to see anyone.

I sat in solitude for half an hour watching torrential rain bubble through gaps in ill-fitting windows and run in puddles down the corridor. Another soggy passenger joined us and to dispel the myth we lurched off towards North Road with me heaving a sigh of relief.

Once I'd dried out I remember thinking rather fondly of Friary and although I never went there again that visit fuelled my interest in the Southern lines west of Exeter.



FOOTNOTE: The gated carriages referred to were former trailer cars built by Drummond to run with his small 'motor' tanks, successors to the older 'rail motors' where the loco and carriage were combined as one unit. The trailers were open saloons entered by a central vestibule which had waist high, metalwork gates instead of conventional doors. In 1958 these were about 50 years old!



*The above article and illustrations are reproduced with kind permission from*

*"MEMORIES OF THE WITHERED ARM – some travels over the S.R.LINES WEST OF EXETER 1958-1963" written, illustrated and published by Peter Barnfield. I intend to publish further tales of his travels in subsequent issues of "The Dartmoor Pony". Ed.*

**COLAS, THUMPER AND THE WESTCOUNTRYMAN:**  
**27<sup>th</sup> September 2009**



The visit of UK Railtours "The Westcountryman" on 27<sup>th</sup> September caused a bit of a stir on the railway, not least because Thumper had failed and DR had to hire a Colas Class 47 number 47727 "Rebecca" to propel Thumper to Meldon and

back carrying passengers from the special. Dave Clegg and Philip Wagstaff were on hand with their cameras but so was Charles Woodland who has also given me permission to use some of his shots taken on the day. I'm not quite sure how Charles got his intelligence



The Dartmoor Pony Autumn 2009



about the arrival of the 47 but he managed to catch it at Cowley Bridge Junction. Passengers on the special train for Drogo Castle were dropped off



66041 at Oke Photo: P Wagstaff

at Sampford Courtenay and conveyed to Drogo by Carmel coaches. With 66041 leading the special arrived at Oke. 66124 brought up the rear. Volunteer marshals were on hand at Oke and at Meldon to assist with the smooth running of the trains. John Wills and Andrew Turner

joined the train at Exeter to distribute guides and leaflets to the travellers prior to their arrival at Oke. In the meantime Thumper, propelled by 47727, ran the shuttle service to Meldon and return. This service was part of



47727 at Platform 2 Photo: D Clegg



Rebecca and Thumper at Meldon Photo: C Woodland

the normal Sunday schedule. The Castle Drogo passengers were returned to their train at Okehampton and the special departed on time. A photograph of the train passing Yeoford towards Exeter can be found in the News section

**Articles/photographs for the Magazine**

If submitted in hard copy, photographs should be of at least 6"x4" size and of good quality. Copy submitted electronically should be in Microsoft Word format (pre 2007 edition) with any associated photographs in jpeg format no smaller than 2Mb when expanded.

**THE GREAT BRITAIN II RAILTOUR – APRIL 2009 – Part I**

Article and photographs by Richard Proctor

Two of our volunteers, Judy and Richard Proctor, were privileged to have been passengers on the 'Great Britain II' 8 day Steam Rail Tour in April 2009. The stock throughout was West Coast Railways Mark 1s & ex Pullman stock and they were fortunate to be accommodated in a First Class Open Mark 1 car. There follows a brief resumé of their trip.

Day 1 - London (Victoria) to Bristol (Temple Meads) - Loco 34067 Battle of

Britain Class 'Tangmere' (built 1947).

The train was pulled into Victoria by West Coast Railways Class 47 (47760), where it was uncoupled and then 'stalked' us all the way round Britain for 1900 miles!! We left Victoria exactly on time (and arrived 8 days later at London Kings Cross exactly on



Our Mk1 home for 8 days

time! - not a bad record for such a complicated tour!). The Victoria departure was particularly nostalgic for Judy, bringing back memories for her of steam hauled boat trains



Departure from London Victoria



47760 shunts the train into the platform at Bristol Temple Meads

on which she travelled when she worked in Paris in the late 1950s and early 1960s! After a champagne greeting to get us in the mood and a water stop at Newbury Racecourse to get Tangmere in the mood, we

enjoyed the first of many superb meals on board - all cooked in a converted

Mark I kitchen car by a chef and team of excellent cabin crew who looked after us all the way.

**Day 2 - Bristol (Temple Meads) to Penzance and return.** This was the longest trip of the tour (415.5 miles) and the westbound service was hauled by the preserved diesel loco 'Western Champion'. There was only one stop for a crew change at Plymouth, so it must have been one of the fastest journeys between Bristol & Penzance (3hrs 52 mins)? After a refreshing break in the



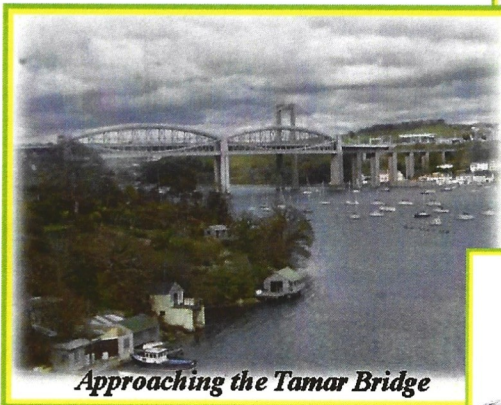
*Western Champion arrives at Penzance*

sunshine at Penzance we were hauled, double-headed, back to Bristol by BR Standard Class express passenger loco 70013 'Oliver Cromwell'. Because the planned second loco (Nunney



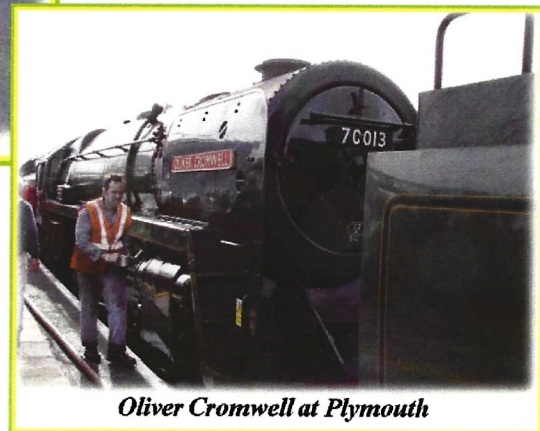
*Tangmere and Oliver Cromwell at Penzance*

Castle) had failed the previous day, Tangmere was brought in to help out and lead us back over the 150



*Approaching the Tamar Bridge*

year old Tamar Bridge to Exeter. Here we were met by a delegation from The Dartmoor Railway to wish us well on the rest of our adventure. From Exeter we proceeded back to



*Oliver Cromwell at Plymouth*

Bristol, arriving in the dark, both steam locomotives giving Bristol a rousing welcome!

**Day 3 - Bristol (Temple Meads) to Preston.** This sector should have been pulled by 'Princess Elizabeth', but we were told it was unavailable - so what happened ..... 'Tangmere' again!! 'Tangmere' became part of the plot and we wondered whether it was somehow attached to the stock and couldn't be parted! However, the trip went very well with only one snag.

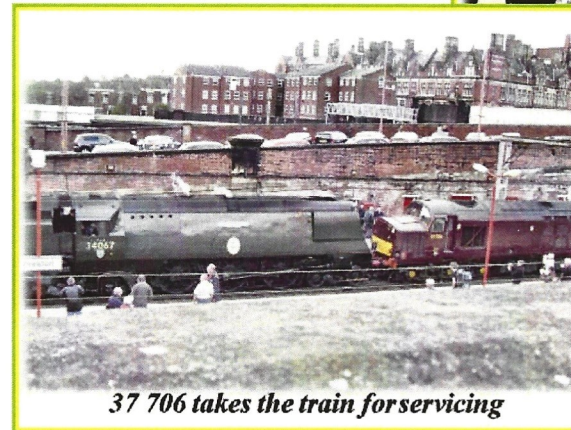


*Tangmere leaving Bristol TM*

'Tangmere' had not been 'gauged' for the planned route through Chester, so after the Welsh section through Abergavenny and back into England at Hereford and Shrewsbury, we were diverted along the West Coast Main Line



*Preston*



*37 706 takes the train for servicing*

at Crewe for a high speed run into Preston. Here Tangmere was finally prised apart from us and the stock removed for cleaning and servicing by a West Coast Railways class 37. We did comment that perhaps 'Tangmere', being a Southern loco, thought

she was going to Preston Park at Brighton in Sussex, rather than Preston in Lancashire!!!

**Day 4 - Preston to Glasgow Central - Loco LMS 6115 'Scots**

Guardsman' (Built 1927 and rebuilt 1947).. Our route was along the West Coast Main Line all the way, with a very 'Brief Encounter' at Carnforth passing the station at about 75 mph and not even time to take a photograph! Then we had water stops at Oxenholme, Penrith, Lockerbie and Carstairs -

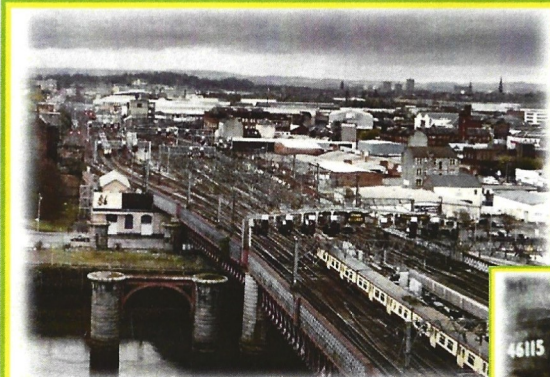


Scots Guardsman at Preston

all of which were in passing loops, which allowed high speed traffic to overtake. Even so we recorded 75 mph for most of the way and over



Crowds at Preston



Approaches to Glasgow Central

Shap and Beattock summits the speed didn't drop much below 30 mph - quite an achievement for a 60 year old loco with 11 full

carriages. This was the day when we were first aware of the enormous interest in the trip - photographers virtually all the way en route - some perched on the most precarious viewpoints in the desolate countryside over the borders.



Judy with Scots Guardsman at Glasgow Central

*This article concludes in the next edition of the Dartmoor Pony with Richard's resumé of days five to eight of their trip.*

## AN EXTRA DAY'S (EXTRA'S DAY) VOLUNTEERING ON THE DARTMOOR RAILWAY

The phone rang about ten to nine on Tuesday night. It was John Wills, the Duty Manager for the day. Graham Isom (Ops Manager) had apparently been asked to get more male volunteers as 'extras' for the Doc Martin filming the following day - and John was acting as messenger. Try as I might I was unable to find anyone who had not been signed up already and who was available to dress up in a business suit the following day, for a seven fifteen start in the morning and a likely finish about six in the evening - on what was forecast to be the hottest day of the year. We had been aware for weeks that the filming was to take place and a number of us volunteers had been preparing a BSO (Brake Second Open) coach ready for the film crew, generator, and other equipment.

So I spent the rest of the evening digging out my best M&S grey suit, grey shirt and a rather striking tie, polishing black shoes and locating my briefcase. The story-line was that Doc Martin (Martin Clunes) was trying to ignore an objectionable traveller (actor David Hill) who sat next to him, and who had been an earlier patient of his. However, he could not change seats as the rest of the carriage was full (of extras!). I won't tell you the rest of the plot as no doubt you will be glued to your TV screens later on this year to see

unusual happenings on Dartmoor Railway when the new Doc Martin TV series begins (I believe we are in the fifth episode, sometime in September).

Along with several other regular DR volunteers and some paid extras I turned up at Okehampton station at the appointed time and grabbed a cup of tea. Shortly afterwards we were ushered by 'Victoria' (with a lovely smile and clipboard - see photo) to some other member of the crew to see if we were fit for purpose. First surprise: before we got organised into a proper queue I was told "You're alright. Go and have some breakfast".



Victoria's Smile

Photo: D. Clegg

So I did. Another wait, which gave opportunity to talk to some of the non-DR extras.

Meanwhile the 'Thumper' (I'm getting so fond of this versatile machine!) arrived hauling the BSO and a Mark 3 InterCity coach which had been hired-in by the film company. The film crew then loaded all sorts of equipment onto the train, breaking a footboard off the BSO in the process. I didn't know our Thumper could manage another couple of coaches on the 1 in 77 gradient, but unrattleable Graham Isom assured me it could. And it did. All day. Without complaint. She really is lovely. Why use the Thumper? Ah well, the naughty Class 47 (47701) sprang another leak somewhere in its innards after we thought it had been successfully healed. Anyway, Peter Chapman, who was manning the 08 shunter up at Meldon just in case we needed to be rescued, was thankfully not required and was able to get on with some yard shunting.

Then the second – much bigger – surprise. Some lovely lady said "Dave, I'd like you and John (a paid extra from Cornwall) to sit opposite Martin in the coach. Is that alright?" So - as you do - I accepted gracefully. And I still wonder if it was the Marks and Spencer suit? Or the tie? Or perhaps I'm photogenic? Or probably they just wanted someone short who wouldn't get in the way of the film camera. When we were shown to our allotted seats, I was pleased to see Graham Parkinson across the aisle next to me - until he started making sarcastic comments about how nice it was to be able to work opposite me. I could see Sue (Baxter) further down the train, but lost sight of Kay Mills, Andrew Turner, Jean Hutchinson, Richard Proctor and Wendy Ware. Dennis Le Worthy was doubling up as Duty Manager, with John Scotney and John Wills both (I think) guarding; and Graham Isom driving for the day.

When Martin Clunes arrived and sat diagonally opposite me, my first ridiculous thought was "Gosh! He really does look just like Martin Clunes". Stupid, or what! Then the other main actor David Hill arrived and sat opposite. I'd seen him many times on TV, but couldn't think where (I've since heard he was in the Full Monty, The Bill and Eastenders). Then began the long processes of directions, rehearsals, takes, retakes, and more retakes – sometimes as many as a dozen for one shot. I was surprised how often there were subtle unscripted and sometimes unintentional changes. Often more amusing than the script were the off-camera asides. One scene required Martin to pull the emergency handle – something he'd always wanted to do! But great disappointment from the Director when the train didn't screech to a stop inside two seconds! They tried the scene a number of times, but in the end filmed it stationary and we all had to pretend to we were thrown about. I'm not sure how that will come out!

With each 'take' the Thumper had to reverse the train back up to Meldon or another suitable point on the line, and I lost count of how often we passed through Okehampton station non-stop. It also meant our driver had to change cabs every few minutes. In fact Martin (Mr Clunes to the rest of you) asked why it always took so long before we reversed, so I explained our driver had to climb down from one end of the diesel unit and climb up into the cab at the other end each time which took time: and he was a bit overweight ... This got us talking more about the technicalities of railways, but I'm still not sure he knows the difference between a locomotive and a diesel unit. But I tried. I also explained what I get up to as a volunteer, but then added "But I get a life as well!" which pleasingly got a good laugh from him.

Having to use the Thumper as a 'locomotive' meant that we had no air-conditioning. We knew this would make life difficult for actors, film crew and extras alike. And as the day wore on it got hotter and hotter. The trouble was that once we were in our seats we were stuck until the next meal break. It did seem a very, very long day, but one I'm glad I didn't miss. Although Dartmoor Railway volunteers were not paid as extras, a donation was made by the film company to the DRSA.

Dave Clegg

July 2009.



*Martin and Dave - Thumbs up at Oke*

*Photo: D. Clegg*

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Dave Clegg is looking for extra help in the C&W dept to clean and prepare 3 coaches ready for Santa specials. Please telephone 01626 867210 if you can help.

## THE STORY OF A 'BUS – Part 1

Words & pictures by Clive Warneford.

I had been a member of the Mid-Hants Railway Preservation Society since 1976, and a volunteer at first with the Building Group and subsequently with the Traffic Group, rising to become a Guard and Shunter.

A small band of Volunteers from Southampton decided to acquire a Kitchen Car with a view to running a Wine and Dine Train (The Watercress Belle) and I joined them in their quest by purchasing 3 Mk1 First Open ex-Ocean Liner Coaches for use with this train. This is where I started to gain knowledge regarding the restoration and maintenance of these types of vehicle. Full details of this train and the events surrounding its use are not really relevant to the article which follows. Really just a precursor to how events evolved.

During 1988/91 I was employed by the Mid-Hants Railway Plc as a Carriage and Wagon Fitter and in that capacity had to visit many B.R. Depots to view coaching stock to assess them as to their suitability for use on the Mid-Hants. On one of these visits I met a man named Eddie Knorn, who was the Production Manager at Wembley InterCity Depot. Eddie and I became good friends and it turned out that he had the desire to purchase a Routemaster 'Bus. During 1993 Eddie had found the type he had been looking for and asked me if I would like to go halves with him in obtaining it for preservation. I was definitely interested as I had had the desire to drive a



*Twickenham Garage, her first home in preservation 1993*

London 'Bus since my 'teens. So we purchased; **RMC 1476** an ex-GreenLine Routemaster Double Deck Coach. The 'bus had become surplus to use and stored pending disposal at Wandsworth Garage from where it was purchased. The 'bus had been painted Red and had retired from front line service to be used as a training vehicle. Mechanically it was in good order but was in need of a repaint and some bodywork repairs. Obviously with something so large as a 'bus we had to find some secure storage for it and through various

connections that Eddie had, the 'bus was moved to the closed Twickenham Bus Garage, where it enjoyed short term storage along with some other similar preserved vehicles. The Garage was due for demolition & re-development (housing) and so we sought a more permanent storage facility. This turned out to be an ex-chicken farm in Berkshire, where again, we had secure dry storage. We are still using these premises some 15 years later. Meanwhile we obtained many spare parts for the possible future use and some body panels to replace those required immediately. These were purchased from Fulwell Garage. Whilst the 'bus was at Twickenham, Eddie undertook the bodywork repairs and a repaint in Red, with large white LT target logo.



*One of the first Rallies we went to was at Staines in 1993*

It will be noted that the 'bus carries an 'L' plate, we decided at this time to restore the 'bus as a 'Trainer', although she was not being used in that role, except to teach me to drive her!

At this point it might be a good idea to describe this vehicle in more detail.....the technical bit!

### **A.E.C. ROUTEMASTER COACH --- RMC 1476.**

#### **BUILT- 1962**

*This vehicle represents one of the 68 "production" Routemaster coaches (RMC's) built in 1962 for service on London Transport's GREEN LINE routes. Their design was based on that of prototype vehicle RMC4.*

*The RMC 'coach' variant is closely related to the standard ROUTEMASTER RM 'bus that can still be seen on the streets of Central London today, however there are a number of detail differences;*

*Exterior:* *The RMC features power operated doors on it's rear platform instead of the open platform of the standard RM The front end styling is different too, with twin headlamps either side of the radiator grille and a two piece blind.*

*Interior:* *Being a longer distance coach, the RMC has a more luxurious interior with a seating capacity of only 57 compared with the RM's 64, permitting a more generous seat pitch. The seating has deeper padding. The RMC features overhead luggage racks and fluorescent lighting, rather than tungsten bulbs in the RM. (later refurbishments of RM's included fluorescent lights).*

*Mechanical:* *The RMC shares the AEC AV590 diesel engine of 9.5 litre capacity with*  
The Dartmoor Pony Autumn 2009

the majority of RM's as built. Although the transmission is broadly similar to the RM, the RMC has a higher speed differential in the back axle reflecting the long distance limited stop nature of GREEN LINE work. The RMC has air suspension as opposed to the standard coil springs of the RM.

The first route to receive RMC's in 1962 was the 715, Hertford-Guildford via Marble Arch and the type soon spread to other GREEN LINE routes displacing mainly RF single deckers. At the end of 1969, London Transport's country area and GREEN LINE routes passed to newly formed LONDON COUNTRY as did the fleet of RMC's. A decline in GREEN LINE patronage and a new fleet of single deck coaches resulted in all RMC's being demoted to country "bus" work by mid 1972.

During the subsequent period London Country acquired many one man operated buses leading to the withdrawal of their ROUTEMASTER fleet between 1977 and 1979.



RMC 1476 in as built condition at Harlow Garage in 1962

**RMC 1476** started her career in **October 1962 at Guildford** on route 715 but a fortnight later she moved to **Epping** then later on to **Harlow** for use on the 718 route Harlow-Windsor service and 720/A Bishops Stortford-Harlow-Aldgate route. Since then she has been based at various country area and London Country garages including, **Grays, Hatfield, Hertford and Garston** being withdrawn from Grays in early summer of 1979 and stored out

of use for a couple of months at **Radlett Airfield**. In common with most other ex-London Country ROUTEMASTERS, RMC 1476 was bought back by London Transport.

All of the resurrected RMC's were used for driver training by LT, receiving repaints into red livery. RMC 1476 saw service at **Peckham, Mortlake, Stamford Hill and Holloway** garages in this role, moving to **Wandsworth Garage in November 1989**. Based there until March 1993 as a London Coaches trainer, when she was purchased for preservation by Eddie Knorn and C. Warneford

Once I had satisfied Eddie that I could drive the vehicle in a safe and competent manner, I was able to take the 'bus to quite a number of rallies. In fact by 1996 I was doing most of the rallies attended by the 'bus, 21 during that year, including Wedding Transport for Eddie's wedding.

(To be concluded in the next edition of the Dartmoor Pony)

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